Attainment and Alienation: The Rise of The Mature Student

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Respectfully dedicated to the memory of Paolo Friere (1922-97)

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Abstract

This thesis examines the attitudes and experiences of a sample of mature students from Merseyside's three higher education establishments; to whit, Liverpool University, Liverpool Hope University College and Liverpool John Moores University. The research written up here provides a contribution to the current discussions on 'lifelong-learning'. Firstly, those discussions relating to the meanings inherent in the term itself and, secondly, in the ongoing discussions on potential implementation processes. This research provides a 'snapshot' of the attitudes and backgrounds of those who have successfully made the leap into higher education and become mature students, and thus provides new insights which can be used in comparison with older studies on similar themes - such as Hopper and Osborn's (1975) work. Future discussion based upon the findings presented in this thesis could focus on how these people are different from those who have been unable or, perhaps more importantly, *unwilling* to make that leap.

The first two chapters consider the literature available, and the ongoing debates related to adults in higher education, particularly in light of the increasingly vocationalised, instrumental attitudes taken by policy makers regarding the role of education in society. Chapter three offers an overview of the methodologies used in the research and presents the uni-variate and bi-variate data derived from the questionnaires, leading to the establishment of a two-fold ideal typology of 'late' students (between 21 and 30 years of age at entry, single, childless and from any geographical area) and 'returning' students (31 to 40 years of age at entry, with children, from local area only). Chapter four takes these typologies and uses them as

the basis for cross-tabulation with attitudinal variables. The main observations from this are that whilst mature students are overwhelmingly female to begin with (59.9% of the sample here) this ratio becomes even less balanced the older the age group - females outnumbered males 4 to 1 in the 'returning' group. Secondly, mature students tend to be 'younger' the higher the apparent status of the institution they attend. Hence, there were more 'lates' at Liverpool University as a proportion than at either John Moores or Hope, and Hope had the largest number of 'returning' students.

Chapters five and six discuss the experiences of the sample; those leading them into coming into higher education in the first place, then their experiences of higher education itself. In terms of being lead into higher education, the majority of the sample viewed career enhancement as important - but crucially, this was not necessarily reflected in their choice of subjects, as Arts students appeared no less 'careerist' than more directly vocational students, and as such any degree appears to be being treated as 'vocational'. The effect of earlier, often negative, educational experiences upon these students is also discussed. It is worth noting that this sample appear to be more qualified than other, nationally based samples such as Graham's (1991), and it is a possibility that they may be less representative than one would have hoped because of this. Finally, chapter seven discusses the findings, and places them in an overall framework for further research.

The main conclusions of the thesis are twofold. First, if age is removed from the picture entirely, mature and traditional students seem more alike than not - there is a preponderance of white collar mature students (and a huge 46.4% of these have traditional A level qualifications) and a dearth of blue collars relative to the

population. Second, blue collar *males* are especially scarce. Hence, the notions with which I began this research regarding adult-female and adult-female-working-class subordination are certainly not supported by the evidence here. Further research needs to be undertaken to find ways to persuade more adult blue collar males to return to education.

PREFACE

> It is necessary that we never lose sight of what public education is for. It is not a matter of training workers for the factory or accountants for the warehouse but citizens for society. (Durkheim, 1885, p449)
>
> In order to renovate our state apparatus we must at all costs set out, first, to learn, second, to learn, and third, to learn, and then see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life. (Lenin, 1923, p239)

The study of mature students is problematic, if only because it is so hard to define who and what a mature student is. For example, Lucas and Ward (1985 p151) state that, at Lancaster University, a mature student is taken to be a person over 23 at commencement of a degree. Hartley and Lapping (1992, p78) at Keele state that a mature student must be over 19 but have been out of education for at least three years. Griffin and Smithers (1984 p73) at Manchester claim that over 21 (previously 23) is the yardstick. Elsey (1982 p71) at Nottingham specifies over 25 years. Field (1989a p16) at Warwick does not offer any specific definition, while Woodley (1984 p37) in his study of the Open University offers the distinct categories of under 21, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, and 51 plus. Nisbet and Welsh (1972 p204) attempted to classify mature students into different age related groups, and by their own admission, failed to do so. The research presented in the following chapters takes on board the warning of Tight (1988 p3) concerning the vast heterogeneity of the mature student population in comparison with the relative homogeneity of the 18-21 year olds.

The objective of this research is the systematic examination of the structure, culture and processes within higher education as they pertain to mature students. How are mature students in a different social position from that of the traditional age students? Is university a process of 'normalisation' for the mature student, or is happy co-existence a realistic possibility? If prejudice *does* occur, from where does it emerge? Are we talking about 'institutional' discrimination, with academic institutions being explicitly designed for (and in the case of Students' Unions etc. also *by*) the young. Could we instead be talking of 'personal' discrimination, being practised by academics (and possibly younger students) who resent the presence of an older undergraduate in what has been traditionally 'their' world.

Assuming there *is* an identifiable age-related prejudice at work, the next question is, how does it work with other structural and cultural prejudices? Does the age prejudice, for example, reproduce the divisions which already exist along traditional gender, ethnic and social class lines, or is this something entirely new for us to consider? Issues of gender, ethnicity and class will be considered throughout this research.

This thesis explores the origins, destinations and motivations of those students who have removed themselves from education for between 5 and 24 years (those no younger than 21 and no more than 40 years of age when they commence undergraduate study) and who have then decided, for whatever reason, to return. There are two reasons for this focus. Firstly, this age range comprises the bulk of mature students (85% in

Woodley's 1991 sample, for instance). Secondly, it would be naive to expect the age range of 21 and upward to be a homogeneous group, whereas this may be somewhat more true of the "twenty-" and "thirty-somethings". Whilst the life experiences of a 21 year old and, for example, a 35 year old may be very different; the former most likely being single and thus mobile, the latter most likely being married and thus tied to a specific location, their motivations for a return to education may still be much the same. Both will be young enough to use their degrees to climb further up career ladders, and both will have been in the workforce (or the unemployment queue) long enough to have realised the need for further academic advancement. In the case of students over 40, it is more likely that pursuit of a personal interest (possibly after redundancy) will be the driving forces behind their entry into higher education. I am not, however, so unwise as to assume that there will be no blurring of boundaries here.

This study involves some broad analysis of the systems and practices of education itself, but it is primarily about the characteristics of mature students. Are they merely the inevitable by-product of an increasingly redundant labour force needing retraining, or are they the products of a school system which has created their failure and under-achievement who are now trying to succeed and achieve after some time away? To this end, it will be necessary to look at the social backgrounds of mature students (previous education, employment, sex, and race). Were they perhaps failures before they started simply because of life-chance inadequacy? Do they believe that a degree will make any real difference to their life-chance outcomes?

We begin by reviewing the existing literature on the subject, examining the available statistics and try to draw some meaningful inferences. This lays the template for the research which has been based upon questionnaire data, followed by qualitative research through interviews.

CHAPTER 1

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE MATURE STUDENT

The mature student is clearly not a new phenomenon. For example, Walker's (1975) study goes back as far as 1965. Tight (1988 p3) explains that his institution, Birkbeck College, London has been admitting mature students for over a century and a half. Large scale social upheavals such as World Wars I and II have contributed to mature student booms by virtue of the fact that large segments of the university age population were suddenly removed from the education market, to be returned a few years later when their tours of duty ended (Busselen and Busselen, 1975, p281: Simpson, 1983, p1[*]). Thus, it is clear that the modern mature student has roots going back many years into the history of education[**].

On the other hand, we can see a substantial quantitative and a qualitative shift in the relationship of the mature student to education. To begin with, mature students are now considerably greater in number, having gone from a national average of 5-6% of the

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[*] Simpson wonders why so much effort and so many resources were spent on introducing the PhD to British universities at the end of WWI when such resources could have been spent on the vast number of undergraduates (she does not actually use the term `mature', but their status as such is self-evident) coming into the university sector having returned from fighting the war.

[**] That said, the mature student is, of course, likely to be in large part a product of the late 20th century expansions (including those immediately after the Robbins report). As Hobsbawn (1968, p152) for example points out, in 1913 there were only 9000 undergraduates in total in Britain. Thus, at that point the mature students (presuming there were indeed any) would be a very small cohort indeed. We can say therefore that the mature student is not a `new' phenomenon, but nor is s/he particularly `ancient'.

undergraduate population in 1982 (Elsey, 1992, p71) to actually outnumbering the traditional entry students, 319,400 to 281,600 according to the Department for Education's (1994b) figures. However, this figure should be taken cautiously as it includes part-time mature students (three-fifths of the total - the differences between the two groups will be discussed in chapter three) and thus the comparison is not totally just. Nevertheless, a considerable growth in numbers of mature students is evident. Why should this be?

Several reasons suggest themselves. Firstly there is the cynical reason suggested by both Pratt (1989, p75) and Woodley (1981, p103): Both here and in the United States higher education institutions have experienced a decline in the number of 18 year olds now that the "baby-boomers" are nothing but a distant memory, and the lower birth rates of the 1970s (Woodley, ibid.) and 1980s (Pratt, ibid.) are being keenly felt. McLoughlin (1991, p57) predicts a further drop in the number of 16 to 19 year olds of around 850,000 (based on 1991 figures) by the year 2000, and Pratt (ibid.) predicts a drop in traditional student applications to university in the U.K. of 25%. However, university places in the U.K. have been steadily expanded (at least until 1994) since the late 1980s. Thus, for purely economic reasons, vacant spaces need to be filled, so the universities can do one of two things. They can either lower their standards to take in less able 18 year olds or they can admit older students who may be just as able as the best 18 year olds. A related possible reason for the rise of the modern mature student is the change in attitudes held by the universities towards them. Levin and Levin (1991, p688) indicate

that in the U.S., until recently, many colleges of law and medicine would not admit older students regardless of their qualifications and abilities because they viewed them as a waste of educational resources. This may be a facet of what Littler (1997, p12) has described as "social age". She suggests that;

> ... although a person's chronological age can be considered a private matter, our social age enters the realm of the public sphere. Social-age definitions, age norms and age appropriate behaviour are responsive to cultural, social and economic change. As such they become uncodified instruments of social control.

Thus, these American institutions are applying the logic that universities are for young people, and that older applicants are somehow breaching the etiquette (and perhaps even the moral obligations) of their social-age-cohort. Again, using this logic, a person of (for example) thirty five years should, perhaps, be thinking in terms of career consolidation and childrearing, rather than entering the 'young' world of the university.

Perhaps the same is true of many institutions here in the U.K. If so, however, such institutions are beginning to soften their attitudes - no doubt because of the aforementioned economic necessity and demographic reality rendering such an argument rather hollow, as well as the realisation that mature students can be a godsend to a tutor who is having difficulty in motivating his/her traditional age charges, because the mature students can, and do enliven dull seminars, and as such can be ideal students to teach (Williams, 1997, p43).

It can clearly no longer be said that a mature student could be taking up a place which could be used for a more "worthy", that is to say, "traditional" student [*],[**].

All of this being so, one would expect the mature student to be welcomed with open arms by academic institutions, especially as the mature student has a great deal to offer in what would appear to be a sellers' market. However, the reality appears somewhat less idyllic. According to Maynard (1992, p109), mature students may have a great deal more in the way of commitments than their relatively carefree 18 year old counterparts. However, the slightest request for help may sometimes be greeted with accusations of "whinging". It is accepted that traditional students have social lives and oversleep, thus missing classes, but mature students are generally expected to be more conscientious (presumably placing greater value on their education as it is a "second chance"). Thus, for example, when school buses for their children prove erratic, they come to the lecture late, and indeed may request more flexible timetable arrangements and/or childcare facilities. Yet such requests are generally deemed unreasonable. Maynard questions the "unreasonableness" of such a request in the light of everything

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[*] Having said this, it is worth pointing out that there is evidence to suggest that `traditional' age students resent the presence of mature students, considering them to be taking up places which would be more properly and more profitably be made available for more traditionals, going as far as to suggest that to have a different admission policy for mature students is tantamount to an infringement of the university's (in this case, Warwick's) formal policy of equal opportunity (Field, 1989b, pp 42-3).

[**] Thompson (1996, p5) gives the example of Pam Perkins, a 52 year old mature student, who was told by a parent of a teenage undergraduate that it was mature students like her (Perkins) who were keeping out teenagers, like her (the complainant's) son. The implication is that not only do the young undervalue mature students, but so also do the *families* of the young.

which traditional students are given without request - she lists accommodation, refectories, launderette facilities, sports centres, cleaners, kitchens, counselling and medical centres. Given that many mature students study at the university closest to their homes and commute daily, thus neither requiring nor being able to participate much in the rich tapestry of the undergraduate social scene, their own requests do appear small.

Labour Market Destabilisation and Mature Study

The rise of mature student numbers in U.K. universities is clearly, in part, due to the expansion of higher education and hence the increased availability of places - coupled with the demographic decline in the number of 18 year olds. However, economic factors are also likely to be a motivating element in a return to education. Longworth and Davies (1996, pp 61-63) suggest that post-Fordism* (although they do not use this term specifically) is a reality, as employment in the late 20th century depends upon employability, and employability depends upon flexibility of specialisation. They suggest that individuals must now resign themselves to a career change at least four times during their working lives, especially in the areas of technology and engineering, where the pace of technological development gives specific knowledge a built-in redundancy.

* Brown and Crompton (1994, p10) characterise the development of post-Fordist regimes in Europe as based upon `toughness in welfare, increasing poverty and hostility to outsiders'. They suggest that changing patterns of consumption and labour processes (through technological change) have created this post-Fordist situation, and must be matched by increased labour market *flexibility*.

The authors cite IBM as an example, where the workforce was 'downsized' from 18000 in the U.K. to 12000, and suggest that the university 'milk rounds', where companies compete for the most promising (soon to be) graduates are a thing of the past. Companies such as IBM will, in the future employ a small, highly educated, highly paid core workforce, with everything else being 'out-sourced' to external service providers. Thus, individuals must treat lifelong learning as not merely desirable from a personal and cultural point of view, but as an absolute necessity for continued employability. In other words, the future is 'study or die' and the devil take the hindmost.

Longworth and Davies (ibid, pp116/7) suggest that these economic trends, coupled with the rise of numbers of mature students, are going to force the universities to change the way that they function: mature students will need to be given far greater consideration than they are at present. They cite the need for assistance for mature students who have been away from education for some time so that lost study skills can be reclaimed, and timetables and course locations which take into account the flexibility necessary for mature study. They also suggest that part-time accommodation should be provided for mature students who need to spend time at the university, but who have permanent homes elsewhere. The point is that mature students, up to the present, have been something of a curiosity, whose needs could be fairly safely left unmet by the university, whereas in future market forces and demographics will make the recruitment and academic well-being of mature students vital to the survival of the university, and

they will thus, in future, have their needs taken more seriously (the same point is made by King C., 1995, p118).

It can safely be assumed that universities are unlikely to reduce their teaching capacity (it would hardly make economic sense as funding is directly proportional to student intake) and that diminishing grants may make university education less appealing to traditional undergraduates not wishing to accrue large debts through student loans at the beginning of their careers. Mature students, on the other hand, more used to self-sufficiency, may budget in advance, eventually leading to a situation where mature students could vastly outnumber the traditional ones. In such a situation, the status of mature students - presently measured in terms of how they differ in kind from the traditionals - is bound to change. Let us now examine this status.

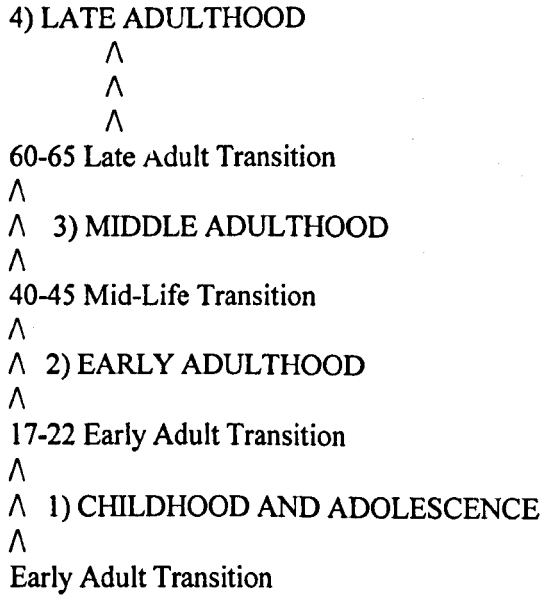
The Mature Student "Problem"

As has already been suggested, prejudice exists in some quarters that education for mature students is education wasted. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that there is an unspoken socially held timetable of life events, and the mature student is by definition a 'life-cycle deviant' (Marks, 1996).

Selim (1979 p61) offers a "life-cycle calendar", wherein all life events are mapped within their appropriate time-frames. According to the calendar, higher education is the preserve of the "young adult" (18-25) whilst they are going through their

"intimacy versus isolation" phase of testing out their own identities. Similarly, Levinson et al (1978, p20) have provided a detailed map of a man's (sic) life cycle (see FIG 1.1).

FIG 1.1: From Levinson et al (1978), "Seasons of a Man's Life"



Levinson et al suggest that the "early adulthood transition" stage is the point where intelligence and physical prowess are at their most heightened, and that they decline subsequently.

> As compared with later eras ... early adulthood is distinguished by its fullness of energy, capability and potential, as well as external pressure. (ibid. p23)

If this is the case then a higher education life schedule of 18-21 seems almost biologically determined, as well as socially compelled. They go on to suggest that the rest of the twenties are given over to achieving self-identity through careers and raising

families. They do, however, concede that a return to education may be a habit of middle adulthood, when people re-evaluate their lives thus far, although such an explanation does read like a, "What have I done with my life?" cry of desperation rather than self-improvement. There is doubt as to the empirical grounding of these models. Rush et al (1980 p347), for example, found that whilst employers' attitudes conformed to the stereotypical notions of age reflected in the model offered by Levinson et al, there was little or no evidence to suggest that such stereotypes reflected the *reality* of being a given age. However, it would be naive to assume that a lack of empirical support alone will eradicate a stereotype.

Both Levinson et al and Selim are putting forward what appear to be plausible models for a social structure of life, and if these models are in any way representative then necessarily the mature student is a life-cycle deviant, and as undergraduates they hold the status almost of freaks. However, Levinson et al suggest that the mind is at its sharpest in early adulthood, and if this was the case one would expect the mature student to perform less well compared to his or her younger peers, especially when one considers that a mature student may well have other life-events to contend with whilst studying; partners and children spring immediately to mind. Is this in fact the case?

Available evidence would seem to suggest quite the opposite. For instance, Phillips (1986, p292) points out that in his survey of the entrance qualifications of mature students of five different (unspecified) higher education institutions, 47% had 2

or more A levels, 13% had Higher National Diploma or equivalent, 14% had degree level qualifications already, and 2% had postgraduate qualifications. On the other hand, only 7% had no academic qualifications, and only another 4% had less than 4 O levels. He goes on to point out that students aged between 25 and 44 make choices about education using exactly the same criteria as their traditional entry peers, career enhancement primarily. Lucas and Ward (1985 p153) found that in the age range of 23-29, 56.8% of entrants had at least 6 points at A level matriculation (at least one "C" grade, or one "D" and one "E").

Moreover, several researchers have found that mature students actually outperform the traditionals. Woodley (1984 pp35-50) found that mature students aged 21-25 gained marginally fewer firsts or upper seconds than traditional entrants (31% against 33%) but that the 26-30 age group was more successful than the traditionals with 37% gaining firsts or upper seconds. Maynard (1992 p108) found that her mature students performed better almost from the very start of their course, and finished with results between 3% and 8% clear of the traditionals. Winford Hicks, course director at City University, has this to say:

> Many young people go to university because they don't know what else to do with their lives. I'm in favour of young people bumming around, and travelling to Australia and doing bar jobs *before* university. In my experience, mature students are among the best because they have a clear idea of what they want to do. (Quoted in McFerran, 1996, p9)

Indeed, Knowles (1983, p53) suggests that traditional notions of pedagogy are out of place because adult learners (his term*) are always more motivated and do not need external motivation and/or cajoling in the way that children (and indeed some traditional age undergraduates) do, and the problem with `adult' education as it currently stands is that adults are treated like children. Knowles argues for a new teaching art of `andragogy', the `teaching *of adults*' (the sexism of the term is regrettable, but his point is noted). Lucas and Ward (1995, p153) came to similar conclusions, adding that mature students were also less likely to fail or get low marks. They offer a more detailed breakdown of performance difference (percentages are the differences in mean scores between traditionals and matures, with the matures always doing better) by subject;

Environmental Sciences	13%
English	8%
German	7%
Engineering	5%
Social Administration	5%

So much for the myth that mature students are less able than traditionals. Perhaps it would be interesting to view such findings in a little more depth. How do mature students differ by sex? Do their class backgrounds differ radically from traditionals? Which subjects do they choose? Let us now consider such matters.

* In this case `adult' is taken not to include traditional age undergraduates.

Life Chances and The Mature Student

i) *Sex*

In 1992, women comprised 47% of the total number of mature students (all age groups) in British universities - a rise of 15% since 1982. This breaks down as 27,500 men between 21 and 24 years at entry to full-time higher education (universities, polytechnics and colleges) and 29,500 over 25, against 19,100 women between 21 and 24 and 31,000 over 25. In part-time higher education there were 21,000 men between 21 and 24 and 52,000 over 25, against 15,500 women between 21 and 24 and 54,300 over 25 (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Mature Students by Age and Sex in Higher Education in 1992 (adapted from Department for Education figures for 1992 (1994b))

	21 - 24 years	Over 25 years	Total Mature Undergraduates
Men (full time) :	27,500	29,500	57,000
Women (full time)	19,100	31,000	50,100
Men (part time)	21,000	52,000	73,000
Women (part time):	15,500	54,300	69,800
	83,100 (33.25%)	166,800 (66.75%)	249,900 (100%)

These figures are somewhat problematic, given that the classification "over 25" covers such a heterogeneous range of people. However, they suggest that in full time higher education, it is generally women over 25 who are the predominant female mature students whilst, in part-time study, both sexes are far more equally represented in the over 25s group. This appears to be consistent with the notion that the under 25s are more able to move (back) into full-time education because of having fewer

commitments in their lives than over 25s. However, given that "over 25" could mean a person of anything from age 25 to 80 or more, the figures may indeed hide other trends.

Given that the number of 21-24 year old males in full-time higher education is not significantly different from the number of over 25s, and given also that the number of 21-24 females studying full-time is approximately two-thirds of the over 25s, perhaps these statistics are blinding us to other trends. Perhaps the lower number of 21-24 year old females, compared with males, is because women of this age, for whatever reason, are less able to pursue an undergraduate course than comparably aged men. The greater number of over 25 females in full-time higher education would seem to suggest that it is easier for older women (but again, we don't know exactly how old) to enter than younger women. This could support Maynard's (1992 p109) notion that mature students who ask for such necessities as child care facilities are considered "whingers" (see also Phillips, 1986, p300) and generally ignored. Female mature students also may not always receive the approval and support of their spouses. Elsey (1982 p73) found that among married female mature students many said that they were expected to cope with academic work plus an unchanged (and unaided) domestic routine* - one could suppose that only when childcare is less of a problem (that is, when the children are old enough to fend for themselves) can mothers feel free to enter higher education.

* James (1996, p459) gives the examples of `Sandra' and `Sophia', whose parents and other relatives were wary of them going to university lest it interfere with their `jobs' as wives and mothers. Sandra's mother-in-law is quoted as saying that `a mother really has got better things to do with her time (than study)'.

Furthermore, many female mature students appear to be disappointed by their experiences of university. In her sample of Women's Studies students (six women between the ages of 26 and 34, including herself) at Lancaster University, Karach (1992 pp312-315) found that the women found it hard to maintain a sense of personal identity in an institution where they were placed in an undifferentiated mass within the total undergraduate community by the staff, and where they were not respected as adults with useful life experience. Moreover, these women lamented the fact that the academic system effectively placed them in competition with each other, rather than allowing them to collaborate on (and thus derive pleasure from) academic work. Indeed, De Wolfe (1989 p50) comes to similar conclusions, going as far as to say that subjects such as Women's Studies should not be assessed in the normal competitive (masculine) way, as the subject is more about co-operation than anything else. Karach goes on to highlight the sadness and sense of personal "dislocation" felt by women mature students, who feel that they are letting go (at least temporarily) of their true selves, in order to succeed in the objectified and objectifying (and distinctly *masculinised*) world of academia.

However, in Phillips' (1986, pp279-300) study, it was found that women mature students enjoyed far more subjective benefits than their male counterparts (Table 1.2, below), and moreover, all of the women experienced fewer problems than they anticipated (Table 1.3, below).

Table 1.2: Percentage of Full-time Mature Students Who Received Benefits (Phillips, 1986, p297)

	To Some Degree		Considerable	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Developing long lasting friendships.	79	86	15	18
Ability to work alongside people of different ages and backgrounds.	84	89	20	27
Broader perspective of local community and society in general	79	83	22	32
Personal culture of knowledge acquisition and learning.	89	95	31	47

Table 1.3: Percentage of Full-time Females who anticipated and encountered problems (Phillips, 1986, p298)

	Anticipated	Encountered
Quantity of work required	84	74
Readjusting to the relative freedom of studying	52	38
Identifying the standard of performance required	83	70
Studying alongside younger people	42	13
Settling into the routine of college life	56	30
Dealing with additional pressures imposed by family commitments	71	65

It would therefore appear, at least from the evidence of Phillips' study, that female mature students encounter fewer problems and perform far better than they expect. However, Phillips concedes that there may be other factors involved, such as the fact that males and females may not be studying the same subjects, and that females may indeed choose particular courses purely because they fit in with their childcare arrangements. Phillips further concedes that if the latter is the case, then female mature students may be sacrificing opportunities for advancement in employment at the expense of immediate expediency. There may also be social psychological factors involved: perhaps female mature students are less likely to complain about apparent injustices than males, accepting them as part of the overall academic experience. Perhaps too, the females are less competitive than the males, and are studying for the education rather than the degree - an important distinction. Bearing all of this in mind, Phillip's study, whilst interesting, can hardly be seen as definitive.

ii) *Social Class*

> The right to freedom of speech has little real substance if, from lack of education, you have nothing to say that is worth saying, and no means of making yourself heard if you say it. (Marshall T., 1950, p21)

At this point, consideration must given to the persistence of elitism in higher education. Why is it that higher education, despite the vast expansion of the places available, remains impotent in eradicating elitism? Why should higher education be measured in terms of the Oxbridge ideal - with every other institution (and consequently staff and students therein) found wanting? For example, are such tables as `The Times

Good Universities Guide' (1993, pp 67-70) at all helpful in this, when Oxford and Cambridge are placed at the top with all other universities ranking beneath them - and significantly, all of the new universities ranking below all of the traditional ones? Does this actually suggest inherent superiority, or merely that the criteria for measurement are skewed towards measuring the characteristics of elite institutions so that all others are found wanting? Moreover, is not the very idea of ranking institutions tempting a self-fulfilling prophecy; the elite institutions attracting most of the funding and best staff and students and therefore maintaining an elite status, with the non-elite institutions taking what is left and remaining second best. What effect does this elitism have on the potential applicants to the universities and on the eventual students? Specifically, in this context, what of the working class mature student?

Education, in particular higher education, has long been held to be a predominantly middle-class institution. A century ago, Veblen (1899, pp225-228) was drawing comparisons between the university hierarchy and its fond attachment to the symbolism of rank and status that university education offered (graduation ceremonies, caps and gowns, titles etc.) and the esoteric rituals of initiation used by priests and/or shamans in barbaric (his term) societies where knowledge was obtainable only after initiation. Veblen suggested that `higher learning' was merely another example of `conspicuous consumption' (that is to say, consumption publicly performed as a way of maintaining an outwardly observable social status rather than consumption for the satisfaction of need) and as such, higher education was simply a way for the `leisure

classes'* to preserve a sense of mystique through `esoteric' knowledge. Because of this leisure class dimension to higher education, education could under no circumstances be `useful' or `practical', as this would have been the height of vulgarity.

Moreover, he contends that where educational establishments have been built in lower class (again, his term) areas, they may begin to teach `practical' knowledge, but with increased prosperity, and indeed increased numbers of young members of the leisure classes, that which is taught is likely to become more and more non-practical, as the establishments drift towards traditionalism. Given all of this, one could reasonably suggest that universities were designed to be training grounds for middle and upper class youth to prepare for their status in the `adult' world. Gorz (1982, p3) suggests that `leisure' is itself changing as society is now made up of an aristocracy of `tenured' workers in permanent employment, a growing mass of the permanently unemployed, and a proletariat (his choice of word) in the middle carrying out the least skilled, the least desirable, temporary jobs. As such, `leisure' is something forced upon people, and thus a `leisure class' is not to be envied. In this way, the traditional students could be seen as a *Veblenian* leisure class, whilst the matures might be a *Gorzian* one. Traditionals, in this model, would be a leisure class because they would be in a position to enjoy their time at university with little to worry about, because their pathway into elite careers was already mapped out by parental `string pulling' and the mere fact of

* Veblen conceptualises the leisure classes as comprising the whole of the "noble and priestly classes, together with much of their retinue". He speaks of their occupations as being diverse but principally non-industrial (p1). As such I shall be taking his definition as being interchangeable with such labels as "middle" and "upper" class.

having a degree would be no more than a confirmation of leisure class status. The mature students, on the other hand, would be a leisure class because of their disenfranchisement from the world of work, and thus they would need to work hard and achieve high standards at university for their own survival in the labour market. In both cases, the term `leisure' is problematic, since it implies both choice and (arguably) recreation.

In a very real sense, the young working class person would be considered out of place in such a (*Veblenian*) `leisure' institution. A working class mature student is likely to be even more alien (and alienated) in such a place. The complexities of the relationship between class and educational attainment are well known and documented: Bernstein (1970, pp171-174: 1971, pp106-108) argues that working class underachievement in schools is a result of class based linguistic deficit - working class `restricted' codes being insufficient (or provocative) in the school where middle class `elaborated' codes are the expected norm. However, Bernstein's theories have been criticised (Tizard and Hughes, 1984, p136, Tizard et al, 1988, p236) for their stereotypical assumptions of the nature of communication within working class families, and for assuming that parents who are monosyllabic in front of teachers will be the same elsewhere - such parents may be intimidated by teachers, but more confident to converse in the privacy of their own homes.

There is also the oddity of the value accorded by working class people to a system which appears to offer them very little. White (1997, p4) notes the irony of former Prime Minister John Major, who left school at 16, seeking to put "a grammar school in every town" thus bolstering the very system which failed him.

One must also consider how far deliberate rejection of what schooling offers by the working class is a factor. As far back as the 1930s, Tawney (1931, p106) referred to "proletarian snobbery", which made working class people more interested in the activities of the nation's elite than in improving their own poor social status. Willis (1977 p52) studied working class boys in a Wolverhampton secondary modern school. He found that the culture from which these boys emerged was based upon the practical being considered more worthwhile than the intellectual*, where "strength", "toughness" and "masculinity" were laudable aims. Thus, education was rejected as a waste of time, and a culture of "delinquescence", as Furlong (1985, p174) puts it, was embraced instead. Presumably, there may have been some who would secretly have desired what education had to offer, but were held in check by peer pressure, though this is never explicitly suggested. What is suggested is that such class forms are a self-fulfilling prophecy; witness the quote from one of the boys, speaking of his own disruptive, disrespectful activities:

Spansky: If any of my kids are like this, here, I'll be pleased. (ibid, p12).

* See also Keddie N. (1971, p138) for similar findings.

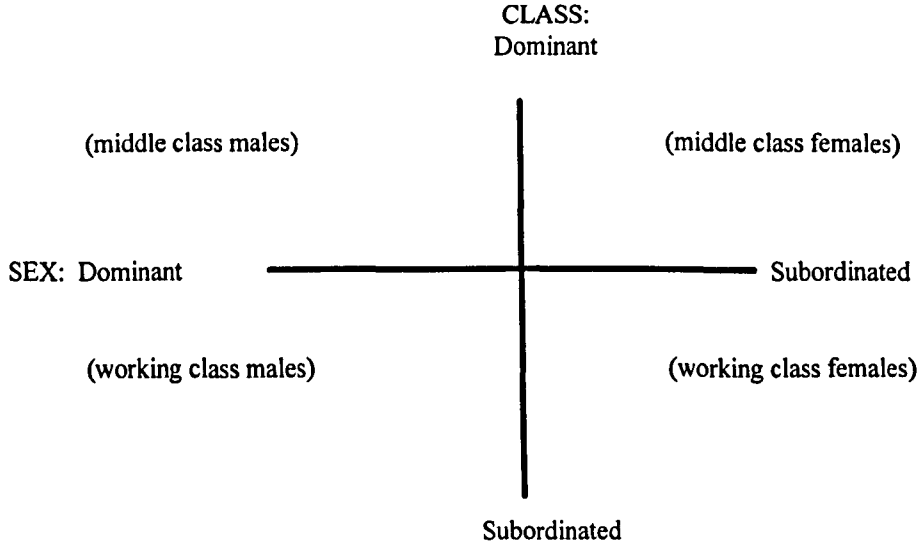
It is a matter for conjecture as to whether this would be true. However, what the whole book suggests is that working class culture is inherently oppositional to educational (predominantly middle class) forms. However, what makes this thesis interesting is that later, having left school, found work and started families, some of the "lads" started expressing regret at their wasted educational opportunities (pp 107/8). One wonders whether some of these "lads", or people like them, feeling such remorse, eventually took up evening classes and attempted to get into higher education. If so, was the working class culture from which they emanated and in which they lived still going to be oppositional within the higher education sector? After all, much university work is anything but practical, being for the most part based on face to face, verbal interaction. Could the working class mature student, experiencing higher education for the first time, come to see it as just as "valueless" as schooling was? Moreover if, as Ainley (1994, p77) suggests, higher education is a process of becoming `more middle class', then the working class mature undergraduate could be placed in the position of having his or her class background seen as inadequate and in need of change, and his or her age rendered deviant in a `youth' environment. The question could be framed, are working class mature students latter day Jude The Obscures (knowledge hungry but stifled by an elitist class based system) or, as Giddens (1996*) claims, merely disinterestedly filling in time

* Concluding plenary address at the conference on `Dilemmas of Mass Higher Education', Staffordshire University, April 12th 1996. Giddens claims that `lifelong learning' is a sham, and that mature students are merely, as he puts it `parking themselves' away from the job market temporarily, because doing something is better than doing nothing. He does not appear to believe that mature students have any particular interest in their studies and he certainly does not appear to value them *as* students. Giddens, in response to Rustin, the previous speaker at this conference, described himself as a `traditional' intellectual. Rustin offered the axis of `traditional' (elitist, exclusive) and `organic' (expansionary, nclusive) intellectuals in H.E. That Giddens was happy to define himself in this way speaks reams.

between jobs, treating a university education as little more than a comfortable alternative to the dole queue*.

The effects (or indeed, injuries) of class pertaining to education are even more apparent when one places class on a theoretical axis against sex, as I have attempted in FIG 1.2 (below):

FIG 1.2: Theoretical Axis of Class/Sex in School Education



Haythorne (1991, p52), Byrnes (1977, p1) and Payne (1983 pp13-16, 19) offer autobiographical insights into the position of the working class girl in school. Haythorne was from a working class family in West Yorkshire in the 1940s and was denied the chance to go to the 'posh' grammar school by her mother who claimed that educating a girl was a waste of time:

* As Ainley (1994, p29) points out, universities have expanded drastically (including large numbers of mature students) but that class make-up of the student body is still overwhelmingly from Registrar General's classes 1 and 2. This suggests that mature students may also be predominantly middle class.

> If you think I'm going begging to give her high falutin' ways you're wrong. Anyway, what sort of life do you think she'd have at the posh school if they knew we had to beg for her to get there? No! It's not as though it was one of the lads that had passed. She's a lass and she'd no sooner get through school than she'd be getting married; then where's her education gone, down the bloody washtub with the mucky nappies. Leave well alone.

Witness also the reported feelings of Byrnes' father:

> He told me I didn't have to learn to read and write because of the simplest reason I was a girl and would grow up to be married and have babies. (ibid)

Thus it appears that, as working class girls, both Haythorne and Byrnes had to attempt to overcome parental class values which included sexism, pride (in Haythorne's case, refusing to send her to a school they could not afford without outside help) and pragmatism about their expected future roles as wives and mothers*. Indeed, evidence suggests that female teachers have similar difficulties: Al Khalifa (1989, p81) suggests that female teachers are treated as "pin-money professionals" whose ultimate vocation in life is childrearing, and whose career in teaching is little more than a temporary diversion. She goes on to point out that until World War II a marriage bar existed on female teachers - a female teacher who married was subject to dismissal. It is little surprise therefore that the experience of learning is gendered, as female role models appear to give up (or be forced to give up) everything at the first opportunity.

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* Consider also the role of mothers in creating such mindsets in their daughters. Greer (1971, pp86-87) speaks of the forced feminization of little girls by their mothers, turning them into passive acceptors of an implied masculine superiority.

Unlike both the "lads" in Willis's Wolverhampton study and Haythorne, Payne came from an aspirational working class family, which valued education not merely instrumentally, for its utilitarian ends of gaining access to better jobs/careers, but also for its own sake. However she notes that her success was less valued than her brother's, and that the grammar school forced a double cultural life upon working class girls (forcing them to speak one way at home and another way at school) and to subjugate most aspects of their femininity, as femininity and scholastic success were held to be incompatible. Keddie (1971, p137), for example, found that teachers expect academic ability and social class to be mutually inclusive entities - that is to say, teachers assume that high academic ability is linked to high social class background, and low academic ability is linked to lower social class background. Thus, being successful in a (middle class) grammar school requires the working class pupil to lead a double life - indeed a double cultural life. This is compounded in the case of the working class girl, who is forced to sacrifice her gender identity to the demands of the school and to straddle two cultural worlds, whilst possibly ultimately being wholly in neither. Payne conceded that these single-sex grammar schools were very good at getting their young, female charges into higher education, but the question begs, *at what cost*? These girls, already straddling two opposing cultures, are now sent into the world of higher education (the middle-class grammar school culture writ even larger). Given that 'university' in Britain, at least for the time being, is taken to mean a three or four year long residential course some distance from one's home, this pulling between middle class (educational) and working class (home and family) cultures is likely to be even more keenly felt (see also

James, 1995, p459). Moreover, Payne observed that the sexism which is ingrained in the ethos of the school remains unchallenged in the university, and that no matter how well the female undergraduate performs, she is still prescribed for the role of wife and mother after graduation. This being the case, a mature student who already *is* a wife and mother is placed in a very contradictory role position.

Parkin (1972, p62) discussed the grammar and secondary modern school division of pupils, and highlighted how they (the schools) functioned to create social solidarity.

> What is significant ... is that the two types of school serve not simply to educate the young for future positions, but also to instil into them appropriate levels of aspiration and expectation. So far as the secondary modern school or its equivalent is concerned, one of its main socialising effects is to lower the ambitions of those who pass through it to accord with the opportunities in the labour market. ... The experience of the minority funnelled off for grammar schools and their equivalent is (that) these children tend to cherish much higher hopes for the future and are altogether much more optimistic about their chances of success. Indeed there is some evidence to suggest that grammar school education tends to expand future ambitions; this ... is especially true of working class children entering grammar school.

Parkin concluded by stating that the secondary modern school fulfilled a "useful and humane function in psychologically preparing future members of the underclass for the harsh realities of the world awaiting them outside the school gates" (ibid)* . Kitch

* Bowles and Gintis (1976, p11) made a near-identical observation about American schools, suggesting that it is the perceived meritocracy of schools which allow the real inequality which they enshrine to go unchallenged. Duane (1970, p49) has described the British school system as "a systematically ruthless conditioning of children for adult roles geared to the production of material wealth for a section of our society, rather than for the extension of civilised standards for all."

(1996, p11), in her autobiography, indicates how bright working class children were treated when she was at school (early 1950s):

> As I continued at school I became aware that I was very bright. I was often punished by caning for being disruptive (which meant I asked "why?" a lot). (Kitch, 1996, p11)

Indeed, as Griggs (1989, p65) has commented, the introduction of the comprehensive system did little to change this class bias, because many local authorities set up comprehensives, but retained grammar schools, and thus the comprehensives became little more than secondary moderns with a new and inclusive sounding name.

Having given consideration to both macro and micro aspects of schooling, it is manifestly clear that working class children suffer a double disadvantage. There is the cultural "drag factor" of working class anti-intellectualism, and the very nature of the school system itself - cultural and social reproducer of capitalism, no less. However, Furlong (1985, p176) warns against falling back on this kind of functionalism too far, simply because schools spend vast amounts of time and money trying to convince working class children that education is the way to self-improvement. It is the cultural totality, rather than specific subcultural forms which must be considered. As such it is not so much the agency of resistance of the pupils themselves, but its role as response to the school structure which is significant in cultural reproduction.

There is evidence to suggest that egalitarian reforms of education in Britain have counter-intuitively had the effect of making working class attainment (relative to middle class) harder than it already was. Heath (1987, pp13-15) has suggested that whilst *overall* educational attainment has continued to rise, it is the middle class children whose attainment has risen the most. He suggests that schools' rhetoric on reform is stronger than their action, and that middle class parents push their children harder to maximise attainment, which reduces the impact of egalitarianism on the career outcomes and eventual lifestyles of children. Pyle (1975, p159) suggested that egalitarian policies are rarely associated with egalitarian outcomes. It is worth pointing out that these are two relatively old studies. Much may have changed in the intervening decade, or two decades respectively. The question is, have recent reforms in higher education had an egalitarian outcome, or does university expansion simply mean more degrees for the children of the professional classes? Some suspect the latter, given that the expansion of places in higher education in the early 1990s was followed by the savage cuts in the student maintenance grant (10% in each of the years 1994 to 1996), the introduction of £1000 per year top-up fees from 1998 and, in the case of mature students, from 1996 the phasing out of the mature students' allowance. So whilst the expansion of places may well have been an egalitarian gesture, the 'elitist' gestures which followed may have nullified the effect, leaving us with nothing more than an expanded elite. In other words, the education minister giveth and the treasury taketh away. Shadow Chancellor (now Chancellor) Gordon Brown MP (1996, p13) claimed that a Labour government would intervene at all levels to eradicate inequality of

opportunity. He further claimed that at best what was happening at the moment was that the poor were `compensated' (via the welfare state) for their inequality, but in fact little, if anything, was being done to correct the problem, and indeed inequality was widening in the early 1990s faster than ever before.

The evidence offered by Willis and by Keddie would lead one to hypothesise that the traditional entry students are overwhelmingly not working class. Indeed, as Ainley (1994, p29) points out, at the end of the 1980s, two thirds of undergraduates were still from classes I and II, whilst only one per cent of children from unskilled manual backgrounds reached university. It seems, therefore, that educational expansion may mean not equalisation of opportunity, but more for those who already have it, although Ainley does concede that the balance is very slowly shifting towards a greater minority working class participants in higher education. However, what of mature students and class? Table 1.4 (below) offers a breakdown of 1995 U.C.A.S. acceptances by class and age.

Table 1.4: Social Class of Accepted Home Applicants for Full-time Degree Courses by Age, Entry (Source: U.C.A.S., Department of Research and Statistics)

	Under 21		Over 21	
Social Class	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
I	31287	17	5326	10
II	78068	42	17361	31
IIINM	21178	11	6254	11
IIIM	28071	15	10251	18
IV	12662	7	4775	9
V	2950	2	1396	2
Unknown	11357	6	10524	19
Total	*185533*	*100*	*55887*	*100*

As can be seen from the above figures, among the traditional age applicants (the under 21 group) the largest group accepted to university in 1995 came from class II, followed by class I with the rest some way behind numerically. Of the mature students, again, of all of the social class groups it was class II which predominated, but class IIIM was the second largest group. It should be noted than in each age category there are substantial numbers of `not known' groups, which means any assumptions made about the class make-up of the undergraduate community must be qualified by the fact that 21,901 out of the total number of 240,710 (nearly 10%) are unaccounted for.

Ainley (1994, pp 46-59) has suggested that even in the "traditional" universities, mature students are generally of working class origin and in that sense they are more like the students at the "new" universities, and moreover goes on to suggest that as mature student numbers rise, the typical stereotype of the "boarding school" leaver is likely to change. However, the U.C.A.S. figures above do not support Ainley's hypothesis, which throws some doubt on this theory. He goes on to suggest that in the "new" universities,

such stereotypes are less prevalent, as far greater numbers of mature and/or working class students are present: "new" university undergraduates tend to be in attendance at their local institution, older, of more diverse ethnic origin and working class. However, the downside of this is that such institutions are perceived to be of lesser quality than the traditional universities.

iii) *Race/Ethnicity*

A preliminary point to note in regard to race and higher education is that the large numbers of non-white overseas students in British universities may disguise the representation of UK-based ethnic minorities. That said, according to Carvel (1996 p6) domestic applications from Asians (predominantly those of Indian and Pakistani ethnic origin) now account for almost 9% of total applications (1996/7 entry*), and a further 3.1% were from Afro-Caribbean students. In each case, applications were roughly twice the level of the population ratio (to whites) in total. These figures, however, do not give the ages of these applicants, so the question is, are these minority applications from the same age groups as the white applications? A further question is, how many of these ethnic minority applicants are successful, and where do they go to study?

A 1982 study of ethnic minority graduates of the Council for National Academic Awards (those from the former polytechnics and colleges of higher education) found

* Gupta (1977, p185) claimed that school-leaving boys and girls of Asian ethnic origin have generally higher educational and vocational aspirations than white children of the same age. If, twenty years later, this is still the case, then the higher levels of university applications among Asian school leavers is no surprise.

that, as a percentage, Afro-Caribbean students were dramatically older than white students (mostly over 35 years) and that Asians were about as numerous as U.K. whites in most mature student groupings, although as a percentage there were twice as many Asians in the 30-34 age group as U.K. whites (Brennan and McGeevor 1987 page 17). What these figures suggest is that U.K. ethnic minority graduates are generally older than U.K. whites, with 50% of Afro-Caribbeans and 45% of Asians being above 30 years of age as opposed to only 35% of U.K. whites. Of the 2640 graduates in the 1982 study, 6% were non-white which corresponds roughly to the general population percentage but, as already suggested, many of these may be from overseas (Brennan and McGeevor 1987 p10). Likewise, Modood (1993, pp 171/2) indicates that whilst minority ethnic representation in higher education is, as a ratio, getting better, and is indeed better now than ever before, there is still a disparity of representation across subjects (minorities are disproportionately represented in non-vocational subjects) and lower status institutions. Schuller (1995, p8) points out that minorities are concentrated in the 'new' universities.

It is also worth noting that the figures quoted by Carvel may be disguising certain gender based trends. Pool (1997, p 8/9), referring to U.C.A.S. figures for 1995 entrance, notes that of all the sex/ethnic groups it is in fact white females who are the least numerous in proportion to their numbers in the general population, and that 12% of white females have a higher education qualification of some kind, compared with a combined figure of 13% of women from all ethnic minority groups and 15% of white

men. This information, combined with that of Brennan and McGeevor on age disparities between ethnicities, suggests that analysis of relative lack of access (or otherwise) to higher education for minority groups is a complex task.

It could thus be hypothesised that the problem for non-whites in the UK higher education system is not so much access per se, as percentage participation roughly mirrors national population percentages, but access at the "right time". Perhaps one could hypothesise that a generally racist school system is responsible, as well as cultural factors associated with both race and class background*. For instance, Furlong (1985, pp213-226) found that Afro-Caribbean school boys, like Willis' "lads" did not (at least outwardly) appear to value their school, formed similar role boundaries between themselves and the harder-working students (including taking on their own linguistic forms), demonstrated similar anti-social behavioural tendencies ("physical and verbal confrontation") but surprisingly they placed a high value on the qualifications to be obtained from education. Furlong goes on to suggest that at least part of the explanation lay in the liberal comprehensivism of the school in which his study was done, where streaming was not overt, and thus pupils were shielded from the visibility of their failure until the last possible moment. However, this cannot reasonably be the whole story, and Furlong does subsequently offer the explanation that Afro-Caribbean culture, especially

* Halsey (1995, p164) suggests that in terms of access to higher education per se, ethnicity is not necessarily a barrier; more likely it is the "asymmetric fit of race to class" which needs to be addressed, and as such he proposes that positive discrimination in favour of the working class in access to higher education would improve ethnic minority access.

the mother's role as "pursuer of respectability", must not be underestimated. Afro-Caribbean boys were brought up to have a high regard for the "respectability" of qualifications (p182), and thus these boys had to somehow straddle upbringing and peer pressure - in other words, such a boy had to "work hard in class *and* flout the rules of the school to develop a reputation as a man" (p183). This interesting anomaly could be part of the reason why there are so many Afro-Caribbean mature students - perhaps, having lost the opportunity for attainment within school it is only later that they can reach the goals to which they aspire. Perhaps one should also consider the role of peer pressure in schools as an attainment inhibitor. There is likely to be less of this in the "adult" world to cause problems for the mature student.

It must be borne in mind that Brennan and McGeevor's figures are just for the former polytechnics and colleges of higher education, and so ignore figures for traditional universities. However, they suggest that non-white British mature students are a rare commodity in the other (traditional) universities, and this is an issue which must be borne in mind during the course of any research. However, there is evidence to suggest that it is indeed the former polytechnics/new universities in which the largest concentration of non-white U.K. undergraduates is to be found. Ainley (1994, p30) shows that ethnic minority participation in an institution or course is inversely related to its status. Thus, the more non-white students, the less value the institution is seen to have. Ainley goes on to suggest that as the majority of non-white undergraduates are mature students with family commitments, the drop-out rate is likely to be significantly

higher than for white, traditional age students. The students in Ainley's sample were not oblivious to their status either, witness the feelings of this black student from Ainley's "Inner City" university:-

> Because it's got a bad name, they attract a lot of black and ethnic minority students and when I was applying people said, "Oh, you'll easily get in there", and they're always boasting how they've got 45% ethnic minorities and the lecturers really live on that, you know, and that really pisses me off 'cos it's ironic that most of them are white. (Ainley, 1994, p59)

Clearly this student was very aware that he was being condescended to by his chosen institution.

So the evidence suggests that there are "sufficient" ethnic minority graduates and undergraduates but that the majority of them are older than their U.K. white counterparts, and from less prestigious institutions. What of their experiences after graduation? Table 1.5 (below) offers some insight:

Table 1.5: Type of work undertaken by 1982 C.N.A.A. graduates (Adapted from Brennan and McGeevor (1987) pages 24 and 25).

	U.K. Afro-Caribbean	U.K. Asian	U.K. White
Admin Management	21	11	12
R and D Science	0	7	3
R and D Engineering	8	6	5
Science support	0	7	5
Env planning	17	1	7
Marketing and sales	4	3	6
Management services	0	7	5
Financial	8	8	7
Legal	0	0	0
Information	0	1	5
Personnel	0	0	1
Soc, Med, services	13	31	13
Teaching/lecturing	4	3	5
Entertainment	0	1	2
Artistic design	8	0	6
Other non-professional	17	13	19
	=100%	=100%	=100%

The greatest single concentration of Asian graduates is in the social and medical services, which are generally vocational and related to specific courses. I would tentatively posit that this is a reflection of proportionally more Asian students enrolling in these courses. he greatest concentration of Afro-Caribbean graduates is in administration and management followed by environmental planning, and the greatest concentration of whites is in "other non-professional" work. The most interesting facts to be gleaned from these figures are that apparently none of the Afro-Caribbeans took up jobs in science, as opposed to 7% of Asians and 3% of whites, and that the proportion of Afro-Caribbean graduates in environmental planning vastly exceeded the proportions of both Asians and whites. Other than these, the figures show variance within only a few percentage points across the three groups, which suggests that employer prejudice does

not stop non-whites obtaining graduate jobs. However, such figures cannot illustrate prejudice within the graduate career structure (pay grades and promotion prospects) and neither do they assess the relative merits of these graduates. Are there, for example, more Afro-Caribbeans and Asians with first class degrees in the financial sector than whites? Do whites obtain more prestigious jobs with lesser degrees? Is the "other non-professional" cluster of Asian graduates, as Ainley (1994, p97) suggests, evidence of graduates failing to find "graduate" jobs and falling back on their families' businesses*? As it stands, Brennan and McGeevor's evidence cannot, unfortunately, answer these questions.

The work of Jones (1993, pp6/7) should be considered at this point. He dismisses the terms "ethnic minority" and "black" as being wholly inadequate due to the differential attainments and status of the various minority groups. He finds that 33% of whites between 16 and 24 are educated to A level or higher as opposed to 36% of Indians, 41% of African Asians, and 44% of Chinese. However, he finds that other groups lag well behind in terms of attainment, with only 18% of Pakistanis and 5% of Bangladeshis reaching A level or higher. What Jones is arguing is that whilst it is undeniable that ethnic minority groups as a whole are subject to prejudice in almost every social sphere, it is not merely such discrimination which determines their

* It is worth noting that Pool (1997, p8) found that unemployment was twice as high for black graduates as for whites. Significantly also, Finn (1985, p121) in an earlier study found the same trend in vocational training, with far more ethnic minority Y.T.S. trainees in lower, "non-employee" status positions than whites.

circumstances; cultural factors, group class structures and length of time spent in Britain by the groups must also be considered.

iv) *Status*

The effects of class are relatively easy to identify. Class membership on an objective (though not always subjective) level is quite fluid; one can theoretically change one's class whenever one changes job. For instance a shop-steward being promoted to management moves (objectively) from working to middle class immediately. However, the effects of status are somewhat harder to detect. In the case of mature students, their "age" status is impossible to change - one cannot make oneself younger after all - and if such students are perceived as being of lesser quality than their 18-21 year old counterparts then such a status can never be changed. The best that mature students could hope for would be a change in the *perception* of their status. Change in status would have to be the product of a macro-level revaluation of mature student worth. Thus, in the Weberian sense, age status can be transposed upon class, sex, race and other groupings such as able-bodied/disabled, to reduce the status of the individual within the higher education system*.

However, does this hypothesized reduction in overall status affect life chances after graduation? In Ainley's study, student respondents considered that university was a

* Crozier and Garbert-Jones (1996, p196) found that the first thing mature students need to overcome is a feeling of innate social, cultural and intellectual inferiority compared with both traditional age students and with tutors. They suggest that a long period away from education had made them unsure of themselves and their abilities.

process of becoming less working class, if not always more middle class. If this is a realistic account, and a university education provides access to better jobs, can we say that the mature student does as well as the traditional entrant? Are the same vistas of opportunity which (supposedly) present themselves to 21 year old graduates available to (for example) newly graduated 30 year olds?

Tarsh (1989, p582) suggested that employers may, in a prospering labour market, value the past work experience of a mature graduate, although this would be dependent upon whether or not the experience was relevant to the job on offer. However, given an ample supply of younger graduates, such as we have now in the 1990s, employers may be less likely to "risk" employing an older graduate. Older graduates are perceived as less easy to train and unwilling to take orders from someone who may be their chronological junior. He goes on to point out that mature students tend to be concentrated in non-vocational subject areas - the arts and humanities are clear examples of this. As such, the mature graduate is to a large extent subject to the whims of market forces. Tarsh offers a breakdown of mature graduates by age and discipline (see Tables 1.6 and 1.7 below; figures for graduates over 42 have been omitted).

Table 1.6: Age* and destinations of new UK (Traditional) University Graduates of Full-time degree courses 1987. Adapted from Tarsh (1989) page 585.

	MEN				WOMEN			
Age:	<23	23-26	27-32	33-42	<23	23-26	27-32	33-42
Education	-	1	1	1	2	3	2	3
Other Soc. Science	8	6	13	18	14	9	22	31
Other Arts	6	5	8	11	8	5	8	12
Theology	-	1	6	7	1	1	2	2
(Sub Total)	*15*	*12*	*28*	*37*	*24*	*17*	*34*	*48*
Engineering	18	20	14	4	3	2	1	-
Business	9	6	3	5	7	4	3	3
Science	32	16	14	12	21	10	7	3
Medical	-	17	11	4	-	20	10	-
Law	5	3	4	7	6	3	6	5
Languages	5	9	6	10	16	25	16	15
Professional	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
Agriculture etc.	1	3	2	2	2	3	2	-
Para-Medical	1	1	2	2	5	4	4	3
Creative Arts	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	2
Multi-Discipline	10	9	10	14	13	10	13	12
All=100%	22,552	10,489	1,029	525	17,137	7,783	699	606

* N.B. A full-time first year undergraduate of 21 will graduate (generally) at age 24; thus for the purposes of this thesis the graduate age range to be considered in terms of first career destination is the 24-43 years (44 for 4 year courses, 45 for 5 year courses etc.). However, given that 5 year courses tend to be in highly competitive subjects such as Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Studies, it is unlikely that mature students will be found therein, and it can be fairly safely assumed that the vast majority of mature students are on 3 year courses.

Table 1.7: Age and distribution of new UK Polytechnic Graduates of Full-time degree courses 1987. Adapted from Tarsh (1989) page 585.

	MEN				WOMEN			
Age:*	<23	23-26	27-32	33-42	<23	23-26	27-32	33-42
Education	1	3	5	11	9	11	15	26
Other Social Science	9	10	15	20	15	20	26	28
Other Arts	4	4	10	13	7	10	15	17
Sub Total	*14*	*17*	*30*	*44*	*30*	*40*	*56*	*71*
Engineering	25	35	30	13	3	3	1	_
Business	16	10	4	5	12	9	6	3
Science	24	19	14	20	16	15	11	7
Creative Arts	8	7	8	5	14	9	14	7
Law	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	4
Languages	2	2	2	3	8	7	5	4
Para Medical	1	1	1	_	4	3	1	1
Professional	6	5	7	5	7	5	5	2
ALL=100%	12,182	2,717	862	412	10,672	1,323	619	617

Tarsh's figures make interesting reading. However, some of the data should be approached with caution: for instance, the figures for medicine would suggest that there are no traditional age graduates, whereas the truth is that it takes longer to graduate in this subject, so an "age-lag" is to be expected (Tarsh fails to take this into account when providing data). Similarly, there appear to be more 23 to 26 year old males than either of the other groups graduating in engineering, but this could be explained by the fact that they may be doing foundation and/or sandwich courses, and thus, like the medical graduates, could be older anyway when they graduate, despite having been traditional age at entry.

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* N.B. A full-time first year undergraduate of 21 will graduate (generally) at age 24; thus for the purposes of this thesis the graduate age range to be considered in terms of first career destination is the 24-43 years (44 for 4 year courses, 45 for 5 year courses etc.). However, given that 5 year courses tend to be in highly competitive subjects such as Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Studies, it is unlikely that mature students will be found therein, and it can be fairly safely assumed that the vast majority of mature students are on 3 year courses.

Department of Education (1994b, p3) figures suggest that in the 1990s a far greater number of mature students attend the "new" rather than the traditional universities (82% in 1992). Conventional wisdom alone would suggest that the generally far lower entrance requirements - and greater possibility for part-time study - would make them more attractive to older students who may not have the requisite (traditional) university entrance qualifications. However Tarsh's study suggests otherwise. It seems that far more mature students attend traditional universities than new universities (polytechnics in Tarsh's model) with roughly four times as many men between 23 and 26 (10,489 to 2,717), and six times as many women between 23 and 26 (7,783 to 1323). The figures for men and women between 27 and 32 are far less dramatic, but there is still a greater number in the traditional universities. Given this, we can deduce that either Ainley's assertion about the mature student being closer in kind to the working class new university/polytechnic student is inaccurate, or that by "mature" he means significantly older than the definition used in this thesis. It must be borne in mind that three-fifths of the Department for Education sample were part-time students (whom Tarsh omits) who are overwhelmingly in the "new" university sector. If one is to examine similarities and differences between traditional and mature students then a generally common frame of reference is necessary. It is also worth pointing out that Tarsh's figures are just for those doing first degrees, whilst the Department for Education figures include 'other undergraduates' (presumably those pursuing Higher National Diplomas, certificates etc., and who will be overwhelmingly in the polytechnic/'new' university sector). In terms of "subject status" we can see that far more of the female

mature students referred to in Tables 1.6 and 1.7 are to be found in the arts and social sciences (see sub-totals) and this increases with the age of the students. Thus, the perception of the subjects as "female" does have some semblance of truth. Having said that, a "feminised" status of anything in a patriarchal society inevitably means a reduced or devalued status, and thus these subjects may be devalued in the eyes of employers (not to mention academic institutions themselves).

The sex split in subject areas is noticeable in both types of institution: in engineering the males of all ages vastly outnumber the females, the reverse being true in education (and no doubt the split occurs within education according to lower primary, upper primary and secondary spheres with males concentrated at the secondary end and females at the lower primary end). The sciences are less dramatically weighted towards male students, although still men outnumber the women in every category in both types of institution. In the "other arts" and "other social sciences" categories, the females in all categories outnumber the males. In the new universities/polytechnics these subjects increase in popularity with age for both sexes, but in the traditional universities they reach a trough in the 23 and 26 age groups (both sexes). In languages the mature females outnumber the males by between 200 and 400% taking each category into consideration.

It can be generally concluded from these figures that females are concentrated in the less directly vocational subject areas (and hence, maybe, less *employable* subject

areas, although this could be an advantage in terms of flexibility of specialisation), and so these "feminised" subjects are likely to be those less valued ultimately, especially considering that education in the 1990s is (necessarily) becoming more and more market orientated. Moreover, it is mature students generally who tend to be clustered in these areas. Hence, the status of a "mature" degree is already likely to be lower than that of a "traditional" degree, simply on the basis of subject choice. However, the twin factors of high graduate availability in the job market currently and the perception of mature graduates as a "risk" ultimately compound the lowered status of the mature graduate, placing him/her at a distinct disadvantage in the world of work. Consequently, the views of the students in Ainley's (1994, p77) sample that they were becoming less working class are possibly inaccurate.

Social Mobility and Mature Study

Clearly, the predominant motivation for entering higher education in the first place (academic interest of course notwithstanding) is the desire for the career opportunities which a degree will grant. However, mobility through education is a very complex process which requires some discussion.

Firstly, we have to consider what education (especially higher education) is for. Is it to provide a meritocratic framework in which the gifted can excel, as suggested by Lord Robbins (1966, p3) for example? Is it part of a system of social engineering (democratic or otherwise) for the maintenance of organic solidarity? Is it a system

constructed for elite preservation? Secondly, we must consider what mobility through education amounts to in the 1990s. Specifically, will a degree give the holder automatic entrance to the best and most rewarding careers? Or is mobility dependent upon other life-chance factors? In particular, how applicable is the concept of mobility through education to mature students and graduates?

Let us first consider the nature of education itself. Issues of mobility, or lack thereof, in education have a history traceable back through several centuries of philosophical debate. Does education conform to the philosophical model offered by Aristotle of the "mean" in his *Politics* essay which assumes neither "a standard of excellence which is above ordinary persons, nor an education which is exceptionally favoured by nature or circumstance ... but having regard to the life in which the majority are able to share"? (in Everson, ed, 1988, p96). Aristotle biographer T.A. Robinson (1995 p105) points out that Aristotle's educational ideal was one where education alone was the "guarantor that people would be admitted into political power on the basis of merit rather than noble ancestry or wealth". As such, education, politics (in its loosest sense) and mobility cannot easily be separated, as education will provide political power through the mobility it grants.

Is this an accurate model of higher education as it stands today? This writer believes a qualified "no" to be the appropriate answer. Certainly there are aspects of British higher education which clearly stem from meritocratic intentions. The very

existence of the Open University springs to mind, it being an institution devoted to learners who may have missed out earlier, curing what Tuckett refers to as the 'Social Darwinism' of education - 'if at first you don't succeed *you don't succeed'* (quoted in Baty, 1998, p6). However, the Open University is but one institution, and there exists a hierarchy of assumed worth of academic institutions with Oxford and Cambridge remaining firmly at the top, and accessible predominantly only to the privileged elite; for example, those who have parents rich enough to send them to expensive independent schools. Christ's, Clare, Corpus Christie, Emmanuel, Homerton, Jesus, New Hall, St Catherines, St Johns, Selwyn and Sidney Sussex colleges of Cambridge University all claim to have a 50/50 split of independent to state schools, whilst Pembroke has a 60% and Gonville and Caius a 65% independent school intake (O'Leary and Cannon, 1993 pp91-104). Such figures can hardly be considered evidence of meritocracy when one considers that only 7%* attend independent schools, and only 24%** of those taking 2 or more A levels (the standard university entrance) are from this sector. Thus the majority appear immediately to be denied access to these colleges by virtue of being state educated. A 50/50 independent/state intake is highly elitist.

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* Source: Halsey A.H. et al (1980, p76) suggest a figure of 6.4%. Blunkett (1996, p2) puts the figure at 7%.

** According to Department for Education figures (1995, pp8-9), of those 17 and 18 year olds taking 2 or more A levels (including with combinations of AS levels) only 26687 out of the total year cohort of 110885 (that is to say, 24%) are from the independent sector. Paxman (1990, p175) points out that the Oxbridge selection procedure, dependent as it is largely upon interviews, is naturally bound to favour the most articulate applicants - which will mostly mean those who have been public school educated. As Hoggart (1996, p41) notes "talentless wastrels ... from the right schools, with the right contacts could be fairly confident of a place; meanwhile Jude continued to wait outside."

Ainley (1995, p57) argues that what is necessary is a wholesale democratisation of higher education. At present, he suggests, there is the "elite", abstracted education offered by Oxbridge and at the other extreme there is the vocational (which he rightly redefines as "labour market led") education which gives the student exactly what s/he needs for his/her end career *and no more* (my emphasis) (see also Ellis, 1996, p319). Democratisation could take the form of preventing elite universities from becoming further "privatised"; turning Oxford and Cambridge into residential adult education colleges (thus presumably removing their elite mystique once and for all); abolishing Training and Enterprise Councils and returning responsibility for public expenditure on vocational training to elected bodies (thus freeing vocational training from the influence of the private sector); and finally, creating a "2 plus 2" system of learning, where 2 years of study (leading to a diploma) would take place in a local college and a further 2 years of university study would upgrade this to a degree (see also Tight, 1993, p28 for a similar argument). This last point seems of particular relevance to mature students, who could break their student careers down into more manageable time structures, stopping at a diploma if they wished to (if, for example, finances precluded continuation of study) and carrying on at a later date. Indeed, finance is likely to be a crucial aspect in the mature student's experiences of mobility and education.

The mandatory grant, whilst in essence an egalitarian gesture had, by 1997, been eroded to such a level that it no longer covered even the rent in halls of residence - and the grant will disappear altogether in the next few years. Thus, the undergraduate

community must either work to pay for the shortfall (not always practical, much less desirable given how it consumes study time), take out a student loan or ask relatives for more money. This last option is fine if you happen to be from a well-off family that can afford such things, but this is not an option for students from less well-off families. This is likely to be doubly true of mature students, who as adults will be expected to be more self-sufficient than their traditional age counterparts - the parents of a 30 year old, for example, could, with some justification, feel that their "parental" duties were complete. Indeed, there is also evidence to suggest that some mature students are discriminated against by universities with regard to "hardship" funds (Marks, 1996, p14). The conclusion of this is that mature students may be more likely to terminate their own studies because of financial hardship. There is also evidence to suggest that mature student applications are falling off numerically. Carvel (1996, p6) claims a drop of 2% in mature applications for 1996/7 entry which he attributes to the phasing out of the Mature Students Allowance. The 'top-up' fees to be introduced in 1998 are likely to make matters worse and to put off more potential mature applicants. However, this is speculation at this stage.

Returning to my earlier question: can graduate status be seen as a guarantor of mobility for the mature graduate? Will, for example, a 30 year old new graduate be able to progress from his/her original point of class/status origin (whatever that may be) into a higher class/status category by virtue of holding a degree? Clearly the answer will be no in an "absolute" sense if Tarsh's (1989) data are representative, and prospective

employers are in fact biased against the older graduate. However, the question could be refined to ask whether holding a degree provides the mature graduate with a level of "relative" mobility? Perhaps this will be the case in so far as a degree is evidence of a high level of intelligence (which is not to say that non-graduates are necessarily unintelligent, of course). However, in a nation where there are more and more graduates available the mere fact of being a graduate is no longer enough - a 2(2) is unlikely to guarantee anything anymore - and employers are likely to use status-deficit factors (such as age) as reasons for not employing a particular graduate. Indeed, in such a climate it could reasonably be argued that the concept of a "graduate career" is rather dated and redundant.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF `LIFELONG LEARNING'?

Before continuing with this examination of the present-day mature student, a brief review of the history of adult education in Britain is necessary. Specifically, it is worth noting, first, the historical (and ongoing) tension between those who would like adult education to be purely or mainly vocational and those who favour a more liberal approach. Second, current enthusiasm among policy makers for lifelong learning needs to be considered.

Post-Compulsory Education in Britain: A Brief History

It is worth noting immediately that adult learning in Britain has always been deeply affected by the high levels of elitism within the education system. Fieldhouse (1997, pp 2-3) notes that education in the early 19th century was considered to be only for apparently well born individuals. Despite the fact that the industrial revolution was creating the need for a different kind of worker - one with a whole range of skills - the education of the working class was thought to be "tantamount to opening Pandora's box". Fieldhouse (ibid., p27) refers to Davies Giddy M.P., who in 1807 made the following speech to Parliament, claiming that education for the working classes:

> ... would be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments ..., instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them fractious ... it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity; it would render them

> insolent to their superiors, and in a few years (*it would be*) necessary to direct the strong arm of power against them.

To this extent, education was not directed towards purely vocational ends based upon class of origin, but was indeed explicitly hegemonic - with the children of the powerful educated for power, and the children of the subordinated trained for their own subordination.

However, this is not necessarily to suggest that there was a groundswell of working class discontent at the lack of educational opportunities afforded them. Stephens (1987, p123) notes that the idea of schooling for the working classes was commonly treated with hostility *by* the members of the working classes. He cites a common midland expression from the 1850s (and the gendered nature of the quote should be noted):

> His father went down the pit and he made a fortune, his son went to school and lost it.

Thus, many members of the working classes in mid-19th century Britain seemingly saw education as not merely a waste of time, but as a possible passport to poverty. Fieldhouse (ibid, p39) notes that the costs involved certainly proved prohibitive to a great many working class people who were nevertheless keen to study. It would therefore be naive to imply that 19th century education, with its class-specific ends, was simply a product of ruling class exclusivity.

Fieldhouse (pp24-25) goes on to note that when colleges began to be established for the explicit purpose of providing education for adults in Britain in the 19th century, their instrumentality of purpose was explicit. Firstly, they were there to help to minimise the alienation caused by factory labour (and thus to make for more docile workers) and secondly (and more importantly) they were there to offer enough training to create a more *useful* workforce. Consider the following stated aims of two of the 'Mechanics Institutes' (firstly Leeds, secondly Manchester, both from 1824, cited in Fieldhouse, (1997).

> This society was formed for the purpose of enabling Mechanics and Artisans of whatever trade they be, to become acquainted with such branches of science as *practical application in the exercise of that trade.* (My emphasis)
>
> (our objective is) to supply at a cheap rate, to the various classes of the community, the advantages of instruction in the various branches of *science which are of practical application* to the various trades or occupations ... to improve the skill and practice of those classes of men who are so essentially conducive to the prosperity of this large manufacturing town. (My emphasis)

It is again worth noting the gender-specificity of the above quote (as Fieldhouse in fact does) noting that where education was available to adult, working class females it was explicitly designed to make them better wives and mothers even though, as Fieldhouse notes, large numbers of these women were themselves waged workers.

Friedrich Engels is cited by Fieldhouse (p27) referring to the Mechanics Institutes as teaching;

> ... that brand of political economy which takes free competition as its God ... The proletariat is told they must resign themselves to starving without making a fuss ... The students are taught to be subservient to the existing political and social order. All that the worker hears in these schools is one long sermon on respectful and passive obedience in the station in life to which he has been called.

How far this archetype of adult education - teach them what they need and no more - has changed in the 20th century will be considered shortly, within the scope of the ongoing debate over 'liberal' versus 'vocational' education, and the need for 'lifelong learning' in the 'learning society' required in the 'age of information'.

The Labour Market

It is quite likely that a great many mature students fear being redundant as soon as they graduate. The available evidence suggests that they may be correct in this fear. Graham (1991, p55) found university 'milkround' recruiters to be obsessive about age, and to have un-rationalised (sic) low age limits for recruitment. Indeed, Nicholls and Haskel (1988, p4) found that only 5% of employers welcomed mature graduates, and 8% actually said that mature graduates were not recruited. A further 15% considered mature graduates up to certain age limits (various) and 16% did so under the vague heading of 'conditional upon certain criteria'. Sixty-seven percent of the employers in the survey stated that they had no-one responsible for monitoring the recruitment of mature graduates. The mature students in Graham's sample pointed out that 'younger' graduates had a tendency (and possibly more importantly, the ability) to move around - both geographically, and within jobs at the regional level - and thus a mature graduate

could be a wiser choice if an employer wanted him or her to stay with a locally based job. Few of the employers appeared to recognise this.

Graham's sample of students desired legislation to prevent age discrimination. This could only, however, be a partial solution. Loopholes can always be found in any legislation, and employers could find new ways of excluding older applicants - specifying G.C.S.E.s as a requirement rather than O' levels, for example, (regardless of higher qualifications) would immediately exclude anyone who left school before 1988.

Higher Education Expansion and The Rise (and Rise) of Credentialism

> We are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match ... when *young people* ... can't find work which meets their abilities and expectations, then we are creating frustration with ... disturbing social consequences. We have to ration educational opportunities so that society can cope with the output of education ... People must once more be educated to *know their place* (my emphases) (Nigel Lawson M.P., quoted in Cohen, 1986, p6)

> If we have a highly educated and idle population, we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must once more be educated to *know their place.* (my emphasis) (unnamed Treasury M.P. quoted in Ranson, 1984, p241)

The above quotes from Nigel Lawson M.P and the M.P. cited by Ranson are significant to this debate in that they combine an almost pragmatic elitism and a return to the attitudes displayed by Davies Giddy M.P. (in Fieldhouse, ibid.) with all the implied ageism. As recently as February 1997, the Conservative government's Department for Education and Employment was speaking in terms of limiting access to higher education.

> There is a limit to how many extra graduates the economy can absorb before the increased productivity they generate starts to decline ... So long as higher education is funded from the public purse, the projected rate of return to the nation's investment should be a major factor in determining the appropriate size of initial full-time higher education. (cited in Carvel, 1997, p1)

No mention is made of the position of the mature student in any of this, and education is assumed to be nothing more than a commodity within the job market. The role of learning as a worthy activity in and of itself is entirely lost - and the Ranson quote implies that education for its own sake cannot be a 'civilising' influence, rather that knowledge creates civil unrest.

In a sense, the expansion of access to higher education in Britain that took place in the early 1990s signifies the final end of the 'embourgeoisement' thesis. Ainley (1996, p17) suggests that the effect of this expansion has not been to professionalise the proletariat, but to proletarianise the professions. In the same article, he claims that we are not moving towards the stated ideal of a 'learning' society (where education is seen as continuous and lifelong) but merely towards a 'certified' society (ibid, p11)*. Hutton 1995, p216) notes, with unconcealed disappointment, how universities have been turned into 'factories for the production of degree holders'. Likewise, Ritzer in reference to the American system of higher education (which nevertheless sounds very familiar) speaks of the "McUniversity", rationalised to its smallest components, where students are simple knowledge receptacles on a production line, afforded absolutely minimal contact

*It should be noted that this is not a particularly new argument. A generation ago, Illich (1978, p8) spoke of the 'modernised poverty' of a society so lost to the culture of mass consumption that 'learning' has been replaced with 'credit accumulation'.

with lecturers or books - "Higher Education: It's like processing meat" (Ritzer, 1996, p139) (see also Phillips, 1996, p302). Readings (1996, pp4) sees this as a 'crisis' in the universities - in this case Canadian, but he suggests that the point is just as applicable in Britain. According to Readings academic discourse is moving from one of cultural transmission using the language of 'standards', where the universities were previously the controllers and arbiters of legitimate knowledge, and moving towards a discourse of 'excellence' measurable in terms of 'commodified' (hence, saleable) rather than 'legitimate' (abstracted) knowledge.

The proliferation of Bachelor degrees has necessitated far more people than would have previously done so staying on to obtain Masters degrees. Given the dearth of grants available for post graduate study this is a profoundly elitist phenomenon. Schuller (1995, p9) describes this as not so much extended but *distended* education - where people are forced to stay in education for economic survival rather than continued interest*. Indeed, Crompton and Sanderson (1986, p34) depressingly observe that even apparently encouraging academic trends could be interpreted as evidence of much less encouraging ones. For example, they suggest that the greater proportion of females participating in higher education (up from 31% in 1970 to 43% in 1984, and now over 50% according to Department for Education figures) may be a facet of a 'diploma

* This is remarkably similar to the problem faced by school leavers in the mid 1970s, when (at the time) unprecedentedly high unemployment levels forced young people to stay in full time education until the age of 18. These school leavers were, for the most part, the academic 'failures' from the school system, and further education colleges were in the position of having to accept students who were not able to undertake A level study, nor particularly interested in so doing, and who demanded 'relevance' in the study they were given (Pring, 1995, pp59-60).

disease' - the pursuit of qualifications purely as a means of securing work*; in other words, purely extrinsic, instrumental motivation.

I would argue that this need not be the reality of the situation. The devaluing of a degree through popular access to university will only be true if one interprets a university education as merely a passport to middle class careers - in other words, considering such an education merely in terms of its extrinsic rewards. This, I would suggest, is one of the odious consequences of transposing the laws of market economics onto the university sector. An institution dedicated to `pure' research is unlikely remain so dedicated when balancing the budget requires the said institution to bow to the whims of the market. Masters degrees in Business Administration are more economically viable than, for example, influenza research so a situation could emerge where influenza researchers were forced out of the universities altogether, and forced to survive as best they could in the `free market'.

Mature Study: "Liberal Education" versus "Vocational Training"?

> A child is born in the United States in 1984. From the `infant school' he finds himself in at the age of six months to the `geriatric learning centre' he dies in, he finds himself going to school all his life `for the good of society' ... The `permanent school district' in which the young man resides has experts to make the important decisions for him. It is called a `permanent school district' because by 1984 it was recognised that all people must go to school all of their lives - permanently. Most of the remaining funds have all been turned over to the local `permanent school district' and have been renamed `higher schools' ... By 1984 there are no more universities or colleges as we know them. Their buildings and

* They further point out the similarly depressing fact that equality of gender in university make-up need not be reflected within the labour market. So if a degree is seen by a woman as her passport to a `male' career, she is almost certainly wrong.

> faculty members of the old universities or colleges have long since been fired, sent to `retraining camps', or to mental asylums for `the good of society' ... When he does die, a minister eulogises over his grave ... `And so we say goodbye to this lucky man', the minister chants, `firm in the knowledge that he will go to heaven where he will attend a `school for angels' into eternity. (Ohliger, 1971, pp103/4)

The presence of the mature student is the cue for a debate on the purpose of university education. Is it simply a `front end' activity performed by young people as a preparation for adult life (as suggested by the `life cycle' arguments of Levinson et al, discussed in chapter 1) or is it a part of a lifelong process of personal and social growth? If the latter, is the Orwellian-dystopian futurology of Ohliger an accurate (or potentially accurate) scenario, or just intellectual perversity?

In truth, Ohliger appears to stand alone in equating lifelong learning with the downfall of civilisation or at least the western education system (the two are often spoken of as if coterminous). Others suggest that cultural and social factors themselves are changing notions of the age specificity of education rather than the reverse, as Ohliger implies. Pilcher (1995, pp149/150) suggested that the life course and age categories are being fundamentally destabilised in the late 20th century as childhood is becoming shorter, `old' age is becoming longer, transition to adulthood is becoming harder and the norms and values of the `middle years' are undergoing change. These latter two are facets of a destabilised labour market and the lack of jobs available for the young and the termination of work through redundancy for the middle-aged. Pilcher argues that mature students are physical evidence of this life-course destabilisation - although she concludes with the coda that age based societal divisions are likely to

remain because of their usefulness in attaching psychological meaning to the ageing process. Mature students appear to have the worst of both worlds. They are expected on the one hand to cope with the destabilisation of their own life course - and being placed in a role (that of the undergraduate) held to be solely for the young - and on the other hand, they are expected to accept the continued validity of those very socially prescribed age demarcations of which they know they *themselves* are evidence of the decline.

In fact I would agree with Pilcher's assessment of the destabilisation of the life-course, but only as a partial explanation for the rise in mature student numbers. A further two factors are worthy of consideration. Firstly, there is the demographic reality of diminishing numbers of 18 year olds and an ageing population (see McLoughlin, 1991, pp2,57: Schuller and Bostyn, 1996, p79-80: Tuijnman, 1996, p31) and the concurrent rise in the availability of university places, which has opened up new opportunities for older people to enter university. Secondly, one must also consider the role of the destabilised labour market which has created the need for ever more qualifications to gain (in the case of the traditional age students) and to regain/maintain (in the case of mature students) permanent employment. As was suggested earlier in this chapter, this has led to a new credentialism. `Graduate' jobs are declining and soon a degree is likely to be seen as an entrance qualification for careers previously seen as being for non-graduates (though as I will highlight momentarily, this is merely the most pessimistic interpretation of the facts at hand). Certainly, we could hypothesise that career enhancement is at least part of the motivation for mature study. This supports the notion that labour market destabilisation is one of the factors in the rise of mature

student numbers, and suggests also a degree of "vocationalism" in mature study. Longworth and Davies (1996, pp25/26) suggest that `lifelong learning' is a necessary response to the rise in technology. Firstly, the pace of technological development is faster than most people can keep up with, and so regular retraining is necessary to prevent (or more likely, *minimise*) skills shortages. Secondly, technological innovation has created potential for new teaching technologies - distance learning via the internet, for example - which will open up new vistas of learning provided people have the necessary access to these technologies and the requisite skills to be able to access them effectively. It would seem that the scenario offered by Longworth and Davies here requires first (re-) training in the use of new educational technologies, followed by education (in the more abstract sense of the term) itself - a six month training course in internet usage followed by an internet based distance learning degree. Admittedly, at the moment this is largely science-fiction, but the potential for useful exploitation certainly exists.

> There are two enemies I have in mind in writing this book. The first are those who, in the face of certain changes, retreat to a narrow concept of liberal education which leaves so many dispossessed. The other is those who, in trying to make education more relevant, betray the best that is preserved within the liberal tradition. The divide is, and no doubt always will be, between liberal education and vocational preparation. (Pring, 1995, p183)

Let us now consider the two poles of this particular debate. It should be noted that the terms "vocation" and derivatives such as "vocationalism" in this context are intended to imply training and/or retraining for specific career ends. That is to say, a

mature student pursuing a degree for the specific purpose of improving his/her labour market position is clearly studying "vocationally".

i) *The "Liberal" Model*

> Learning, in the renaissance, was part of the *joie de vivre*, just as much as drinking or lovemaking. And this was not only true of literature, but also of sterner studies. Everyone knows the story of Hobbes's first contact with Euclid: opening the book, by chance, at the theorem of Pythagoras, he exclaimed, `By God, this is impossible' and proceeded to read the proofs backwards until, reaching the axioms he became convinced. No one can doubt that this was for him a voluptuous moment, unsullied by the thought of the utility of geometry in measuring fields. (Russell, 1941, p81) (*Author's emphasis*)

Russell called for the re-embracing of the `renaissance' educational experience, and resisted the notion that scientific knowledge was more `useful' than any other (possibly a response to Herbert Spencer's derision of `ornamental' knowledge and praise of the purely scientific: see Spencer, 1859, p14) and suggested that all knowledge can have a `practical' purpose - even if it is only the intellectual and spiritual enhancement of the individual - and that learning could be a sensual as well as intellectual event.

Fieldhouse (1997, p30) noted that the liberal ideal of adult education can be traced back at least into the middle of the 19th century. The Sheffield People's College (established 1842) was modelled on the values of its founder, Reverend Robert Bayley, and aimed to offer a "humane higher education" to adults from the locality. Likewise, the London Working Men's College was based upon the Christian Socialism of its founder, F.D. Maurice, and its courses were intended, as Fieldhouse (ibid) points out;

> ... to be humane rather than technical or vocational; but also to tackle socially and politically controversial issues by systematic study ...

For most of this century, Fieldhouse (p203/4) has noted, British adult education within universities has been state funded but granted a high degree of autonomy from state interference, producing a liberal, democratic, dialectical, non-ideological, non-propogandist, non-didactic form of learning. This learning was intended to help the adult learner gain wider experience and greater awareness of alternative views, and crucially, as Fieldhouse points out, teaching was non-utilitarian, insofar as its intention was to create better *citizens* rather than better trained *workers*.

However, given that such education was paid for via the generosity of wealthy benefactors, a degree of paternalism was no doubt evident in the teaching. Indeed, Fieldhouse (pp42/3) suggests that the 'university settlements' movement, begun in 1883 in Oxford by Reverend Samuel Barnett, was a partial recognition of this very problem, and sought to take the university into working class communities - specifically, to take the university to those who would otherwise have no access to it. Fieldhouse notes that it was felt that a mingling of students from different social backgrounds would create a 'common ground' for the learning experience - as well meaning liberal benefactors and teachers had so far failed to do because of their inability to appreciate the culture and values of working class students. The first Oxford 'settlement' was established at Toynbee Hall in the East End of London in 1884, to be followed by Bethnal Green in 1885, and by the end of the 19th century others followed in Bristol, Ipswich, Liverpool,

Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow, although Fieldhouse has his doubts about how far they actually succeeded in their stated aims. However,

> Despite its paternalism and authoritarianism, the university settlement movement did also have a strong Christian Socialist basis inherited from Maurice, which contributed to the more radical, egalitarian strands of adult education in the 20th century.

Fieldhouse does, however, appear to see the end of the 19th century as a time of optimism for adult learning.

> More positively, 20th century inherited a strong tradition of socially purposive adult education and the belief that adult education could and should contribute to political and social action. (ibid, p45)

ii) *The Vocational Model*

> Vocationalism is or seems value free only to those who wish to avoid a definition of education which raises troubling questions about social justice, about the needs of a democracy and, an even worse threat, about education as a good in itself, whatever its practical benefits. (Hoggart, 1996, p22)

Pring (1995, p184-186) notes that the intention behind university education has always been "liberal" (in the "laissez-faire" sense) in that it is about self-improvement, the development of the intellect and the learning of those things which are worthy of intellectual appreciation (with all of the cultural hegemony that that implies) rather than the practicality of vocational learning. The exclusivity of this ideal should be noted: as Pring points out, such a system writes off the vast majority of learners by only allowing access to the elite minority (such as those with a public school education where the necessary cultural references are taught). Similarly, Pring criticises the liberal ideal for

not merely ignoring practical and vocational learning, but for being actually *disdainful* of it. It is possible (perhaps even likely) that this disdain is the enduring product of the elitism of the 19th century, where "education" was for the sons (and very occasionally the daughters) of gentlemen, and "work", and the learning of appropriate "skills" to adequately perform this work, were for "the masses".

Whilst, on the evidence of research discussed here (Graham, 1991: West, 1996*), it certainly appears true that mature students do enter higher education with the possible extrinsic benefits of university education in mind, it is also true that a great many also consider the intrinsic merits - studying a subject in which they have had a long-term interest, for example. What is open to question, however, is both whether the higher education sector is accepting of mature students with non-vocational study orientation, and whether, for those who *do* seek a vocational course of study there is anything appropriate to their needs (which may or may not be the same as those of vocationally directed traditional age students).

The vocational drift of much of what was initially well-intended 'liberal' adult education is clearly evident in the material cited above, with movements dedicated to offering a 'humane' education coming up against paternalistic (albeit well meant) attitudes and lack of state funding which once led to the crudely functionalist attitudes displayed in the original Mechanics' Institutes. Indeed, as Pring has suggested,

* West (1996, pp116 and 122) found that even among students in their 50s, career enhancement was a motivation, but they admitted that this was probably wishful thinking.

'liberalism' (laissez-faire) is as much a part of the problem as 'liberalism' (paternalistic philanthropy) was held to be the solution.

In the U.S.A., Sherman (1991, pp65 and 70) notes that in the debates over vocational education the arguments seem to have been won by the 'social efficiency advocates', and criticises American educationalists (but most notably Sidney Marland) who lament the rise of participation in American Education:

> For example (Marland) asks whether or not we are producing too many Ph.Ds, and if the dream for higher education has become a 'fetish', a national 'totem', surviving long after its gods have died.

In the U.K., Wringe (1991, pp33-36) notes that both major political parties have a history of criticising the education system for its lack of 'relevance' to the world of work, lamenting the fact that so many able graduates gravitate towards academia and the civil service, and calling for more directly vocational (and directly *industrial*) studies, and the involvement of industry and commerce in curriculum planning. The problem inherent in such logic, of course, is that it ignores the changes that are occurring in the labour market as we move from an *industrial* economy to a *service* one. As Pring (1995, p11) points out, what is desired from the education system is not craftspeople but *technicians*.

Wringe suggests that careers *education* (his emphasis, presumably meant to indicate 'as opposed to indoctrination') is a good thing - giving pupils and/or students an

informed choice about the world of work. But he remains pessimistic, suggesting that such 'education' would merely manifest itself as the deliberate selling of industry and the placing of it in a falsely attractive light. Indeed, calls for schools and universities to become even more directly vocational seem to this writer to be as absurd (and hardly less damaging) as calling for bodies to be modified to fit cars. Nevertheless, as Raggart et al (1996, pp4-5) and Tuckett (1996, p53) point out, the prevalent assumption has become that vocational education is 'investment' (and presumably worthy of state subsidy) and non-vocational education is 'consumption' (consequently less worthy, and responsibility for funding more likely to be seen as that of the individual).

Pring (1995, p55), however, notes that vocationally orientated reforms of the education system, at least in the U.K., are highly problematic. He comments that every well intended move made in this country to incorporate vocationalism into education (he cites the 'technical' schools of the Tripartite/pre-comprehensivisation era, Youth Training Schemes and now National Vocational Qualifications) is hampered by the inherent snobbery within the system where the ideological divide between 'thinking' and 'making' is at its most pronounced. Vocational work is considered beneath those who are academically gifted and vocational training is merely the repository of those schools deemed either incapable or unworthy of further and higher education. This would suggest that the perceived academic/vocational argument becomes even more pertinent with regard to mature students. If the mature student is deemed to have already had his/her chance to do well in education at the 'appropriate' age, then s/he may, using Pring's logic, be deemed less 'worthy' of a place on a purely academic,

liberal course of study - although s/he may be considered more kindly if s/he is gravitating towards a purely vocational course for which there is guaranteed (insofar as it ever can be) employment upon graduation.

iii) *Lifelong Learning: Towards a "Liberal Vocationalism"*

As Russell suggested, the pursuit of a `stern' discipline - such as the sciences, or engineering - does not preclude the pleasurable appreciation of learning, merely that the wholehearted pursuit of utility is likely to be a less than happy experience. Moreover, if all students were merely pursuing what was necessary for the job market, higher education (and probably universities themselves eventually) would no longer have any validity or reason to exist. Indeed, if knowledge *for its own sake* becomes a non-viable concept, then the pursuit of all forms of learning beyond basic literacy and numeracy run the risk of being labelled decadent.

Admittedly, the above is an extreme scenario, but it is not an implausible one for all that. Using education as a preparation for work is manifestly not the same as being educated for work. Framed as questions, do we want an education system which enhances the lives and intellects of those who reside within it (and which helps them maximise their potential to become thoughtful and creative citizens) or do we want a `sausage factory' which moulds people into their proscribed work-roles, crushing their intellectual creativity as it does so? After all, there is little use in training philosophers when what is needed is a regular supply of systems analysts and machine operators. Shute (1993, p42) argues that this is exactly what schools already do, turning children

into future 'clerks' (ironically, in an almost universally literate age when clerks are scarcely needed). Will universities be expected to become similarly 'vocationalised'? It is this writer's contention that only in the former case can a healthy education system (and by definition also, a healthy *society*) be maintained. An instrumental education, as outlined in the latter scenario, is perhaps likely to create instrumentalism in other walks of life - attitudes towards social responsibility, other individuals' rights and liberties and so on - creating a society of 'accredited' (in the sense suggested by Illich) individuals operating with a means-end utilitarian mindset, unable to see beyond immediate gratification. Nevertheless, such educational utilitarianism still has its defenders.

It is also worth bearing in mind that vocational and non-vocational are not easily separated. They are context specific. As Sargant (1996, p198) points out, a subject may be 'vocational' for one person but purely of interest to another. For example, a classics degree from Oxford or Cambridge (and maybe a public school background beforehand) has, on the surface, no utility value at all. However, given that so many UK M.P.s are Oxbridge educated, it could be seen that such a degree is a 'vocational' pursuit for aspiring politicians. Ellis (1994, p5) refers to an Oxbridge education as a 'residential course in leadership'.

An education designed to meet the needs of industry rather than the individual student is hardly an education at all. However, this appears to be exactly the scenario desired by recent U.K. governments.

> The Thatcher government never understood or accepted the argument that education was important for its own sake. It made that quite clear in its 1995 Green Paper ... which called for higher education to serve the national economy more effectively. The tories turned the universities into a kind of utilitarian entrepot, in which the values of education were progressively undermined by the values of the balance sheet. (Phillips, 1996, p300)

For the mature student, of course, the utility value of much of what higher education can offer is greatly diminished and will of course be diminished further with the age of the student him/herself. A 35 year old can make less practical use of a degree than a 21 year old, simply because the 21 year old has more time to use it, to say nothing of the potential problem of lack of geographical mobility of a 35 year old when attempting to gain 'graduate' work - assuming the term has any currency in the latter half of the 1990s. A 50 year old can make still less use of a degree, and is far more likely to be pursuing a course of study purely for its intrinsic benefits. It is worth noting that Woodley (1993, p120) found that of Open University students who had suspended their studies before completion, the majority claimed that the experience had a good effect on them as people*. I would suggest that such activity, far from being frowned upon as an

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* Woodley divided his sample into 2 groups of 3 categories: those who left with some course credits whose prior education was below A level, A level, or above A level standard, and those who left *without* course credits whose prior education was below A level, A level, or above A level standard. Those with *above* A level entrance qualifications but *no* accumulated course credits were the least happy of the 6 groups in this regard (38%) and those with *below* A level entrance but *with* some accumulated course credits were the most happy (77%). In each case, the lower the entrance qualifications the happier the students were with their experiences of the university, which suggests that those students with the most to gain are in fact the ones who gain the most. Longworth and Davies (1996, p8) found that the mature students in their research sample likened their experiences of a return to education to a spiritual awakening - one man going so far as to say that being sacked was the best thing that ever happened to him, because education had taught him to say what he *felt* rather than what he *ought* to say.

extravagant or wasteful usage of the higher education sector, should be positively encouraged, as mature students can bring a great deal into university with them in terms of life experience that others could use. That this experience is so rarely valued by host institutions (see Karach, 1992, for example) is lamentable.

For myself, I support Russell's line that a 'useless' renaissance education is still inherently and extrinsically useful. If an individual has his or her consciousness heightened and intellectual faculties engaged and this is found to be a *pleasurable* experience, then the benefits to the individual will also, most likely, be benefits for the community at large. The graduate housewife and mother will be better able to generate a love of learning in the lives of her children. An unemployed graduate can still avail him/herself of libraries and *usefully* spend time furthering his/her learning. *Any* individual graduate, in whatever walk of life, who has found higher education to be a process of personal growth is far better able to be an effective member of the *social* world*. As such, a 'useless' education is still a socially useful and necessary event. In other words, even if the net result of mature study is nothing more than the gaining of a better qualified dole queue (and the chances are that it will offer *far more* than just this) then it is still a useful, valid and worthwhile enterprise - and I thus dispute the claim offered by Ranson about education contributing to civil unrest.

* Russell goes as far as to claim that an educated person may also be a more moral person because of the civilising influences of education (he points out that school bullies are rarely the most intellectual of school pupils). However, in a century which has seen vast increases in access to higher education at the same time as witnessing some of the grandest and vilest acts of mass homicide ever perpetrated (Stalinist Russia, Cambodia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Bosnia - to say nothing of World Wars I and II) I don't feel this is an entirely defensible claim. I do however support the general notions that education is *usually* a force for good, and that no learning is ever wasted.

If the above scenario were to be embraced, credentialism would be less of a problem - the devaluing of one's `glittering prize' is only an issue if the education itself is not the prize. If gaining a degree in one's chosen subject is not the means to an end but *the end itself* then devaluation can never occur. In this sense, the mature student is at an advantage over his/her traditional aged peer, and perhaps we should be less concerned with trying to make the mature students more like traditionals than encouraging the traditionals to be more like the mature students.

`Lifelong learning' appears to be becoming a reality, although Longworth and Davies (1996, pp10/11) suggest that this is part of a global political impetus towards sustainable economic growth based on `holistic' interpretations of environmental and educational need. This seems more like wishful thinking than empirical reality. Britain, after all, for eighteen years consistently re-elected a rabidly capitalist government between 1979 and 1997, and capitalism is certainly not known for its holistic (or indeed, long term) interpretations of social need. Whether the present large numbers of mature students are merely a demographic `blip' existing only whilst there are large numbers of university places and not enough intelligent 18 year olds to fill them, or whether the trend continues, is something only time will tell.

If lifelong learning were to provide the impetus for stimulating the economy and retraining workers (and pushing the economy back to something near full employment) then an ongoing future presence of mature students would be expected. In such a case, career enhancement could be seen as a primary motivation for mature university entry.

If, however, lifelong learning becomes little more than a political 'soundbite', and its effect on employment prospects peripheral, and still large numbers of mature students were in evidence, then one would have to hypothesise that interest was a more motivating factor than career enhancement.

Adult Learners: The Marginalised Majority?

As has already been noted in chapter one, mature students, if one includes part-timers, now form over 50% of the total undergraduate population. This being so, one might expect the predominant educational 'culture' to be becoming less 'youth' orientated - and particularly since 1996, the 'European Year of Lifelong Learning', more accessible to, and more welcoming of, mature students. This, however, does not always appear to be the reality of the situation.

Tuckett (1996, p45) has noted, with apparent regret, that despite the fact that 'school leavers' are now the minority group in higher education, educational policy is still geared toward attracting their custom, and coursework and timetabling are structured to their convenience. Moreover, Tuckett points out that the Department for Education's policy appears to be to make it harder for adults to return to education. He refers to the Department for Education White Paper which criticises social security claimants who are not 'genuinely available for work', including those who are at college or university. As a result of this, Tuckett claims, it has become harder for many adults to take advantage of the '21 hour rule', where claimants are theoretically allowed to

study for 21 hours per week (subsequently shortened to 16) without losing benefit entitlement.

Tuckett has further noted how policy discussion by the Department for Education is geared towards providing adult education only in subject areas and on courses which will lead directly to work, the suggestion being that adult learning is 'peripheral' and presumably school leaver learning 'central'. Certainly, Tuckett has suggested, it is seen by policy makers as somehow wrong to spend money on adult learning which would normally be spent on school leavers. Again, this suggests a rise of 'vocationalism' regarding the opportunities to be afforded mature students.

The increasingly dire situation vis-a-vis undergraduate grants has been discussed at length in chapter one. It is worth adding this coda: 130,000 adult students were affected by the abolition of the £1000 extra grant allowance given to full-time students over 29 years of age who had come from paid work which was announced in the 1994 Budget (Tuckett, 1996, p57). Tuckett finds it hard to square such politicking with the (now former) government's stated aim of expanding access to further and higher education, and he is amazed at how many adult learners actually *do* find their way onto rewarding and satisfying programmes of study in this climate. As such the mature students are clearly the *marginalised majority* - politically and culturally disenfranchised within a system which despite sheer force of numbers appears to only barely tolerate their increased and ongoing presence.

It is worth noting that the Labour Party's plans for education are scarcely better for the mature student. Despite the rhetoric in the 1996 'Lifelong Learning' (Labour Party, 1996, p15) consultation document on adult education "contributing to community life and enriching the lives of millions of people", which itself echoes the statement in an earlier document (Labour Party, 1995, p4) that "education is central to personal fulfilment and satisfaction", the Labour Party appears no less instrumental regarding the education of adults than the Conservatives. The 1995 document (p27-28) called for greater links between industry and universities. This appears to be a call both for a greater 'privatisation' of higher education and also for greater 'vocationalism' in what is offered for study, and for greater contributions to local economies (likewise) and stresses that "All students should prepare for the world of work".

The document then suggests that all students should undertake vocational skills modules as part of their courses. As such, the Labour Party's conception of lifelong learning appears to be little more than lifelong retraining and *re*-retraining. I would not wish to deny the need for vocational provision, but what I would question is whether this should really be the *totality* of provision, especially given the rhetoric of 'life-enrichment' mentioned earlier in the document. Likewise the Labour Party's proposed 'University for Industry' (UfI) appears to be little more than an extension of the instrumentalism outlined above.

> Where necessary, the University for Industry will develop courses and learning resources that are tailored to the needs of individual companies or updated regularly ... employers could be asked to contribute the on-line computer time for a course to be followed in breaks before or after work. (ibid., p31)

The UfI, it would seem, will provide the possibility of on-going retraining of employed staff for a minimum initial financial outlay (computer hardware) which - given that the work will be conducted during breaks and after work - will not interfere with employees' ability to get their work done and will not take them away from the work place as day release would. In this scenario employers certainly benefit, and to an extent so do those already in paid employment, but the U.f.I. does nothing whatsoever to address the education and training needs of the unemployed and the retired, and its mandate is entirely vocational (and industrially rather than individually determined at that). As such the U.f.I. appears to be little more than a licence for creative exploitation of the workforce, and a guarantee that the emergent situation of a securely employed elite and an insecurely employed/ unemployed mass will become even more entrenched. Furthermore, it would seem that the mature student on a non-vocational course is likely to be further marginalised under the Labour administration. The addition of £1000 extra annual fees from 1998 can scarcely improve the situation.

Summary

The question which needs to be asked at this stage is, has 1996, the European Year of Lifelong Learning, been a failure simply because of the contextualising of the term `learning'? Certainly, in terms of what the U.K.'s two major political parties are proposing, `learning' is equated with `usefulness' or, as a recent Times Higher Educational Supplement Editorial (10/1/1997, p13) put it,

> These days, when politicians discuss learning, they mentally drop the L.

'Learning' as far as adult education (including higher education) is concerned, is apparently a means-to-an-end and there appears to be little, if any, consensus that provision for the education of adults is an intrinsically worthwhile usage of increasingly scarce funds. Given the evidence of several of the writers cited in this chapter (West, 1996: Wringe, 1991: Tuckett et al, 1996) there does appear to be a 'new vocationalism' dawning in higher education, but most especially with regard to higher education for adults, with mature students being accepted cautiously, and those on non-vocational courses apparently being resented as a waste of money.

It will be necessary to place the experiences and motivation of the mature students under consideration in this thesis within the context of the culture highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Theoretical Perspectives

The research presented in this thesis took two forms: firstly, quantitative surveys based upon mailed questionnaires initially despatched to the whole (potential) sample; and secondly, open-ended interviews conducted with a stratified random selection (details of the sampling frame will be given shortly) of those respondents who indicated a willingness to take further part in the research. All of those who were interviewed had initially filled in a questionnaire.

The advantage of the quantitative data is that it is (theoretically at any rate) reliable and replicable and it features a large enough sample to be considered cautiously generalisable. With the qualitative data, on the other hand, the advantage is one of 'depth'. Quantitative data alone can be a little 'shallow' in terms of the information provided. For example, one of the items on the questionnaire asked for a response on a 5 point ordinal scale to the statement 'School was a pleasant experience'. A response at point 5 ('strongly disagree') suggests that the individual disliked the schooling s/he experienced. However, it offers *no* further clarification to this response: did they, for example, dislike school because they found maths or geography lessons dull, or did they dislike it because, for example, they were sexually assaulted by the headteacher? Clearly these fictitious examples are extremes of experience (the former being relatively

mild and the latter being horrific) the details of which the quantitative data alone can neither elicit nor elucidate. Thus, I would characterise my quantitative research as a metaphorical `line drawing' and the qualitative research as colour and shading. Moreover, a combination of methods such as this should allow for a respectable degree of triangulation, as similar results will reinforce the validity of the interview and the questionnaire data.

In terms of the theoretical starting point for this enquiry, I allowed for a high degree of `analytical induction' in the research. I had several `hunches' as to what results might emerge, but beyond that the research was an exploration seeking whichever themes presented themselves. As such I followed the seven steps toward `analytic induction' suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p127):

1) Develop a rough definition of the phenomenon to be explained.
2) Formulate an hypothesis to explain that phenomenon (this can be based upon the data, other research, or the researcher's insight and intuition).
3) Study one case to see the fit between the case and the hypothesis.
4) If the hypothesis does not explain the case, either reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the phenomenon.
5) Actively search for negative cases to disprove the hypothesis.
6) When negative cases are encountered, reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the phenomenon.

7) Proceed until one has adequately tested the hypothesis by examining a broad range of cases.

Vague qualms about the use of the words `prove' and `disprove' aside (such scientifically loaded terms can be out of place in this kind of research), broadly speaking, this is the path my qualitative research followed - except that regarding the third point, an initial pilot of 10 people, rather than just one, was conducted.

The sample was selected from within the 21 to 40 year age range. This was because prior research had shown that this age range covers the overwhelming majority of mature students. Graham (1991, p10) found that 88% of mature students fell within this range. Similarly, the Department for Education's (1994b) figures suggest a figure of 87.96%. Both Graham's and D.f.E. figures also suggest that as a cohort, mature students gradually diminish in number with age*. An initial hunch was that mature students' experiences will vary with age and it was decided to concentrate on the up to 40s simply because of their numerical dominance. There is no implication that older mature students should be ignored. It was more a matter of using the resources available for this study to the best effect. The over-40s are likely to span several age-related types of mature student and it would have been impossible, with the time and other resources available, to do justice to them all.

* In Graham's sample, 51% were 25 to 29 years at entry, 24% 30 to 34 years and 13% 35 to 39 years. In the D.f.E. sample 73.1% were 21 to 24 years at entry, 9% were 25 to 29, 3.4% were 30 to 34 and 2.2% 35 to 39 years.

Pilot Study

Before embarking upon the main research, I considered it necessary to perform a pilot study to refine the parameters for my questioning. The method employed was a largely unstructured interview (see appendix for interview schedule) designed to elicit the broadest possible answers. Additionally, at around this time, another study was conducted (for a conference paper) which compared the experiences of a sample of former Access students who became Liverpool University undergraduates with the attitudes of a sample of admissions tutors. The results of this paper will be referred to at various points throughout the remainder of this thesis.

Sixty-three interview invitations were sent out (31 males, 32 females). The sample was selected randomly from full time students across the Liverpool University Social and Environmental Studies and Arts Faculty registers (based upon selections of names and addresses supplied by the two faculty offices), across all subjects as far as possible, and with the aim of keeping the sex ratios within each subject intact - for example, there were far more female than male psychology students, so this was reflected in the numerical sex balance of invitations. However, I was something of a hostage to fortune, as the number of invitations per department was dependent largely upon the selection of names supplied by the faculty offices themselves. The number of invitations is shown in table 3.1 (below):

Table 3.1: Numerical Breakdown By Department of Invitations To Take Part in Pilot Study

Subject	Male	Female	Faculty
English	3	1	Arts
Irish Studies	1	0	Arts
Latin American Studies	0	1	Arts
History	1	1	Arts
Popular Music	1	0	Arts
Archaeology	2	0	S.E.S.
Psychology	1	7	S.E.S.
Mathematics	0	1	S.E.S.
Accounting	1	2	S.E.S.
Architectural Studies	0	1	S.E.S.
Economics	4	1	S.E.S.
Sociology	4	5	S.E.S.
Geography	4	3	S.E.S.
Politics	7	3	S.E.S.
Economic and Social History	1	1	S.E.S.
Combined Honours	1	5	S.E.S.
Total =	31	32	

Of these 63, 12 replied saying that they were prepared to take part in the study (5 males, 7 females) with the gender/subject divisions breaking down as - 6 from sociology (3 male, 3 female), 1 male and 1 female from geography, 1 female from history and 1 female from psychology. These 12 were each individually interviewed, using the pilot schedule. All these interviews were tape recorded. As a matter of record, before starting the tape in each interview, I informed participants that I had myself been a mature undergraduate, thereby allowing a common frame of reference to be perceived by the participants and hopefully also going some way towards breaking down the hierarchical relationship between interviewer and interviewee. All were informed about the pseudonymous nature of the writing up procedure. The questions were intended to start open ended, becoming more specific as they went along.

Unfortunately, two of my recorded interviews (one male and one female) had to be left out of the study. I had misread their ages from the faculty records, and they were too young, being 21 year old second years - and thus not mature students by the university's (or indeed, my own) definition. This left 10 usable interviews. The results of these interviews have been interlaced in the following chapters with the main research findings.

The pilot study proved useful in that it helped in the refinement and redefinition of the interview schedule for the main research (Taylor and Bogdan's 4th point) and in that it reinforced one of my working hypotheses that mature students were by and large those who had underachieved in school very likely because of inadequate teaching, and that a consequent dissatisfaction with the mechanisms of education had led them to leave at the first available moment. However, on the basis of the pilot I discovered that the issue of underachievement is a complex one, taking in areas of class and gender subordination, cultural clashes (the problems of being older in a 'youth' dominated environment such as a university*), marginalisation through illness, marginalisation through learning difficulties, marginalisation by other pupils (bullying), underachievement through the over-enjoyment of non-academic pursuits ('bunking off', smoking behind the bike sheds and so on) and this helped me to create a new, less rigid schedule.

* To this extent, what was being reported was *personal*, as opposed to institutional discrimination.

In fact, to my surprise, the effect of the pilot study on the main research was one of simplification, in that I found that much of what I had in the pilot questionnaire schedule was superfluous. For example, the question, 'What led you to university?' was usually enough to elicit remarks on a wide range of issues, and it was therefore used as an opening prompt, leading to sub-questions, in the main research questionnaire. The question, 'Was Liverpool a good choice?' proved problematic, as several of the pilot sample were native Liverpudlians, and indeed for them it was the only choice available, given the mobility restrictions of family, mortgages, work and so forth. However, it was not a question that could be wholly ignored as, firstly, there were likely to be an (albeit proportionately small) number of mature students from outside the locality, and secondly there were three higher education institutions in Liverpool, so the choice of institution, if not city, was still relevant. Thus the question was rephrased in the main research as 'Why (name of institution)?' allowing for the reasoning behind a particular choice of institution to be elaborated upon. For students from outside the locality only, the 'Why Liverpool (the city)?' question was retained.

Main Research - Background

Part-Time versus Full-Time Study

Consideration needs to be given to the differences between full-time and part-time modes of study. There are two factors requiring discussion. Firstly finance, to date, may well have been decisive in the choice between full and part-time study.

Certainly prior to the introduction tuition fees, it may have seemed 'cheaper' ultimately to study full time - grants were available and fees would have been paid by local authorities. However, it is not as simple as that. If a mature applicant is in a relatively well paid job then s/he will have to think long and hard before s/he abandons it for three or four years. It may well be that a part-time mode of study is more financially prudent, even given the extra costs in terms of fees which part-time study would necessitate. Secondly, domestic responsibilities may demand - especially of female applicants - that they devote themselves primarily to the home situation, rendering academic work a 'spare time' or 'leisure' activity. Hanson (1996, p105) found that those mature students who choose to study part-time were far more instrumental in their attitudes regarding their courses. Full-timers on the other hand, with more time with which to pursue their studies, were more 'reflective', and more likely to view education as an end in itself.

With all of this in mind, it is likely that the full-time and part-time students are radically different people. There may even be a gendered dimension to the choices of full- and part-time study. Males disinclined (or psychological unable) to abandon 'breadwinner' status may choose part-time study (West, 1996, p72). Females may choose part-time study because of their domestic and/or childcare responsibilities. Indeed, Morrison (1996, p224) suggests that in this case even part-time study proves hard for some women, as 'college time' already takes up 'whole time' (itself

subdivided into domestic work times) leaving little organisational possibility for 'private study time' to be accommodated.

Full-time mature students of either sex will have made the decision that study is to be the focus of their lives, rather than a leisure activity, and it is for this reason I would argue that full-time and part-time mature students are entirely different, and should be considered as such for research purposes. Perhaps the least artificial way of describing the apparent distinction is to suggest that those engaged in full-time study are 'students' because they are immersed in the academic and student culture for the greater proportion of their time. The part-timers, on the other hand, are 'people doing a course', and not partaking of the 'culture' of student life in the same way as the full-timers - they would scarcely have the time for it. For these reasons, I shall therefore be only considering full-time undergraduates in this research.

The Sampling Process

Initially, it was my intention to focus specifically upon Liverpool University mature students, and to use entirely qualitative methods - more specifically, open ended interviews. To this end I attempted to gain access to a representative sample from Liverpool University records. I was hoping to approach approximately 500 students, working on the assumption that only a fraction of this number would be prepared to take part in my research. This, however, proved problematic, as faculty heads were loathe to let me (or indeed, *anyone*) have access to names and addresses of their students for

ethical reasons on the grounds of privacy of personal information. Eventually, with the help of my supervisor, a compromise of sorts was reached: I provided the university administration with 500 requests for interviews in sealed envelopes, which representatives of the university senate addressed and despatched themselves.

At this point it seemed that it would be sensible to also include a structured questionnaire (see appendix one) to provide a potentially greater sample, insofar as people were more likely to just fill in a questionnaire than to actually come and be interviewed face-to-face. Thus 500 structured questionnaires were sent out to Liverpool University undergraduates (I will describe the nature of the sampling in detail shortly). Necessity had proven to be the mother of invention here, it seems!

Having sent out these questionnaires, it seemed that a better picture of the typical mature student(s), at least those in Liverpool, would emerge if the two other higher education institutions in the city were included. To this end the Director of Educational Guidance and Progression at John Moores and the Director of Teaching and Learning at Liverpool Hope were approached, and each provided a list of approximately 200* mature students' names and addresses, all of which were used. The John Moores sample was slightly problematic, in as much as the J.M.U. database could only determine that students were 'mature' but could not give their ages, so I had the prospect of having questionnaires arrive which would be unusable because the students were outside the

* Both Liverpool John Moores and Liverpool Hope supplied me with more than 200 names and addresses, but the number I actually sent out was *exactly* 200 for each institution.

age range of my sampling (see later in this section for details of sampling). That said, of the questionnaires received from John Moores students only two had to be discarded for these reasons, which suggests that my criteria for age selection were valid and that mature students in general were covered by my age categories. In the end, I received far more questionnaires back from Liverpool Hope than from John Moores. It was suggested by the Director of Teaching and Learning that this was because Hope students had a greater association with their institution, and were thus more eager to help with studies such as this (1995, personal communication). However, I have no empirical support for this assertion.

In total, therefore, a potential of 900 responses (though significantly less than this were expected to be returned) offered the possibility of a sample large enough to consider statistically reliable comparisons of institutions, sex, class, region of origin, marital status and age group as they pertained to each other in the questionnaire data.

What was obtained was 192 questionnaire responses from the combined selection of 900 students approached. Table A1 shows frequencies by institution (most of the results tables can be found in appendix two). Liverpool University students were the largest group in the sample (109) compared with Hope students (60) and John Moores students (23).

Regrettably, it was not possible to follow up non-respondents from Liverpool University to increase the number of questionnaire returns simply because of the method of despatch that was used. The University Senate, as previously stated, took delivery from me of 500 unaddressed envelopes which they proceeded to address and send out. Thus, at no point did I have a list of those people to whom questionnaires had been sent. In all cases, students were at liberty to use internal mail, which meant they would incur no postage costs. Liverpool University students had the opportunity to send their completed questionnaires directly to me at the sociology department. In the case of J.M.U., the questionnaires could be sent (again, using J.M.U. internal mail) to the aforementioned Director of Career Guidance and Progression, and at Hope the questionnaires could be sent internally to the Director of Teaching and Learning. In both cases, questionnaires were collected, as they came back, by myself from the two institutions on a weekly basis over the course of an academic term.

The achieved sample (192) was not large, and the response rate was quite modest. This means that the findings must be treated cautiously. However, this chapter will show that wherever comparisons with more representative data are possible - in terms of age, sex and socio-economic backgrounds - the profile of the sample proves little different from the profile of all Merseyside mature students who, in turn, prove little different from mature students nationally except in so far as the profile of the entire Merseyside population is skewed, with a higher proportion of the workforce in the manual grades, for example. This means that some cautious generalisations from this

research may be justified, though most of the inferences and conclusions in the following chapters are based on similarities and differences within the achieved sample.

Of the 192 respondents approximately two-thirds were prepared to be interviewed in person, thus a selection of 50 (30 from Liverpool, 10 from J.M.U and 10 from Hope) across the three institutions, were approached and appointments for interviews were booked. Such a large potential sample was used to allow for non-attendances due to sicknesses and other reasons, although in the end only a small fraction (16 in total) failed to appear for their interviews. Oddly enough, the majority of these were Hope students: 8 out of the 10 who were booked for an interview failed to attend. The deputy head of sociology at Hope claimed that Hope students were becoming increasingly instrumental in their attitudes, and could not see any point in taking part in research because there was nothing directly in it for them (1996, personal communication). This went against what Hope's Director of Teaching and Learning claimed (see above), but in the prevailing educational climate this was perhaps not surprising.

Of the Liverpool and J.M.U. students, only 2 from J.M.U. and 6 (from a much larger sample) from Liverpool failed to attend, thus a total sample of 33 were interviewed, which, with the addition of the pilot interviews, gave a grand total of 44 interviews.

The selection of interview participants was a stratified random one (30 by 10 by 10), except in that I was limited in my choice to those who had said that they were prepared to be interviewed, and, in the case of Hope students, whilst I received a very positive response in terms of the number of questionnaires returned (60 out of 200) very few were prepared to be interviewed, and in fact the 10 students whom I tentatively booked for interviews represented the vast majority of those who were prepared to take part, and thus were not really `random'. I am also well aware that those who were prepared to take part were likely to be those who had an `axe to grind', and wished to have their feelings put on record, and thus may not have been entirely representative. The stratification was done in order to go some way toward limiting my own `experimenter bias' - I had no wish simply to select participants who appeared likely to be those who would merely support any points I would wish to make, as I felt it necessary to make this as exploratory a study as possible.

The Institutions

Liverpool University was the first of what have become known as the `redbrick' universities. Founded in 1881, it has a long and distinguished history of academic excellence - in 1993 The Times `Good Universities Guide' rated it 19th nationally (O'Leary and Cannon, 1993, p136). As such it has arguably the highest status of the three institutions here.

John Moores University is rather different, being a former polytechnic, with the apparent status deficit that this implies. It could be argued that it is a `second best' option for many applicants after Liverpool University. The Times `Good Universities Guide' gives J.M.U. a 1993 ranking of 71. However, J.M.U. offers a range of more professionally and vocationally orientated subjects than are unavailable at Liv. U., and as such it may be the first choice of those desiring such a course. It is worth bearing in mind also that the criteria for comparison of academic institutions in this guide are not entirely fair. Rankings are based on, amongst other things, research income, staff to student ratios, number of staff Ph.D.s and number of postgraduate students, on all of which the former polytechnics are likely to score lower than the traditional universities, not because of straight-forward inferiority, but because of differences in philosophy and aims.

Liverpool Hope is a rapidly expanding college which (for now) is affiliated to Liverpool University. The Institute, as was, was formed in 1980 by the merger of two smaller colleges (St Katherine's and Notre Dame) and in 1996 had a total undergraduate population of 4,200 (Undergraduate Prospectus, 1996 entry, p9). In terms of the make-up of the three institutions' populations (and in particular, the size of their mature cohorts) marked differences can be seen.

Table 3.2: Percentages of Mature Students by Institution

Institution	% of Mature Students*	Total Undergrads**	Total Matures***
Liv.U.	17	9755	1900 (approx)
J.M.U.	38	11024++	4190 (approx)
Hope	33	4200 (approx)	1380 (approx)
	Mean % = 29.3		7470 (approx)

As can be seen from table 3.2 above, Liverpool University had less than half of the mature student percentage of J.M.U.. The question that needs to be asked at this point is why? Is it simply because more people over 21 apply to J.M.U. and Hope, or are there other structural and/or cultural factors at work here? It is certainly possible that J.M.U. has more older applicants. If we assume that Liverpool University is held in high esteem by applicants at large, it could be that mature applicants (who, as much of the literature mentioned thus far suggests, may have poor self-images where academic ability is concerned) may choose to apply to a less prestigious institution where they feel they will be taken more seriously and are more likely to be able to cope. It could also be the case, however, that Liverpool University has less inclusive policies over offering places, and that mature applicants are considered less favourably than traditionals. A separate piece of research which I performed concurrently (1996 pp23-31) suggested

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* Data obtained from Maynard and Pearsall (1995, p62).

** , *** Figures obtained from 1995/6 prospectuses for the said institutions. Figures given in prospectuses are approximations (to the nearest thousand). Given the nature of these institutions, it is likely that, as a percentage, there are many more part-timers in these institutions than at Liv.U., but exact figures for this were unavailable.

++ 1995/6 data unavailable. This is 1992 data from O'Leary and Cannon (1993, p137).

that this was indeed the case. Some admissions tutors demanded that mature applicants be twice as good as the traditionals because they were 'not needed' in a popular department (suggesting a perceived hierarchy of age-related 'quality' of student) and that any problems which occurred once they had enrolled (childcare problems for example) should have been thought about prior to coming and hence were, as far as the department itself was concerned, the student's own problems. This was certainly one aspect of the mature student experience which I intended to cover during the qualitative research.

However, within institutions, other trends are apparent. The majority of the mature students on Merseyside are concentrated at J.M.U. (38% of the student body) and at Hope (33% of the student body) while a below average 17% of the students at Liverpool University are mature. Possibly this is to be expected: the former polytechnics (such as J.M.U.) and colleges/institutes of higher education (such as Hope) have always had a more 'local' focus. Traditional, pre-1992 universities have always tended to look nationally (and internationally) for their students, and would be less likely to be attractive to mature students. Similarly, mature students could reasonably expect that a 'new' university (or university college) would be less prone to ageist institutional discrimination. As such, this spread of percentage participation of mature students may well be reflected in similar studies in any university city. This could be another fruitful area for future research.

As a region, Merseyside appears to have more mature students (as a percentage of the total student body) than the national average (D.f.E, figures). Table 3.3 (below) demonstrates that with a national average of 77% traditionals to 23% matures, the combined average for the three institutions covered by this research is 71% traditionals to 29% matures; somewhat more mature students than the national average.

Table 3.3: Comparison of Percentages of Traditional (<21) to Mature Age (>21) Students - National and Comparative Local*

	All U.K. Universities %	Liverpool University (Liv.U.) %	John Moores University (J.M.U.) %	Liverpool Hope University College (Hope) %	All Liverpool Institutions (Average %)
Traditional Students	77	83	62	67	71
Mature Students	23	17	38	33	29
Total:	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

The Questionnaires

The questionnaire data was structured in two parts. Firstly, personal details were requested:

1) Principal Subject(s),

2) Sex,

3) Age,

4) Year of Study,

5) Marital Status,

6) Ethnic Group,

* Numbers of part-time students are likely to vary between academic institutions.

7) Number of children (by age grouping),

8) Main Previous Occupation (with approximate dates),

9) Country of Birth,

10) Town and County where raised,

11) Academic Qualification(s),

12) Vocational Qualification(s).

Answers were used to make tentative assessments of the social make up of the mature students in this sample. They were used to develop an index of an individual's potential for success in life via higher education. One could hypothesise that a married woman with children has more obstacles to academic success to overcome than a married woman without children, who herself has more to overcome (if she does not have the understanding and encouragement of her partner) than a single woman. Indeed, a married woman with children may have a harder time as a full-time undergraduate than a married man with children, simply because society still expects the woman to be the chief child-carer, and moreover universities generally do not have adequate crèche facilities to meet demand.

The Mature Student Sample

Now that the background to the research has been elaborated upon, let us consider the characteristics of the respondents themselves.

To facilitate a better understanding of the nature of the sample represented in this thesis, a univariate (and a very limited, at this stage, bivariate and multivariate) analysis of the questionnaire responses was conducted. The results of this are presented here, to create a `biographical profile' of the Liverpool mature student population. Let us therefore consider the mature student in terms of age, sex, marital status and ethnicity - as well as noting choice of subjects studied and academic (vocational/ non vocational) background.

i) *Region of Origin*

As can readily be seen from table A9, we are dealing overwhelmingly with a `regional' sample. That is to say, the majority (in this case, 74%) are native to the north west (the next largest group being from the south east, at a mere 7.3%*).

ii) *Subject Choice and Year of Study*

As can be seen in table A24, the greatest concentrations of respondents are in the arts and social science faculties. There is also a surprisingly high concentration in the sciences. The figures presented in table 3.4, below, suggest that, in the main, the sample is fairly representative of Liv.U. students (similar data were unavailable for J.M.U. and Hope). It must be borne in mind that the prospectus data includes *all* undergraduates

* Pilcher (1995, p11) points out that the south east has larger numbers of 25-44 year olds than other regions because of its `economic vibrancy' and attractiveness to working age people. This may go some way to explaining the relative largeness of this figure in comparison with other regions.

(including mature, part time, overseas etc.) so should be viewed cautiously when used in comparison with a purely mature sample.

Table 3.4: Liv.U. - Number of Full-time Students by Faculty (total Undergraduates 1993/4)*

Subject	Number	% of Total	% of Sample
Science	2698	27.14	16.7
Social and Environmental Studies	2026	20.38	26.0
Arts	1807	18.1	20.8
Medicine and Dentistry	1638	16.47	0
Engineering	1009	10.14	9.4
Law	420	4.22	4.7
Veterinary Science	343	3.45	0
Total:	9941	100	

However, with the exception of science and social science students the figures are remarkably close (less than 2% difference). There were fewer science students in my sample (which could be a result of pre-degree science qualifications being harder to study for as an adult, usually part-time and evening, learning) than at Liv.U generally, and rather more social science students (possibly the result of social science departments being more attractive and/or welcoming to mature students**).

Table A4 shows respondents' years of study when they were completing the questionnaire. As can be seen, the majority of respondents (53.1%) were in fact second

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* Figures obtained from 1995/6 Liverpool University prospectus. Data was requested for J.M.U. and Hope, but was not given.

** Again, mature students could expect that a social science department would operate with less age-based institutional (and indeed personal) discrimination than more purely vocational departments.

years*, and only a small minority (4.1%) were in years 4 or 5. The latter result is to be expected as the majority of degrees are, in fact, 3 year courses - exceptions being languages (one extra year spent abroad), engineering 'sandwich' courses, Bachelor of Education degrees (3 years for 'ordinary' level, 4 years for 'honours'), Architecture (3 years for a B.A., a further 4 for BArch) and some of the P.A.M.s (professions allied to medicine).

What this means is that the majority of the respondents had had time to 'settle in' to their institutions, and to gain at least a year's experience of life as a mature student. Thus responses are likely to be more considered (and more useful) than they would be if, for example, a group of just first years in their first term were being questioned.

iii) *Marital Status*

As table A5 demonstrates, the vast majority (70.3%) of the sample were single, with the next largest group (21.9%) being those who were currently married.

iv) *Age (and Age Related Influences)*

Table A3 offers a breakdown of questionnaire respondents by age. The largest groups were in the 24 to 30 age group (12% at 24 years, 9.4% at 25 years, 8.3% at 26 years, 9.9 at 27 years, 7.8% at 28 years, 9.9 at 29 years and 6.8 at 30 years) with

* It must be borne in mind that this was not a specific target - students were randomly selected with no regard for their present year of study. Year of study was simply used as a variable for determining age at entry (i.e., present age minus year of study = age at entry).

numbers dropping off drastically after this age. This suggests that 'mature' students may still be mainly relatively young. However, these figures are slightly misleading, as they do not indicate the ages of the persons when they actually commenced their studies (a crucial part of the analysis). To this end, table A25 indicates ages of participants at the commencement of their degrees. The figures above would suggest that mature students are predominantly 30 years of age or less at entry (78.1% of the sample fall into this bracket) which is to be expected, given the data offered by Graham (1991) and the Department for Education (1994).

An attempt was made to compare the ages of the mature students in the sample with the ages of the local population generally (table 3.5, below). Regrettably the 1991 census data (O.P.C.S., 1993c) was not helpful, as its age categories for adults (children's ages being irrelevant here) were '18 to 29', '30 to 44' and similar increments thereafter. Unfortunately, the first category would also include all traditional age students as well as 'lates'. Thus, like is not being compared exactly with like here. However, what it does show is that mature students appear to be overwhelmingly relatively young, with 75.5% of the sample derived from a mere 17.7% of the population. Again, this would be expected, given Graham's (1991) findings and the Department for Education's (1994b) figures, and this endorses the reasons I had for selecting the particular age range in this study.

Table 3.5: Age of Sample Compared with Age of Merseyside Population (1991 Census)

Age	Merseyside General Population (% of total)	Research Sample (%)
18-29	17.7	75.5*
30-44	20.2	24.5
Total:	*37.9%*	*100%*

v) *Sex*

As table 3.6 (below) shows, there are fractionally more females in the research sample (as a percentage of the total) than in the Merseyside census sample (59.9% to 53.5%) which suggests that females are more inclined than males to return to study. Possible reasons for these sex differences in inclination will be discussed momentarily.

Table 3.6: A Sex Breakdown Comparison of Sample by Merseyside General Population (1991 Census, from O.P.C.S, 1993c)

	Merseyside (1991 Census)		Sample	
Sex	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Males	50,671	46.49	77	40.1
Females	58,318	53.51	115	59.9
Total	108,989	100	192	100

vi) *Social Class*

It is worth stressing that what was being measured was the *current* class positions of the respondents, rather than family background. The `main previous occupation' section (on which this analysis of class is based) needs some explanation. I was well aware that any definition of social class membership is fraught with

* In this case, 21 to 29 years only, thus the figures are not entirely comparable.

methodological danger, and also that any question requesting an individual's class membership details is a hostage to respondents' own individualism - many people who are objectively in one class will for various reasons see themselves as being quite another* . Moreover, as Abbott and Sapsford (1987 pp3-6, 11-13) rightly point out, the majority of the class based analyses available (not least Goldthorpe's) concentrate purely on *male* class membership, with female class membership measured by whatever her husband's (or father's in the case of a single woman) occupation is. Thus a female lawyer married to an unskilled manual worker would be measured as lower working class by most of the available definitions. For all of these reasons, I determined the safest option was to ask for brief work history details, and to assign a class category myself - this class category being based upon the individual student's own previous occupation, rather than opt for a 'head of household' determinant. Thus, I am taking the *individual* as the unit of class measurement rather than the family. The occupations of the questionnaire participants have been placed against Goldthorpe's definitions (1980, pp40-43) (table A8). Given that the sample under review here have been in the labour market for several years (no less than three, no more than twenty-four) it makes a great deal of sense to measure their class position from their own labour market position, and to consider their attitudes and experiences in relation to this.

* Roberts (1978, p6) for example found that in the Registrar General's occupational group AB (upper white collar/service class) 13% considered themselves working class and 5% didn't know what class they were. Of the group C1 (routine white collar) 24% considered themselves working class with 3% 'don't know'. Similar mismatches of objectivity and subjectivity were found for working class participants.

The large number of 'missing' students in the class analysis is a facet of the class schema: several of the questionnaire respondents were somewhat vague about their occupations. Two, for example offered 'housewife', another offered 'student', whilst others offered occupations which straddled several potential categories ('H.M. forces', 'police') without offering any qualifying descriptions. Hence, for statistical safety, they are omitted. Likewise, for the reasons given by Marshall et al (1988, p63) I am forced to omit those who only defined themselves as 'unemployed'. As Marshall et al ask, does the loss of a job also infer the loss of the class position which goes with it?

Table 3.7 (below) shows that according to the 1991 census data there were marginally more blue collar adults on Merseyside than in the North West generally (50.09% to 49.29%) and more in the North West than nationally (49.29% to 46.53%). Table 3.8 summarises the UK and Merseyside data and makes comparisons with the results of the research sample*.

* Note, because the census class data is based upon the Registrar General's six point scale, and my own data upon Goldthorpe's seven point scale, both groups have been compressed into the two general categories of 'blue collar' and 'white collar' for the purpose of this analysis.

Table 3.7: Census 1991 Data, Social Class in Great Britain, North West and Merseyside (10% Sample), by Numbers and Percent*

Social Class (Registrar General)	United Kingdom		North West Region		Merseyside Only	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
I	254,592	6.7	25,767	6.21	4,375	5.05
II	1,142,842	30.29	116,283	28.0	21,722	25.08
IIIi	452,469	11.99	50,412	12.16	10,652	12.30
Sub-Total	**1,849,903**	**48.98**	**192,462**	**46.37**	**36,749**	**42.43**
IIIii	1,071,621	28.4	122,792	29.62	25,628	29.60
IV	513,417	13.61	61,514	14.84	13,153	15.19
V	170,855	4.52	19,974	4.81	4,666	5.3
Sub-Total	**1,755,893**	**46.53**	**204,280**	**49.29**	**43447**	**50.09**
Missing	*98,126*	*2.6*	*17,751*	*4.28*	*6,385*	*7.37*
Total	**3,771,797**	**100**	**414,493**	**100**	**86,581**	**100**

Table 3.8: Summary of Merseyside Social Class (1991 Census) by Research Sample Social Class

	Merseyside (%)	Research Sample (%)
W.Collar	42.43	54.89
B.Collar	50.09	32.29

Table 3.8 demonstrates, in comparison with the Merseyside sample, there is an overrepresentation of white collar mature students and an under-representation of blue collars, which in social class terms makes the mature students similar to the traditionals, as can be demonstrated in table 3.9 (below) where *total* undergraduate social class percentages (1992 entry) are shown relative to the general population percentages and table 3.10 (below) which uses the Goldthorpe scale and compares the

* N.B. for tables 3.8 and 3.9, `missing' class values (non responses or unusable responses) have been excluded for the sake of simplicity.

class percentages of the sample with the levels in the general population as reported by Marshall et al (1988, p102).

Table 3.9: Admission to Higher Education by Social Group (Full- and Part-time) (Labour Party, 1995, p18)

Registrar General's Class Scale	Admitted to H.E in 1992	% of General Population
I	16.9	6.5
II	42.9	19.0
IIIi	12.8	22.5
Total W.Collar	**72.6**	**48.0**
IIIii	16.9	31.0
IV	8.2	15.5
V	2.3	5.5
Total B.Collar	**27.4**	**52.0**
Total	100%	100%

Table 3.10: Research Sample Social Class Percentages by General Population (Marshall et al, 1988)

Social Class (Goldthorpe)	Marshall et al Sample (1988) %	Research Sample %
I Upper Service	10.6	0.5
II Lower Service	18.8	26.6
III Routine White Collar	18.9	29.2
Total White Collar	**48.3**	**56.3**
IV Self Employed Manual	9.1	1.0
V Manual Supervisory	7.7	4.2
VI Skilled Manual	12.3	6.8
VII Semi/Unskilled Manual	22.6	19.8
Missing	0	12.0
Total Blue Collar	**51.7**	**43.8**
Total:	100%	100%

A direct comparison of the above two tables is difficult given the different class schemas used. However, it is clear that in both the total undergraduate body (table 3.9) and the specific mature student sample under examination here (table

3.10), the white collar groups are over-represented relative to the general population and the blue collar groups extremely underrepresented. How much of this is due to structural considerations will be discussed in chapter four. Needless to say, the under-representation of the working class in higher education is not a new discovery, but the extent to which they are self-excluded, as opposed to kept out by external barriers, continues to be hotly disputed. Gammage (1993, p25) suggests that the stereotypical assumptions made by blue collar groups about education do not help them.*

This is, of course, compounded, as Gammage goes on to point out with the very 'commercial' view of education held by policy makers (especially with regard to working class adults) where education exists,

> ... to get you somewhere, preferably profitable. It is about the good of society (i.e. the competitive, economically stable one where workers are flexible, well matched to changing demands and so on.)

This being so, the purpose of a 'blue collar' education (if such a term has applicability) in the 1990s would seem to be to provide flexible workers for the profit makers of the globalised economy, leaving the upper and middle classes to enjoy

* It should be pointed out that this is not an especially new argument, as it is very similar to Hoggart's (1957, pp78/9,84) characterisation of the working class 'them and us' mindset, where working class people ('us') would rather go without than be in debt to banks etc. ('them'). Education is an extension of this process, where working class people have pride in the fact of having worked for everything they have, however humble, and would see a return to education as forfeiting a right to self-respect, because a student grant comes from the government (another manifestation of 'them') and is seen as a debt.

education for its own sake. If Gammage (and indeed Hoggart) are correct, the working class collude in this process by their mistrust of learning. Gammage and Avis (1991, pp 286/7) both also blame the years of Conservative Party politics (particularly under Margaret Thatcher) for sidelining educational experts (teachers, teacher trainers and academics) and expressing a deep mistrust of their views, creating in the process a market orientated education system where 'cultural' learning (in the broadest sense of the term) becomes secondary to creating school leavers (and graduates) who directly match the needs of the job market.

All that being said, however, the relative percentages from the various blue and white-collar class categories require some discussion. The predominance of 'white collar' students has a long history (see Halsey, 1986, pp138-168), but the large numbers of class VII students is a rather more recent phenomenon. Egerton (1996, pp5,6) suggests that since the expansion of higher education in the late 1980s, students from blue collar households who begin, as she puts it, 'from a very low base' (presumably meaning unskilled occupations) have had a greater rate of increased participation in higher education*. According to her figures, white collar mature student participation increased by 46% between 1984 and 1992, but blue collar mature students increased numerically by 63.8%. This could possibly account for the relatively large size of class VII in this cohort - albeit, as a proportion, still slightly smaller than in the

* This may be a facet of increasing 'upskilling' in the work-force, where jobs increasingly require new qualifications to deal with advanced (and constantly updated) technology (see Gallie, 1994, pp 68/9).

general population. This suggests that the white collar hegemony in higher education is lessening, but still apparent.

However, do the figures in the tables above themselves hide other trends? What, for example is the relative class spread of the sexes?

vii) *Class/Sex:*

Table 3.11 (below) reveals both the differences in class make-up of the sexes, and the difference made to females by being in a couple. In the North West, Merseyside and my research sample white collar females were more likely to be in a relationship than not. However, the difference was most marked in the research sample, with 70.37% of females in a couple being of white collar origin (that is to say, prior to coming back into education). This could suggest two things. Firstly, that it is easier for white collar females to re-enter education than blue collar ones (the same being true of males, though not to such a great extent). Secondly, the figures suggest that a hypothesis surrounding notions of female subordination by their partners appears not to hold for this sample, as for both white collar and blue collar females the percentages are roughly representative of the Merseyside and North West populations - in the case of the white collar females perhaps even slightly higher. Perhaps the example of Gaynor (27, Psychology and Sociology, Hope) is increasingly typical:

Gaynor: He's (*her husband*) made up (*that she's at Hope*). He gives me a good kick up the arse every time I think about quitting. "Don't be so bloody silly! You've come this far, you're gonna finish."

Table 3.11: Summary of 1991 Census Data compared with Research Sample

	North West			Merseyside		
	Males	Females (total)	Females (in a couple)	Males	Females (total)	Females (in a couple)
W.Collar	40.39	61.72	63.35	36.48	62.2	64.39
B.Collar	52.67	34.76	34.71	51.7	29.64	29.95

	Research Sample		
	Males	Females (total)	Females (in a couple)
W.Collar	48.05	61.73	70.37
B.Collar	40.25	24.34	25.0

Hakim (1991, p103) suggests that working women (and those who did not put in an occupation would have been excluded from the sample for this analysis anyway) are much more likely to be a self-selected group than working men. She points out that for many women the option *not* to work exists, whereas this is less so for men. She further points out that the majority of these self-selected working women will choose jobs which fit in with their domestic roles (white collar occupations generally affording more autonomy), because (unlike their male partners) `work' is not the central focus of their lives, and as she points out,

> Dissatisfied women workers have the option of dropping out of the labour force and into the homemaker role. (ibid, p103)

Logically, following on from this, one might argue that these women, having opted *not* to work, may have the choice of then becoming students. This would go some way towards explaining the overrepresentation of females - and especially white collar females who, if they have partners, are likely to be in a relatively high income household, making the 'opt out' an easier decision - within the sample.

However, it is the relative position of the males in this sample which raises the most interesting questions. If the sample were to be representative, the blue collar males should account for roughly 52% of the total males (52.67% for the North West and 51.7% for Merseyside only). However, blue collar males account for only 40.25% of the males in the research sample*. Why?

Certainly it is possible that the 'lads' in Willis' (1977) study (or their North Western equivalents), assuming they wanted to get back into education, found it impossible to negotiate family responsibility and learning - not having the 'opting out' option that Hakim suggests is open to women. The 'lads' would now be in their mid- to late- thirties, and they remain comparatively thin on the ground as mature students. Perhaps the cultural norms alluded to by Willis, Gammage and Hoggart are insurmountable after all.

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* Gallie (op.cit) notes that the experience of technological change in the workplace is remarkably similar between the sexes, so this is unlikely to be a factor.

However, it would be wrong to view a rejection of education, particularly higher education, as automatically being the 'wrong' decision. Titmuss (1993, p81) suggests that for many adult learners, it is not 'pleasure' which motivates them - although, as West (1996) has shown, this may quickly change once the student has enrolled on a course and discovers that s/he does enjoy learning, often (significantly) for the first time.

Rudd (1984, pp 27/28) is at pains to point out that viewing working class rejection of higher education as bad decision making is based purely on arrogance. Such a decision, he suggests, is likely to be based on the weighing up of potential benefits (intellectual development, career opportunities, possible higher income) against the deficits (moving away from family and friends; dislodging onself from one's roots for the vague, and getting vaguer, promise of a well paid job at the end) when three years spent in the workforce could in itself bring about a fair amount of career progression.

Such balancing of benefits and deficits certainly appears to occur among mature (and potential mature) students. Grainger (1979, pp 237-239) states that on the extra-mural courses offered by his institution (Durham University) to a group of shop stewards who had been given time off work by their employers to attend, the majority worked hard and appeared to enjoy learning for its own sake. However, few of these eager learners were prepared to take their studies further upon completion.

Grainger claims that out of the seven hundred shop stewards who enrolled, fewer than twenty carried on into higher education - and he is at pains to point out that in no way can these be considered the elite, because for every one that went on to university there were at least three (in his opinion) who were capable of doing so, but who chose not to. Grainger concedes that cultural factors may be partly responsible for this low uptake (including a lack of confidence in their own abilities) but mostly it was a 'costing' exercise, as these shop stewards were aware that graduate status would not guarantee a higher income. As one of Grainger's former students noted:

> I can make more money 'on the tools' than I can in most of the (*white collar/ graduate*) jobs I've been offered.

Interestingly, within the research sample males appear to outnumber females in the upper echelons of both the non-manual (classes 1 to 3) and manual (classes 5,6 and 7), with 100% of the upper service class, although admittedly this is based upon a single individual (likewise, statistical inference based upon class 4 may not be particularly helpful given the very low numbers involved). Similarly, 62.5% of the manual supervisory and 84.6% of skilled manual groups are male. The sex ratio for lower service class is roughly 1 to 1. In the lowest groups of manual and non-manual (routine white collar and semi/unskilled manual) females predominate.

What this could suggest is that there is a gendered relationship to class for this particular sample. Indeed Marshall et al (1988, p64-65) suggest that sex itself carries

problems for class analysis which are relevant to this research. They point out that women's employment tends to be part-time and that it is likely to be interrupted by motherhood. The former may be a consequence of the latter, with child-free women being employed on a part-time basis because of employer fears of having to grant maternity leave to full-time female employees, and women with children taking part-time work to fit in with childcare requirements. In either case, it goes some way to explaining the relatively few females in the higher non-manual and manual groups here. Moreover, Marshall et al state that women's jobs tend to be of lower status and with fewer promotion prospects than males' anyway, thus the non-manual female is more likely to be a secretary than a company director and the manual female is more likely to work on a production line than be a skilled worker. This again offers some support for my findings on the social class composition of this sample, suggesting that they do in fact follow generalisable trends.

Marshall et al also reject Goldthorpe's notion that female class position is dependent upon that of their husbands. They suggest that women's class cannot be ignored in terms of its effect upon familial class and behaviour. They cite evidence which shows that, for example, in a family where the husband has a blue collar job and his wife a white collar job, different patterns of fertility and voting behaviour emerge than would be expected in consistently blue collar families. In terms of conventional wisdom alone this makes sense, because if one assumes that females still carry the greater burden of responsibility for the raising of children then their attitudes are likely

to be those most readily assimilated by children. Thus, female class position is vital to an understanding of the nature of family class structure.

viii) *Mature Student Entrance Qualifications - Nationally and Locally:*

An attempt was made to compare and contrast entrance qualifications for mature students nationally with those of the research sample. However, the Department for Education's figures prove unhelpful, insofar as vocational qualifications are all placed together under one category - allowing no discrimination between intermediate level, higher level and other qualifications - and their data includes the Scottish universities (and hence a wider range of qualifications than my own sample could offer, not least Scottish Highers) and a wider age range than my research sample, there being no cut off point. Their age classification for mature students of '21 to 25' and '25 plus' was impossible to compare directly with my own data.

What could be derived, however, was that far more of the research sample had A levels than the national population (46.4% to 28.12%) and vastly more of the research sample had Access qualifications than nationally (35.4% to 8.2%). However, there were some in the national figures who apparently had no entrance qualifications at all, which may well have skewed the data somewhat.

ix) *Race and Ethnicity*

As can be seen in table A6, the respondents were almost entirely white (98.4%). This is problematic in terms of offering any meaningful analysis of differences in the mature student experience by ethnic origin. This may be a statistical oddity, a fault in the methodology, or may indeed reflect the ethnic make-up of mature students in Merseyside. Suffice it to say that cross-tabulation of ethnicity with other variables would be largely meaningless for this sample.

Emergent Ideal Types

The data as presented in the preceding sections within this chapter suggest that the critical cut-off age for the sample is 30 years, when numbers decline steeply, and after which mature students are also different in that they are more likely to have children and are less likely to be geographically mobile (the latter in part likely to be a consequence of the former). Table 3.12 (below) offers a summary of region of origin by marital status by parental status.

Table 3.12: Region of Origin by Marital Status by Parental Status - A Summary

a) No Children

Marital Status	Region of Origin		Total No.
	North West	Other Regions	
Single	71 (36.9%)	42 (21.87%)	113 (58.8%)
Married	8 (4.16%)	1 (0.52%)	9 (4.68%)
No Longer Married	1 (0.52%)	0	1 (0.52%)
			Sub-Total 123

b) Children

Marital Status	Region of Origin		Total No
	North West	Other Regions	
Single	18 (9.37%)	4 (2.08%)	22 (11.4%)
Married	30 (15.6%)	3 (1.56%)	33 (17.18%)
No Longer Married	14 (7.29%)	0	14 (7.29%)
			Sub-Total 69
			Total No. 192

This table suggests that in this particular sample of mature students, single, childless people are by far the largest group (113, 58.8% of the total) and of these, local people form the majority, though a substantial minority are non-local. Of those students who are parents, local people form the overwhelming majority. Given the much larger number of non-parents than parents among the sample (123 to 69) as well as the greater regional diversity of the non-parents, it would appear that parental status is a much more significant variable than marital status in this instance.

When the variables of parental status and region of origin are combined with age, two "ideal types" of mature students emerge, which can be seen in summary in table 3.13 (below).

As table 3.13 demonstrates, 'lates' are by far the largest group, accounting for 118 of the total 192 sample. Thirty-nine people did not fit the typology and are thus excluded. However, the vast majority of the sample fell into one of the two main types.

Table 3.13: Mature Student Typologies - A Summary

Typology	Age	Parental Status	Region of Origin	Total number
'Late'	21 to 30 years at entry to higher education.	No children	Open. Geographically mobile.	118
'Returning'	31 to 40 years at entry to higher education.	Children	Local only. Little or no geographical mobility	35
Total				153

Missing = 39

However, I am well aware that my sample is *only* made up of full-timers, and that the typology may be very different if part-timers were added to the picture.

Attitudes and experiences

Having considered the social characteristics of the sample, let us now consider the attitudinal questions which were asked, and the reasoning behind the questions.

As has been stated earlier in this chapter, the main research questionnaire was essentially a refinement of the one used in the pilot study. Questions were presented in the form of a statement, with the questioning suffix "do you ..." followed by a five point attitude scale (Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree). This scale was subsequently contracted to three points (Agree; Neither agree nor Disagree; Disagree) for cross-tabulation. Some questions featured "additional comments" sections for participants to add their own responses, but these were not subsequently quantified because very few of the sample used the opportunity. The questions were as follows:

I) *"I found my previous study to be a useful preparation for university level work."*

This was an attempt to assess levels of satisfaction with pre-degree education.

ii) *"School was a pleasant experience"*

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, this can only be a "sketch" answer, because it cannot elaborate upon reasons *why* school was perceived as unpleasant, only whether or not it was so perceived. That aside, a strong dislike of school (a "disagree" or "strongly disagree" response) could offer a partial explanation for an early exit from the education process, as well as an examination of both institutional (the school) and personal (teachers and other pupils) discrimination in the school..

iii) *"Coming to university was always my intention after leaving school."*

This question is a crucial starting point in examining motivations behind mature entry. A "strongly agree" response would suggest that university was a long held ambition only recently realised, whereas a "strongly disagree" response could suggest either "push" factors, such as unemployment or lack of career mobility, or that the desire to go to university was sincere but late blooming.

iv) "My job/career after leaving school was satisfying to me."

As a supplement to the previous question this is a measurement of satisfaction with labour market position - crucially, regardless of what that position actually is.

v) *"University was my last resort."*

Again, this question serves as a "clarifier" for question iii.

vi) *"University has, so far, been a useful experience."*

Deliberately, participants were allowed to interpret "useful" in any way they liked - whether it was useful in purely vocational terms, or in more abstract "life enhancing" ways (subsequent questions clarified these points). As such this is a partial measurement of satisfaction with university life.

vii) *"Career enhancement was my primary motivation"*

viii) *"I think my career prospects will be improved for having done this degree."*

These questions measured the participants' levels of "vocationalism" regarding university education.

ix) *"Interest in the subject was my primary motivation for coming to university."*

This question was included in an attempt to contrast "vocational" attitudes with "liberal" attitudes towards higher education. A "strongly agree" response here would suggest that the participant values his/her studies *for their own sake*, rather than for future utilitarian merit.

x) *"Gaining admission to university was not a problem."*

This question was included as a possible measurement of institutional attitudes toward (and institutionally based discrimination against) mature applicants, but the sample (predominantly local people) interpreted it rather differently. For some 'the problem' was being restricted in their possible geographical areas of application (whether that be because of the relative expense of moving to a new city or merely the reality of having local responsibilities such as family).

xi) *"The teaching on my course is always helpful"*

This could be taken as a measurement of satisfaction, or otherwise, with relationships with staff. Again, this is a "sketch" response, requiring further elaboration from the qualitative data.

xii) *"Relationships with other students are good"*

In retrospect this question could have been clearer: it was my intention to gain responses as to how participants felt they fitted in amongst predominantly young students. In the event, however, the responses in the "additional comments" section (such as there were) suggested that they were interpreting the question as being about their relationships with other *mature* students. However, this question is still useful, as it highlights the participants' abilities in forming social support networks. The question of relationships with traditional age students had to be examined primarily in the qualitative evidence.

xiii) *Have you noticed any changes in relationships with family and friends since coming to university?*

xiv) *What are your plans after graduation?*

xv) *What difference (if any) do you think the degree will make to your career?*

These last three questions were presented without the five point scale - participants were simply given a space in which to write their responses. Again, however, few of the sample actually did respond in this way, and in retrospect it was felt that these questions would be much better used within the context of the qualitative analysis, as they required some degree of reflection on the part of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

IDEAL TYPOLOGY

Let us re-consider the ideal typology which emerged in chapter 3. The 192 full-time mature students in the sample were aged between 21 and 40 when they began their undergraduate careers. By comparing age at entry with region of origin and parental status a two-fold typology emerged. The `late' student is aged between 21 and 30 at entry, has no children and can be from any region. The `returning' student on the other hand is 31 to 40 years of age at entry, has children and is from the local area - in this case, the north west. Of the total 192, 153 fell into one or other of these categories. Let us now examine these types through cross-tabulations with other socio-demographic and biographical data.

Ideal Typology and The Socio-Demographics of The Sample

i) *Sex*

As table A28 demonstrates, females are in the majority in both of the `ideal' categories, accounting for 55.1% of `lates' but as many as 80% of `returning' students. Thus, this disparity increases with age - females outnumber the males by 4 to 1 (80% to 20%) in the `returning' sample.

ii) *Class*

In terms of class position, `late' and `returning' students show remarkable consistency. As table A30 demonstrates, both groups appear to be concentrated in three

of the Goldthorpe class categories: lower service (28.0% lates, 20.0% returnings), routine white collar (33.9% lates, 37.1% returnings) and semi/unskilled manual (19.5% lates and 20.0% of returnings). This suggests two things. Firstly, that mature students of all ages come overwhelmingly from white collar occupations (61.9% of lates and 57.1% of returnings are found in Goldthorpe classes 2 or 3). Secondly, that those who come from blue collar occupations do not appear to come from the skilled groups (only 5.1% of lates and 2.9% of returnings fall into this category). However, summary table 4.1 (below) demonstrates that there are differences according to sex within these ideal type/class groupings. Specifically, returning males are more likely than females to be from the lower service class, and less likely to be from routine non-manual and non-skilled manual occupational backgrounds. Among the females the main difference is that it is the lates, not the returnings, who are most likely to have held lower service class jobs.

Table 4.1: Summary of Ideal Types by Class and Sex

a) Males

CLASS	IDEAL TYPES				Total
	Late		Returning		
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	
Missing	13.2	7	14.3	1	8
Upper Service	1.9	1	-	-	1
Lower Service	32.2	17	42.9	3	20
Routine White Collar	20.8	11	-	-	11
Manual Supervisory	3.8	2	14.3	1	3
Skilled Manual	7.5	4	14.3	1	5
Semi/Un Skilled Manual	20.8	11	14.3	1	12
Total		*53*		*7*	*60*

b) Females

CLASS	IDEAL TYPES				Total
	Late		Returning		
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	
Missing	7.7	5	14.3	4	9
Upper Service	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Service	24.6	16	14.3	4	20
Routine White Collar	44.6	29	46.4	13	42
Manual Supervisory	1.5	1	3.6	1	2
Skilled Manual	3.1	2	-	-	2
Semi/Un Skilled Manual	18.5	12	21.4	6	18
Total		*65*		*28*	*93*

iii) *Marital Status*

As was expected, for the late students, `single' was the overwhelmingly predominant status, with 93.2% of lates coming into this category, as opposed to just 14.3% of returnings. For returnings, the largest single group was `married' (57.1%) with a further 18.5% falling into the `no longer married' category - and as table A47 (Sex by Marital Status) shows, 86.7% of `no longer married' students were female. A summary table of the ideal types, marital status and sex can be seen below (table 4.2) which shows that for both sexes, the late students are predominantly single (96.2% males, 90.8% females) and for the returnings, the majority are married students (71.4% males, 53.6% females). However, the main difference is the `no longer married' category; for all ideal type/sex combinations the numbers are negligible except for returning females, of whom 25.7% are in this category.

Table 4.2: Summary of Ideal Typologies by Marital Status and Sex

a) Males

Marital Status	Ideal Types				Total
	Late		Returning		
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Total
Single	96.2	51	28.6	2	53
Married	1.9	1	71.4	5	6
No Longer Married	1.9	1	-	-	1
Total	*100*	*53*	*100*	*7*	*60*

b) Females

Marital Status	Ideal Types				Total
	Late		Returning		
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Total
Single	90.8	59	10.7	3	61
Married	9.2	3	53.6	15	18
No Longer Married	-	-	25.7	10	10
Total	*100*	*62*	*100*	*28*	*89*

iv) *Institution Attended*

Table A27 appears to suggest that the mature students at Liv.U. are younger than their J.M.U. and Hope based peers - 98.8% of the Liv.U. students fall into the `late' classification - but the spread appears far more even in the other institutions (only 43.8% of J.M.U. and 51% of Hope students respectively fall into the `late' category). The ramifications of this finding are uncertain, but it *could* suggest that Liv.U. is simply more attractive to younger mature students, who are likely to be more ambitious (at least on a career enhancing level) than the returning group and hence more likely to want to attend a higher status, and more `marketable', institution. It could also suggest that the returning students are more likely to accept a place at an arguably lower status, and possibly less intimidating, institution - only 2.9% of returnings (which in actual numerical terms is *a single* individual) are Liv.U. students. Likewise, this could suggest

that returning students are less likely to apply to the higher status institutions such as Liv.U. in the first place, fearing some age-based institutional and personal discrimination. 'Lates' it could be argued would have less of a problem here. In terms of the institutional discrimination they are likely to be still young enough to be seen as an educational 'investment' (even in vocational subject areas), and in terms of personal discrimination, they may well *look* no older than the traditionals anyway.

v) *Subject Type (by Faculty)*

It was expected that the lates would form the majority for all faculty groups simply through weight of numbers, there being far more lates than returning students to begin with. As expected, in all faculty groups but one (education) the lates formed the majority in terms of raw numbers, the largest majority being in Arts (93.1%) and the smallest being in Science (69.6%). The largest total of mature students (both lates and returnings combined) was found in the Social Science faculty groups, which account for 30.1% of the total sample. In the Education faculties the returnings were in the majority (58.8%), which suggests that teaching is a profession entered either 'traditionally' or much later in life. It could also suggest, given that females predominate to such a large extent in the returning category, that education is rather more 'feminised' as well as 'aged' than the other disciplines.

vi) *Entrance Qualifications*

There is a notable difference between the late and returning students regarding the qualifications with which they enter the university system in the first place. Table

A31 shows that for those who entered with non-vocational qualifications (which in practice means all but one of the total sample) the largest group of lates were those with A levels (53.4%), whereas for the returnings, those with Access qualifications were the largest group (42.9%). In terms of vocational qualifications (table A32), the largest group in both categories were those with none at all (53.4% lates and 40% of returnings). This would suggest that routes into higher education for mature students are not too dissimilar to those of traditionals, especially in terms of non-vocational bias.

Having considered the ideal typology in terms of socio-demographics, let us now consider it with regard to the biographical variables.

Ideal Typology by Biographical Variables

i) *School Experience*

Table A37 demonstrates a clear difference between the lates and returnings with regard to their experiences of school. Late students were clearly happier with their school experiences than their returning peers, 42.4% of lates agreeing that school was pleasant with 42.9% of returnings *disagreeing*. It is possible that this may be a result of changes in the education system itself - many of the lates, for example, could have been at school after corporal punishment was finally eradicated from U.K. schools in the mid-1980s, which may have a bearing on their feelings towards the school experience. It may also be possible that their underachievement in schools is felt more strongly by the returnings who have had longer to build up resentment.

ii) *Job Satisfaction*

Again, table A38 shows a clear division between the late and the returning students in this sample. For the returnings, only 25.7% claim dissatisfaction with their jobs (40% actually being *satisfied*) but the late students appear far less satisfied, with 61% claiming to be dissatisfied with their jobs. A possible reason could be that the returnings, having had longer in the workforce, could have had more time to work their way up the career ladder and gain satisfying 'middle class' jobs. However, this hypothesis is not supportable on the basis of the data displayed in table A30 (referred to earlier in this chapter), which shows that class is more or less constant between the late and returning groups.

iii) *Motivations for Higher Study*

As shown later in chapter 5, motivations for mature entry are varied, and apparently contradictory motivations - pure academic interest and desired career mobility - need not necessarily be so. What do these various motivational variables reveal when cross-tabulated with the ideal-typology? In fact, as tables A34, A35 and A36 show, for the variables 'career enhancement' (A34), 'interest' (A35) and the perceived 'usefulness' of the degree in the job market (A36) there was very little difference between lates and returnings.

Table A34 indicates that 71.2% of lates and 71.4% of returnings agreed that they were motivated by potential career advancement, and that 16.1% of lates and 14.3% of returnings disagreed (a remarkable consistency). Similarly, table A35 shows that 66.9%

of lates and 60% of returnings agreed that 'interest' was a motivating factor, against 12.7% of lates and 17.1% of returnings who disagreed. Table A36 shows 86.4% of lates and 94.3% of returnings agreeing that they thought their degree studies would be useful to their careers, with only 3.4% of lates and 2.9% of returnings disagreeing.

Amongst participants' own assessments of whether their entrance to university was a 'last resort' (table A42), a slight difference was noted. More of the lates (73.7%) than returnings (57.1%) disagreed with the proposition, which suggests that more of the lates harboured long-standing ambitions to eventually attend university than did the returnings - or perhaps that these ambitions were lessening with advancing age.

It does appear from this that lates are somewhat more positive regarding university in itself than the returnings, and that many of the returnings, if they had had 'better' choices available (a well paid job, for example), would not have chosen to come to university. Table A44 considers this, by cross-tabulating the ideal typology with intention to attend university. Whilst both groups were in general agreement that university was not something which they had planned to do all along (56.8% of lates and 74.3% of returnings) it is clear that returnings were significantly less likely to claim that they were planning to eventually attend - only 8.6% of returnings claimed that they were planning to attend university all along compared with 35.6% of lates. This makes sense on a purely cultural level, as the emerging 'mass' higher education system has brought with it an emergent 'college culture', in which the majority of young people are now

expecting to gain higher education of one sort or another*. As such the late students could be seen as the cultural 'lag' between the new 'college' culture of the young and the old 'not for the likes of me' culture of their parents' generation (which could include the returning students and would thus explain their lesser ambitions toward eventual university entry) that came with the inevitable academic elitism that was part of the university system before the 1990s' expansion and before the removal of the distinction between universities and polytechnics.

iv) *The University Experience*

Having considered the variety of motivations for mature university entry, what of the experience of university itself? To consider this, the ideal typology was applied to three experiential variables: "relationships with other students are good" (table A39), "University has, so far, been a useful experience" (table A40), and "the teaching on my course(s) is always helpful" (table A41).

There seems to be a near consensus between the two groups that the teaching on their course(s) is helpful (though the students were free to interpret 'helpful' in any way they saw fit, which may cloud the data somewhat). This can be seen in table A41, with 45.8% of lates and 51.4% of returning students agreeing with the proposition, but there was a 9% difference between lates and returning students who were ambivalent (34.7%

* See Scott, 1995, p173, where he argues that this aspirant mentality is now internalised in by the young in the U.K. in the same way that it has been in the U.S.A. for decades.

of lates and 25.7% of returnings). Ultimately, however, there were far more mature students in the sample who were happy with their course teaching than were unhappy.

Again, in terms of relationships with other students (table A39) there is very little difference between the two groups here, both having apparently satisfying social networks within their institutions, with 81.4% of lates and 77.1% of returning students professing agreement with the proposition that relationships with other students are good. It would seem that social isolation was not a problem for the majority of this sample.

Summary

Mature student numbers do appear to diminish drastically after age 30 - there are 118 lates but only 35 returnings here - just as in Graham's sample. However, within this, the gender ratio changes from females being in a slight majority (55.1%) of lates to an overwhelming majority (80%) of returnings. Social class remains fairly constant across the two groups, although routine white collar females appear over-represented in both. Marital status changes between groups, from a huge majority of single people (93.2%) in the late group to a majority of married people (57.1%) in the returning group. Additionally, there are far more `no longer married' females than males (35.7% against 1.9%).

Liv.U. students appear to be the `youngest', with the largest proportion of late students (72%) and the smallest number of returnings (2.9%). The `age' of the students

appears to rise as the status of the institution, and possibly the expectation of age-based discrimination, lessens. J.M.U. has more returning and fewer late students than Liv.U. and Hope has more returning and fewer late students than J.M.U.. In terms of subject choice, lates are the majority in all faculties (which is natural given their greater numbers to begin with) except Education, where returnings (and specifically returning females) are in the ascendant.

Regarding the biographical variables, returnings are less happy with their school experience than lates, but are more satisfied with their careers to date. Very little difference was found regarding motivations for entry, although very few returnings claimed that coming to university was something they had always intended (8.6% of returnings against 35.6% of lates). Very little difference was noted between the groups regarding experience of teaching in university (generally positive) or relationships with other students (extremely positive).

It is worth noting that neither group appeared to have been subject to the 'push' factor of redundancy. Granted, in both groups the majority cited career enhancement as a motivation (and 'enhancement need not mean ending unemployment, it could mean exactly what it suggests), but also the majority in both groups cited interest as a motivation. Thus, the notion that the 'returning' students are doing so because of lack of other, more appealing, employment options, does not appear to apply. For the 'late' students, motivation appears to be dissatisfaction with their present jobs rather than an

absence of them*. Thus, unemployment appears not to have been a significant factor in motivation here.

* Questionnaire responses where the participants cited `unemployed' as the previous job are contained within the `missing' category. In practice, however, there were only two questionnaires that were filled in in this way. The rest (of the `missing' category) offered some form of occupation in their responses.

CHAPTER 5

ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION

Interest and Ambition: Motivations For a Return To Education

The first, and indeed arguably most important, question to ask of mature students is `why?'. What is it that prompts adults, often with financial and familial responsibilities, to enter university at all. To answer this, two separate, but related, attitude questions were included in the questionnaire. The first was, `Interest was my primary motivation for entering university' (table A20), and the second, `Career enhancement was my primary motivation for entering university' (table A18). Again, I am well aware that had I included part-timers in the sample the variety of responses would probably be very different.

Whilst it is perfectly possible that both could command positive responses from the same individual with participants rating interest and career goals similarly (this issue will be considered shortly), I was myself treating them as a continuum: purely `academic' interest at one end and a more instrumentally minded `vocational' interest at the other. It should be noted that these labels do not necessarily apply to subject choices - a degree in Latin may be vocational if you wish to become a librarian or a priest and a degree in civil engineering is entirely academic if the said graduate then chooses to work in a bank. Thus, it may be that a vocationally minded mature student of, say, sociology, is working on the principle that a degree - *any* degree - is a career enhancer, and thus *any* degree could be considered vocational*.

* See chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of this point.

The two statements, and the attitudes given in response to them by the questionnaire respondents, will be considered separately, and then together. Table A72 offers a cross-tabulation of these responses. There does appear to be a relationship between the two variables, with high scores on one being matched by similar scores on the other. 65.1% of the sample agreed with the proposition that interest was a motivation, and 70.4% also agreed with the second proposition. "Interest" and "career enhancement" were therefore both motivating factors for most of these students.

It was expected that 'interest' would be more of a consideration for Liv.U. and possibly Hope students than for those at J.M.U., simply because the more vocational orientation of J.M.U. as an institution would lend itself to such applicants. However, a general trend towards both interest and career enhancement as a motivation was found to be the case (tables A76 and A77), and consistently so across institutions, with 67% of Liv.U students, 78.3% of J.M.U. students and 76.7% of Hope students agreed that interest was a primary motivation and 66.1% of Liv.U. students, 65.2% of J.M.U. students and 63.3% of Hope students all agreeing with the proposition that career enhancement was their primary motivation. When responses were divided by sex (tables A73 and A77), no significant differences were detected.

These figures represent fairly consistent percentages of agreement responses between the sexes and across institutions, with 66.7% of male mature students at Liv.U. offering such responses, compared with 75% at J.M.U. and 81.8% at Hope. For female mature students the percentage of such responses was similar for Liv.U. (65.5%), rather lower at J.M.U. (54.5) and somewhere in between for Hope. What the huge difference in percentages between males and females at J.M.U. and Hope suggests is uncertain.

However, a great many of the females at Hope were trainee primary school teachers, and thus wholly vocational, which could partially explain the sex difference in this particular institution. An explanation for the difference at J.M.U. is less easily formulated.

As table A74 suggests, in all faculties, interest seemed to be the motivating factor. In the arts faculties, 57.5% of respondents agreed with the proposition, as did 75% of science students and 64% of social science students (numbers of respondents in other faculties were too small for meaningful analysis here). Interestingly, these percentage differences appear counter-intuitive. It had been expected that arts and social science students would place interest as a far higher consideration than science students. Having said that, in the particular case of mature students, gaining a place on a science degree will potentially involve considerable lifestyle rearrangement. In terms of the classroom hours needed to complete pre-degree courses, science subjects will be far more time consuming that arts or social sciences. Thus, the mature science undergraduate may have had to attend night school several times a week over a long period, or have done an extra pre-degree 'foundation' year at university to qualify for admission. Hence, one might expect that base levels of interest would have to be very high in mature science students, otherwise they would be unlikely to survive the rigours and ordeals of pre-degree qualification.

Could these percentages also suggest a certain pessimism regarding the career enhancing potential of (mature) graduate status? Table A19 suggests not, as the majority of participants (88.5%) appeared to believe that their degrees would enhance their job prospects, and as table A113 (appendix) suggests, interest in a subject and the perception of its career enhancing properties appear to be related.

Let us now consider in more detail career enhancement as a motivation for mature entry. Table A78 is a cross-tabulation of the responses to university as a career enhancement choice, and of the respondents' opinions of their chosen subject's career enhancing properties (response to the statement "my degree will enhance my career prospects"). The results suggest that career enhancement as a motivation is very closely related to a perception of the degree's career enhancing properties (94.9% of those who agreed with the latter also agreed with the former proposition). It is worth noting that a positive (albeit slight) correlation of 0.3514 (0.001 level)* was found between these two variables (Table A82), suggesting that if students are attending university to gain a foothold in the job market, then they do in fact believe it will help them to do so.

As with `interest', attitudes towards career enhancement were broken down by institution, the assumption being that J.M.U., being of a more vocational orientation, would attract a greater percentage of mature students eager to enhance their career prospects. However, no discernible difference between institutions was detectable regarding these attitudes, with nearly three-quarters of the participants from each institution agreeing that career enhancement was their primary motivation (see table A76).

* DeVaus (1986, p182) suggests that for social scientific research, a positive correlation of 0.35 at the 0.01 level is significant but only moderately so, and it may be down to chance and thus not representative of the population as a whole. That this particular correlation was significant to the 0.001 level suggests a slight but more generalisable correlation.

Given that the sample, regardless of institution, appeared to have such similar attitudes towards career advancement, what then of disciplinary variations? One would expect, for example, a student of Law to be more 'careerist' than a student of English*. Table A78 offers the actual responses grouped by faculty. As with comparisons of interest by faculty, only arts, science and social science offered meaningful numbers of respondents. In this case 67.5% of arts, 78.1% of science and 64% of social science students agreed that career enhancement was a primary motivation. How this was related to the respondents' own future labour market expectations is discussed in chapter six.

Reasons for Delayed Entry to H.E.

In retrospect, this question could have been rather redundant, as it was partially answered within the framework of the answers to 'what led you to university?' However, the question in this form did elicit some more detailed answers from the sample. One of the first things to note was how many expressed the view, especially in the interviews, that their experiences of school (both positive and negative) had shaped their opinions of education generally, in many cases putting them off further study.

Of the 192 questionnaire respondents, 38% disagreed or strongly disagreed that school was a pleasant experience. 34% expressed a liking for school, leaving 27% apparently ambivalent (see table A13).

* Although it is worth remembering that students pursuing courses which appear on the National Curriculum (English, maths, modern languages, history, geography and general science) are at liberty to pursue a teaching certificate after they graduate - and arguably, gain higher status than they would if they had done a BEd degree - thus these subjects may yet prove to be vocational for the undergraduates concerned, and this is a consideration which may affect the data.

Of those participants interviewed, among the strongest opinions expressed were those of Vera (aged 24) and Roni (aged 25), both Liverpool University students, studying sociology.

Vera: School was a terrible experience. I left with, like, 2 O levels, and I had no intention of carrying on in the education system.

A.M.: So why was school so bad?

Vera: I don't know. I just wasn't interested in what they had to say really. It was just a dreadful, *dreadful*, really *horrible* experience.

A.M.: What was it that you didn't like?

Vera: I didn't like the people, the teachers, my old housemaster. I felt that he picked on me, stuff like that.

A.M. Why did you feel that?

Vera: I don't know, it was like every time something went wrong it was, '*You, you're* responsible!' (*pause*) I just felt I was a little bit discriminated against ... I wouldn't say I was a trouble maker, but I got in with the wrong crowd. You know, one thing led to another ... I was, like, written off by most at my school, and also because I'm dyslexic as well, they kind of wrote me off basically.

Consider Roni's very similar feelings:

Roni: I had a bad experience with school. It was a nightmare really. I had learning difficulties - I'm dyslexic - and basically they ignored it! And because they ignored me I used to act up, act the fool. It was my way of getting attention. And I did need *help!*

Janice (41, psychology and sociology, Hope) had similar experiences, but appeared to be less bitter - possibly this was a reflection of her greater age.

Janice: I was dyslexic. I had one teacher, an English teacher, who kept me behind each week for spelling lessons and stuff, which I suppose was good of her - I mean, she didn't have to do it - but other than that teachers really didn't understand the problem. There was no encouragement at school for me to go on and do well in my O levels or anything. It was, `You're in second to bottom class, forget it'. Factory fodder, basically. So I left and became a shop assistant and got married at 16.

Eddie (25, combined honours, Liv.U.) and Gaynor (27, psychology and sociology, Hope) and Erica (24, sociology, Liv.U.) voiced more general misgivings about the perceived barbarism they had experienced in school.

Eddie: I hated every minute. I just wasn't interested. I was *bored.* It doesn't help as well when the school's run by priest and you got whacked over

the arse with a Dunlop green-flash for everything. There was one priest who'd jump off the chair when he was giving you the strap. There was another one - Father John - a right bastard - he'd hit people over the arse with a bacon slicer! We were eleven year olds, and he'd have these kids in tears, *constantly!* You'd get hit for *anything* at our school. You just had to get used to it.

Gaynor: We had this teacher as well, and all she'd ever do was shout at us. I mean she was probably having problems at home, like, but she took it out on us. Plus, coming from Liverpool 8, a lot of the middle class teachers treat you like scum anyway. It was just (*pause*) we were worthless as far as they were concerned.

Erica: It was a strict school but (*pause*). They had a system of rewards and punishments. If you didn't do well they had a `dunces' cap they made you wear, and I had to wear it a lot. It did mark me psychologically, I think.

Sandra (28, molecular biology, Liv.U.) resented the coercive nature of schooling:

Sandra: I didn't like it at all. That's why I didn't want to carry on after my A levels. I did very little work for my A levels because I thought it was a waste of time. I'd left school and gone to a technical college to do my A levels thinking it would be better, but it was just as bad. I just hated it. The things they make you do in school, like P.E., which I'm basically

crap at, and we were forced to do it, twice a week. Things like that - and religion lessons as well. Rubbish! I wasn't interested.

Chris (29, Sociology, Liv.U.) felt that as a working class child in a school in a middle class area he was victimised by the other (middle class) children, which led him to react violently.

Chris: They used to rip the piss out of me for my clothes. My shirt wasn't white, it was grey - it wasn't brand new. But I had steel toe-capped shoes, which really hurt when you kicked someone with them, so (*long pause*) I left at the first opportunity, basically.

Conversely, there appeared to be several mature students in this sample who had enjoyed school *too* much - albeit usually the extra-curricular aspects - and had their chances of academic success ruined by the fact that this pleasurable extra-curricular activity (both sanctioned and illicit) took priority over their school work. This particular scenario seemed particularly (though not exclusively) true of the J.M.U. students whom I interviewed - witness Simon (27, building surveying, J.M.U.), Tony (30, maths, J.M.U.) and Ursula (29, law, Liv.U.):

Simon: I just used to get into trouble, hang around with the wrong kids and that, and I went on a downward spiral. I was a 'trouble maker'. I never got into *real* trouble, I never got expelled or anything. And I took the less academic subjects. I didn't want to do physics or biology, I wanted to do woodwork and metalwork and be with my mates. I mean the teachers

(*long pause*). I've come around since - I was wrong and they were right - but that's the way it was. I screwed up. I wasted 5 years. I can't blame the teachers for that.

Tony: I can't remember it (*school*) very well. I enjoyed it, but I didn't see the point of it at the time. I think I was too immature to be honest. I can't say I had any bad experiences, but I just didn't do anything. I couldn't see the goal at the end. I got maths and computing O-level, but that's about it. I was lazy basically.

Ursula: I think I was quite privileged to be honest, because I was at a small girls grammar school, and I was really good at drama and sports and things, so I had a good school life, but because I wanted to be an actor I didn't take the academic side seriously, so I didn't get much in the way of qualifications. I didn't get *any*, actually.

Some students, mostly but not exclusively those at Liverpool University, recounted similar experiences, but were apparently less inclined to blame themselves for their lack of success. Consider Martin and Todd (25 and 27 respectively, both sociology at Liv.U.); Marilyn (25, combined honours, Liv.U.), Stan (27, civil engineering, Liv.U.) and Sophie (34, geology, J.M.U.):

Martin: I think I learned to swing the lead at school. School basically only taught me how to swing the lead (*truant*). I didn't want to be in class. I'd much rather be running round in the fields. I'd much rather (*pause*) I dunno, be

learning something I could see some value in, rather than being repeatedly told, 'This is what you're gonna need for the rest of your life'. To which I reply, 'Well, how do *you* know what the rest of my life is gonna be like?' So I just thought I'd do my own education.

Todd: I wasn't interested in the work. I had good friends and the only thing I looked forward to was playing sport.

Marilyn: I didn't like the academic stuff. The 'arty' stuff I liked. I wasn't mad on English, maths, history and stuff, but I did alright. I passed them.

Stan: I left school with no qualifications. I was going to do O levels, but I ended up being put into C.S.E. groups, and I just lost interest at that point.

Sophie: I liked it (*school*) but it's funny how they write you off. I was shy, so they put me down for C.S.E.s rather than O levels, which is *disgusting!* I stayed on to get my O levels, which surprised them, and then I stayed on to do A levels - history and English - but I think I woke up to the fact that they were all pigs, and I'm glad I dropped out half way through. My O level grades were enough to get me into nursing, so ...

Stan and Sophie were particularly interesting because they appeared to be blaming the school for their own lack of motivation.

Several students mentioned external factors as contributing towards their underachievement. Several noted family problems of one sort or another - mostly financial. Consider Claire, 35, who was studying Russian and German at J.M.U..

Claire: Well, my excuse is that my mum died and my father wasn't there either, and my brother - he was 18 - he became my legal guardian, and that's my excuse. I was shy, I didn't have any friends. By the time I was 18 I was tired - too tired. I just wanted a holiday basically! (*laughs*)

See also Nicky (33, urban estate management, J.M.U.) and Gaynor (27, psychology and sociology, Hope):

Nicky: I have to admit I wasn't too keen to go into higher education back then. I left school in 1978 and my first child was born in 1979, and that was the first of 6! So there were things of greater consideration than higher education back then.

Gaynor: I was advised to stay on at school - I got 5 O levels - but I didn't see the point at the time. Besides, we needed the money. I mean, I had a job to go to. It wasn't a *great* job, but it kept me in ciggies. That was enough at the time.

Having seen that for many of the sample the school experience was pivotal in putting them off university, at least for a time, the next point to consider is how far

university was a long held dream, and how far it was a reaction to circumstances. For example, were they 'pulled' by the allure of academia, or 'pushed' by (for instance) poor career prospects.

With the questionnaire sample, the measurement of intention to eventually attend university was relatively easy. As can be seen in table A14, a full 60% disagreed with the proposition that university was always an eventual goal. However, interview responses were more varied - because of the variety of life experiences and hence the variety of reasons for delayed university entry - and it is worth considering a number of these. Witness Dave (28), Karen (23), Todd (27) Patsy (31) and Martin (26) all sociology, all Liv.U., and Nicky (33, urban estate management, J.M.U.):

Dave: The honest answer is that that was what my parents wanted, and at the time I didn't want to do anything they wanted me to do.

Karen: I was planning to be a nurse, and that was all I was interested in.

Todd: I suppose it was coming from a very working class background. It was natural for me, or for them, to want me to go out and get a job. I had to 'pay my own way' and that sort of thing, and I didn't even know about university when I was at school. I was never pushed by my parents. As far as education was concerned (*long pause*). My father was a pit man, a coal man, and he was never interested in my qualifications really. That goes for both parents. Er, (*long pause*) I was just expected to get a job, I think.

Patsy: I never thought that someone like me could go to university - I was from a council house, working class background and we didn't have a lot of money and (*pause*) I never imagined, no. It just never entered my head. I left school, spent 4 or 5 months being unemployed, which was partly my own fault. I was so shy I couldn't imagine myself in a work situation, actually meeting strangers and mixing in, fitting in, and I just totally panicked. And I just, kind of, sat at home thinking, 'What am I going to do with my life?' I didn't even have a clue as to what I was going to do.

Martin: My parents couldn't afford to send me, so I had to get the money together to send myself, so that took a while.

Tony: I got offered a job. I didn't think you needed a university qualification to get a job. I know better now.

Nicky: I think at the time, looking at doing a degree, there was the feeling that anyone who did a degree had to be supremely clever and that it was way above my level of intelligence. I think there's only one person out of everyone I knew in my school who went on to university, and he became a doctor. I don't know. I think it's just that I didn't have the confidence.

See also Nadia (29, geography, Liv.U.), Tom (29, geology, Liv.U.) and Mary (28, psychology, Liv.U.):

Nadia: I would have liked to have gone (*pause*). I would have liked to have done my A-levels, but domestic circumstances prevented me - I had to get out and work, really. So I didn't do any A levels, and then I just had to keep paying the rent, so I could never stop working and go back into education.

Tom: I wanted to do something practical rather than theoretical. It was right at the time, but now I think I need something more theoretical.

Mary: I wasn't interested back then, I wanted to work. Not many of my friends did A-levels either, which I'm sure influenced me. I'm sure that had a lot to do with it.

Claire (35, Russian and German, J.M.U.) *did* in fact go to university when she was 18, but floundered. She was unique among the sample in this.

Claire: I got 3 A levels - a 'B' in general studies, a 'B' in French and a 'C' in German. I went to Bangor, but I got kicked out for not working.

Still others had intended to go at age 18, but were held back by poor exam results. Witness Liz (24, nursing, Liv.U.), Schad (28, psychology, Liv.U.) and Mike (27, geography, Liv.U.):

Liz: I did my A levels, and I had intended to go and do medicine, but I didn't get the grades, so I took three years out basically deciding what to do with my life. But I always intended to go to university eventually.

Schad: I didn't do very well in my O levels - I took 9 and passed 3 - and then I went to 6th form and took another 4 and a couple of AO levels and just took another year doing that, but by then I was so sick of the whole thing.

Mike: I'd seen most of my friends go to university and I think the only reason I didn't go when they did was because I wasn't very good at exams. So (*pause*) I actually didn't get the requirements from my A levels you see. Er (*pause*) well, obviously I had the choice of retaking my exams, but I didn't think that would achieve a lot, y'know. Going into work would get some actual work experience in the *real* world. I think when I was working that the idea was that I would like to go to university, but by what route I wasn't sure.

In considering the motivation to enter higher education, two questions present themselves. Firstly, what is it that prompted a return to education in the first place (a question partially answered in the immediately preceding pages) and secondly, what was it that these students expected a degree to do for them?

Regarding the first of these questions, a high proportion of the questionnaire respondents claimed not to have been satisfied with their jobs and/or careers since leaving school. As table A15 shows, a full 50% of respondents were dissatisfied with

their jobs, and a further 21.9% were ambivalent, leaving only 28.2% satisfied. Patsy (31, sociology, Liv.U.) sums up these feelings quite adequately.

Patsy: Well, I'd been doing the same job for 10 years, and I thought there must be more to life than this, and suddenly - I was union rep - and an invitation landed on my desk to go and study at Ruskin College (*Oxford*), and I just thought, 'Ooh, this doesn't sound too bad, I'll have a go'. And I got in and (*pause*). More or less everyone who goes to Ruskin goes on to university and I realised that that was what I wanted as well.

A.M. So this wasn't something you'd planned to do from school then?

Patsy: No! *Definitely* not! About five years ago you could never have convinced me that I'd go to university.

This last statement is particularly significant, given that Ruskin College diplomas take two years to complete and Patsy had been at university for a further two! Thus, higher education seemed to have been something of a 'Damascus Road' conversion for her.

Wendy (30, geography, Liv.U.), on the other hand, had had higher education in mind for a while, and she cited redundancy as prompting her into re-entering education.

Wendy: I'd been thinking about it for a long time, and after I'd got made redundant from a job I didn't like anyway, it just prompted me into thinking, 'Now is the right time!'

Dave (28, sociology and social policy, Liv.U.) also indicated boredom as a reason for going into higher education, but qualified it with an oblique reference to credentialism:

Dave: Erm (*pause*) Why did I come to university? Boredom. And a piece of paper.

A.M. Which piece of paper was this?

Dave: The piece of paper that could get me the job I knew I could do *without* the piece of paper (*degree certificate*).

This suggests, if Dave is at all typical, that there may be a level of bitterness inherent in the mature student experience, with some seeing education as a means to an end, but that they are being forced to compete for work on someone else's (employer's) terms. However, since all the other interviewees expressed more positive reasons for attending university, it could be inferred that Dave's experience was not representative.

As can be seen in table A15, half of the questionnaire respondents *disagreed* that their job prior to coming back into education was satisfying. A few of those interviewed claimed that they had held good jobs; Karen (23, sociology, Liv.U.) trained as a nurse

before university, as did Sophie (32, geology, J.M.U.) and Sandra (28, molecular biology, Liv.U.).

Sophie: I hated nursing! (*laughs*) No, I don't hate nursing. I just hate all the bureaucracy involved. They have too many admin staff. Just like here (*university*).

Martin was an instructor in an 'outdoor centre' - a job he only left when he was forced to because of breaking his collar bone, a move which prompted his re-entry into education. Likewise, Nicky (33, urban estate management, J.M.U.) claimed injury as an initial motivation:

Nicky: I was working in a factory, I slipped a disc and found that I was actually better off on the sick than working. So I was actually on my way to the doctor's, and I saw a little advert on the bus advertising a college open day. So I took myself along to Halton College and basically I'd thought of doing accounting, but they didn't have that, so I enrolled on a BTech doing business management, and at the end of the first year I thought, 'What now?' So I started applying to universities.

Indeed, Nicky's account seems not dissimilar to the kind of 'Damascus Road' experience offered by Patsy.

Most displayed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with their working lives: from Mike (27, geography, Liv.U.) who came into education because he was facing

redundancy to Todd (27, sociology, Liv.U.) who claimed his work was adversely affecting his well-being.

Mike: I was actually going, sort of, nowhere, y'know really, and when I actually came to university, that year, the firm I worked for, I mean there were rumours going round that they were going to lay off some workers. And for the past two years I'd been doing the courses with the O.U., so I thought in the end, you know, I can actually *do* this part-time, so why not do it full-time?

Todd: At that particular time unemployment was quite high, and I was just, sort of, desperate for work. I ended up delivering pop - I got the job through a friend - which was probably the worst time in my life. At that particular time I just thought, 'Well, this is life'. I'd seen my parents, I'd seen my dad get up at 5.30am every morning - for 30 years or something. I worked for six years in a factory. I was very unhappy - very well paid, but very unhappy - and then it made me ill, the work. It actually made me ill. I was working continental shifts, night shifts, split shifts. It was crazy, totally crazy, I was *really* unhappy.

Mike was a particularly interesting case, because he claimed he left work to come to university at the point in time when he was about to be made redundant, thus making a pro-active as opposed to reactive move into higher education - jumping before he was pushed, so to speak.

J.M.U. and Hope students also reported less than pleasurable work histories: witness for example Claire (35, Russian and German, J.M.U.) and Gaynor (27, psychology and sociology, Hope):

Claire: I was a dinner lady for 5 years. (*sarcastically*) That was thrilling! I've done lots of *lovely* things, like washing up, being a waitress - dropping large bottles of tomato ketchup - cleaning shops. Not a very exciting career, just doing the things that other people don't like doing, basically.

Gaynor: Just lots of crappy little jobs basically.

Disliking their jobs was most common among the 'late' (younger) students, but both groups were interested in boosting their careers. Potential career enhancement was a primary motivation for most of the students, with 71.4% agreeing that potential career advancement was a motivation. Witness the attitudes of Edith (40, business administration, J.M.U.), Simon (27, building surveying, J.M.U.), Sandra (28, molecular biology, Liv.U.) and Eddie (25, combined honours, Liv.U.).

Edith: I went on from my H.N.D.. I wasn't going to, I'd thought two years was enough, but with the job market being what it was.

A.M.: So what was it led you to the H.N.D.?

Edith: The job market! (*laughs*)

Simon: I'd gone as far as I could career wise, and I'd always been interested in buildings, architecture, so it seemed the logical step to do a degree.

Sandra: I'd been nursing for five years, since qualifying, and I didn't really like the changes that were going on in the N.H.S. and things. So I saw it (*university*) as a way out.

Eddie: I was a barber, and my whole clientele was students, and I thought, `I can do that'. So I did. That's it basically. (*My job*) was just something I did when I left school. I saw a lot of people having a lot of fun and I thought, `That's for me!'

Other interviewees offered a variety of reasons for their late entry. As we have already seen, some indicated that university was something that they had always intended to do - albeit a rather vague intention - but that extraneous factors had kept them out of education at the `appropriate' (traditional) age. These issues will be returned to shortly.

Motivations and the ideal types

It may be useful in the meantime to set the evidence presented in this chapter more firmly in the context of ideal types of mature students that were sketched earlier. The lates were the more likely to express job dissatisfaction, but their occupational class profile was not inferior to that of the returning students. The lates were more

dissatisfied with similar jobs - generally a mixture of lower service class, routine non-manual and non-skilled manual. However, the lates were less likely to have disliked school. In this respect there was less of a barrier to overcome in returning to education. They were also the better-qualified academically, typically with A-levels. There was a fairly even sex balance in this group, men and women who were mostly still single, whose careers had not made the progress that they had possibly expected, or at least hoped for. A significant minority had always felt that eventually they would proceed into higher education. The catalyst appeared to be career frustration. Very few had become skilled workers, or risen into the service class proper. No doubt some were hitting a `graduate barrier' which they intended to overcome.

The returning students had been doing similar jobs, but expressed less dissatisfaction with these. They were mostly women, either married or no longer married, typically with dependant children. They appeared to have been rethinking their life situations and life chances. Most had disliked school, and had been glad to leave, and at the time most seemed to have been satisfied with their decisions and the adult lives into which they embarked. In their thirties, however, many appeared to have re-assessed their situations. They seemed to have realised that they could have been higher achievers educationally, and in employment. They still had the greater part of their adult lives ahead and had decided to give their life chances a boost, initially by returning to further education and testing out their capabilities, typically on Access courses. As we shall see in the next chapter, most of these thirty-something females were in domestic situations which made career breaks, while they resumed full-time education, a realistic option.

CHAPTER 6

BEING A STUDENT

Academic Background

Tables A10 and A11 profile the questionnaire sample's academic backgrounds. A10 gives their non-vocational qualifications (`O'level, `A'level, Access etc.) and A11 their vocational qualifications (N.V.Q., City and Guilds, BTech, O.N.C., H.N.C. etc.). Regrettably, I neglected to ask when the qualifications were obtained, so it is impossible to know how many of these qualifications were obtained at or immediately after school, and how many were pursued in adult life.

Table A10 divides the non-vocational qualifications into Ordinary (O level, C.S.E. and G.C.S.E.) and Advanced (A level and Scottish Highers). It proved impossible to produce a single measurement of the sample's number of passes or grades obtained. There were just too many variations. Some respondents had only two A levels and others as many as four, passed at a variety of grades. Table A10 highlights *possession* of at least one A level rather than number or grades achieved. Access qualifications are listed separately. They are not assumed to be inferior to A-levels but they are qualitatively different.

Vocational qualifications are organised here into three categories: "Intermediate" (G.N.V.Q., N.V.Q., Btech, O.N.C., O.N.D.), "Higher" (H.N.D., H.N.C.), and "Other" for those qualifications which do not fit comfortably into either of the previous two categories (such as R.S.A. certificates).

As can be seen from the tables the majority of respondents (74.5%) had 2 types of non-vocational qualifications (O'level or equivalent plus A'levels in 46.4% of cases, O' level alone in 16.1% and Access in 28.1%) while 53.6% had no vocational qualifications at all. Hence, it appears that by the mid-1990s most mature students were entering university by a very conventional route. Indeed, if one compares these figures with a national sample (Graham, 1991, p14, see table 5.1, below) then the qualifications of this (much smaller) sample seem to be in line with national trends.

Table 5.1: Highest Entry Qualifications of Mature Entrants (Full- and Part-time) (National Sample: Graham, ibid.)

	Qualifications				
	Non-Vocational		Vocational		
Sex	A Level	Access	Btech/ H.N.C. etc	Other	
Males (%)	40	13	20	27	100
Females (%)	52	16	7	25	100

As Graham's data confirms, the majority of mature candidates now enter higher education with non-vocational qualifications (53% in total of males and 68% of females) and among those who are non-vocationally qualified the A level entrants (as in my own sample) are by far the largest group. In this respect the mature student is more like than unlike the traditional.

The next issue to consider is how useful previous study is perceived as a preparation for higher education. Table A12 gives the sample's responses to this question. As table A12 shows, the majority of respondents (69.8%) did, in fact, find their previous study to have been a useful preparation for university level study. Does the non-vocational or vocational nature of the qualification make any difference to

perceptions of usefulness in this respect? The most satisfied group appeared to be those with two non-vocational qualifications (in practice this usually meant 'O' levels and 'A' levels). Generally the vocational entrants were also happy with their previous study as a preparation (72.2% of those with 1 and 71.4% of those with 2 vocational qualifications agreed that they were useful). However, only 59.5% of entrants with a single non-vocational qualification answered similarly. They were the least satisfied with their preparation for university. This was probably only to be expected as a vocational course is most likely to prepare a student directly for vocational higher education whereas in the case of non-vocational courses it is perfectly possible to begin a degree course in a subject the student has never studied before. University entrants with less than two non-vocational, and no vocational qualifications, were therefore quite likely to feel unprepared though in all the sub-groups the satisfied students were by far the majority.

Institutional Choice

Table 3.1 has already indicated the number of questionnaire respondents by institution. It is worth now considering the motivations for institution choice. As table A80 and subsequent interview data suggests, such choice is often academically arbitrary, based much more upon geographical necessity. Table A80 shows that in each institution the vast majority of mature students were local people. What is immediately noticeable is that the apparent status of the institution is reflected in the number of mature students were are prepared to travel to study there. For example, 62.4% of Liv.U. mature students were native to the north west, rising to 78.3% at J.M.U. and rising again to a staggering 93.3% at Hope. Certainly, Liverpool *the city* appeared to be a necessity rather than a choice in most cases, especially for the returning students. Witness Tony (30, mathematics, J.M.U.), Judith (32, law, J.M.U.), Bill (26, English and philosophy,

Liv.U.), Sally (30, Egyptology, Liv.U.), Tom (29, geology, Liv.U.) and Sandra (28, molecular biology, Liv.U.).

Tony: I needed to be local to where I live. My wife works in Liverpool. Liverpool University turned me down - my Access tutor told me that Liverpool are very down on people who've done Access courses. I liked the J.M.U. course because it was a sandwich course, which seemed good because I get experience *and* qualifications.

Judith: I couldn't have gone elsewhere because of my child, so it had to be somewhere in Liverpool.

Bill: (*My reasons were*) mainly geographical. I didn't want to live too far from home - I didn't want to be stuck in Birmingham, for example. I'd had a look at Keele and I didn't like it - it was a depressing green fields site. So I came here (Liv.U.).

Sally: My family and friends are all here.

Tom: All my roots are here, I live on the Wirral.

Sandra: I'm limited geographically by my family. I applied to here (*Liv.U.*), J.M.U. and L.I.H.E. (*Hope*), but this is the first place that got back to me.

However, institutional choice within Liverpool appeared far more complex, based in large part (as already suggested above) on perceptions of the relative status of the three institutions. Witness Gaynor (27, psychology and sociology, Hope), Janice (42, psychology and sociology, Hope), Robert (26, screen studies, J.M.U.), Sandra (28, molecular biology, Liv.U.), Molly (29, psychology, Liv.U.), Angie (25, genetics, Liv.U.), Ursula (29, law, Liv.U.) and Alice (28, history, Liv.U.).

Gaynor: I didn't get the grades to go to Liverpool (*Liv.U.*). Mind you, I think I would have gone to L.I.H.E. (*Hope*) anyway - it seemed really friendly. I mean a lot of people had advised me against it, saying it wasn't such a good degree, but I really liked the place.

Janice: I like the atmosphere here (*Hope*). J.M.U. is very formal. I was told that Liverpool (*Liv.U.*) was really offhand with mature students and they didn't really like mature students. So I didn't follow that up.

Robert: Oh yeah, I still call John Moores (*J.M.U.*) the `mickey mouse' degree, but still, you've got to work for it. I don't mind all that (*`new' university stigma*) because life's changed. The world's changed. You can no longer just go and do a Ph.D. in some up-your-arse subject and get a job as a screen-writer. There're other ways, better ways, like the way I'm doing it now is a good way.

Sandra: I didn't think I'd get in here (*Liv.U.*). J.M.U. made me an offer eventually, but I thought it would be better here.

Molly: I applied for all three (*Liv.U., J.M.U. and Hope*) but I never thought I'd get in here (*Liv.U.*). But I did get the grades I needed, so I came here.

Angie: It was here (*Liv.U.*) or J.M.U. basically. L.I.H.E. (*Hope*) wasn't really any use because basically I'm a science person. I came here because I figured basically if you're going to do something then do it properly.

Ursula: I got an offer from J.M.U. as well, but I figured if you're going to do law you have to do it at a proper university. It's just not the same (*at a new university*).

Alice: I was accepted at L.I.H.E. (*Hope*) and I was really keen to go, especially because of their good half-term creche facilities. I was going there to do a B.Ed, but my tutor on my Access course told me I should come here because it's better. She said it's not supposed to be, but there're still `proper' universities, and Liverpool is a `proper' university.

Mature students from other regions showed similar `status' awareness. Witness Harry (28, psychology, Liv.U) who was from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

Harry: I got an offer from here (*Liv.U.*) and from Newcastle Poly (*Northumbria University*) and I came here because of the academic kudos.

It could therefore be said that for this particular sample of mature students, if not for mature students more generally, choice of institution was usually less wide than for traditionals, but within the limited framework of choice available these students were using the same notions of quality as the traditionals would - witness the numerous references to Liv.U. as a 'proper' university, implying that J.M.U. was somehow not 'proper'. How much these interpretations of relative institutional status are based upon reality and how much upon prejudice is unclear.

The Mature University Experience

This section will consider the experiences of the sample within higher education. To whit, does the actual experience of university coincide with expectations? To this end, questionnaire respondents were asked whether university had been a useful experience, and whether the teaching on the course was always helpful to them.

As can be seen in table A22, nearly half (49.5%) of the sample agreed that the teaching (and by definition, the lecturers) on their course(s) were always helpful. However, a significant minority (20.8%) disagreed.

What can also be seen (from table A17) is that respondents overwhelmingly (85.4%) saw their university experiences as 'useful'. The interview data was used to qualify these responses - what did the respondents actually mean when they said that university was 'useful' to them? In the majority of cases (sandwich courses being an exception and part-time work notwithstanding) it could not at the point reached in their studies have been found to be useful in the labour market, thus the 'usefulness' must have been perceived in a more personal way. Interviewees were asked, 'How do you

feel about university?' Presented below are some of the responses - Claire (35, Russian and German, J.M.U.), Simon (27, building surveying, J.M.U.), Robert (26, screen studies, J.M.U.), Monica (23, music, Liv.U.), Martin (25, sociology, Liv.U.), Schad (29, psychology, Liv.U.), Nadia (29, geography, Liv.U.), Dave (28, sociology, Liv.U.) and Tom (29, geology, Liv.U.). The experiences related by interviewees were generally positive (in Martin's and Schad's cases, somewhat guardedly), with Tom and Nadia being very notable exceptions.

Claire: I like it (*university*). It's good being back on a course.

Simon: Yeah, I like it. It's an interesting course and it's what I want to do.

Robert: I'm getting more confident. Firstly, I just wanted to get a degree, but now I'm aiming for a first. I know I won't get it, but I'm going to try.

Monica: I've got a lot out of it. It certainly helped socially. It gives you the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life.

Martin: I wish I'd come in without having done A levels. They have been invaluable in terms of getting back an education ethic after having a work ethic, but if I'd come in blind I think I would have got more out of this first year, because I sit there a lot of the time going *(pulls bored face and looks at watch)* "they're open". *(laughs)* They really haven't taught me anything yet. I hope they will, because I came here to learn, so they'd better teach me something. I mean I came here thinking, "Wow,

university, dream come true, opportunity of a lifetime", and then you get to the classes and it's "...we've done this at school!" I hope the second year is harder, because it's making me lazy.

Schad: Well, it's not what I expected at all. I don't quite know what I expected. I tried to come without any expectations, but I must have had some. Certainly the money side of things is pretty dire. How you're supposed to live on a grant I don't know. Maybe when you're 18 or 19 you can, but *I* can't. The only thing lacking I think, there's ... there doesn't seem to be much bonding in our department of the university, y' know. A lot of my friends don't live locally. I live quite locally, but ... There doesn't seem to be many links with the university side as such, so there isn't really a good social side, unfortunately.

Nadia: Well, a big part of it is my isolation. There's all the really young ones, who've got their own ... they all know each other from Halls and they've got their own social life, and then there's the ... most of ... a lot of the mature students are a lot older than me, and a lot of them are men on my course. So I think I'm just about the only one who has childcare responsibilities on the course, so I feel I'm ... I feel I'm that much different and that much separate. I also feel ... I imagined that the other people were going to be really intelligent! (*laughs*) And it's not the case at all. So I er ... I think it's a bit of a let down. I thought it would be more exciting and more friendly and more ... more ... *challenging!* The

only thing I've found challenging so far is how to manage my time, fitting everything in.

She continued,

I spoke (*pause*) I came to the open day - because I wasn't planning to come to Liverpool, I was planning to go to L.I.H.E. (*Hope*) because of the mature student network that there is there, and the volume of mature students, but I came here and I liked the feel of the place. I was a bit surprised, and I'd heard that they were, like, making great inroads in attracting mature students and all the things that they were doing, and of course you have to be in it to win it, sort of thing, so I came. And when I complained about the *lack* of things they said, "Oh, well, we don't feel you need any more assistance because we consider you `oven ready', we don't lead you by the hand". That's what I was told.

A.M.: This was by your department?

Nadia: Oh yes. And I was told that they were one of the most *progressive*. I feel a bit annoyed, I made a mistake - I should have gone to L.I.H.E..

Dave's and Tom's experiences clearly reflected a certain antagonism in their relationships with academic staff as well as with the traditional students:

Dave: I find some of them (*the lecturers*) really patronising. It's all well and good for them to say, `Oh, buy this book, it's essential reading', or, `Buy that book'. They don't live in the same world as us. Maybe way back when they were undergraduates you *could* afford to do that, but you can't nowadays. They're not used to dealing with grown ups, they're used to dealing with kids. I don't think they know how to talk to an adult.

Tom: In general I've no regrets. There's some disappointment about peer group attitude. When I got here I found I was the only mature student on my course, so I tended to sit on my own in lectures. The naivety of the younger students gets me down. I can't be bothered dealing with tossers. But they do tend to ask *me* things they're frightened to ask the tutors. Some of them resent the fact that I get good marks; they aln.ost excuse it as, `Oh well, you work hard'. I don't get on all that well with the post-grads - and some of the staff - either. I think they look down on me as an undergraduate despite the fact that I'm their age. I don't appreciate being patronised.

The responses above represent answers given to direct questions. However, several of the interview participants had more to add. The following information is a crucial product of the interview research, because these are the responses volunteered when interviewees were asked, `Do you have anything to add?' As such, these responses represent individuals' own rationalising of their experiences and positions within their institutions. Not all of the interviewees had anything to add, but of those who did what was immediately striking was the similarity in their attitudes, with the majority

emphasising the positive aspects of being a mature student (greater motivation and clearer goals) and suggesting that younger people should consider putting off university until later in life. Witness Karen (23, sociology, Liv.U.), Tony (30, mathematics, J.M.U.), Roni (25, sociology, Liv.U.), Marilyn (25, combined honours, Liv.U.), Toby (25, psychology, Liv.U.), Molly (29, psychology, Liv.U.), Bill (26, English and philosophy, Liv.U.) and Stan (27, civil engineering, Liv.U.).

Karen: The only thing, I think, this is my personal opinion, is that 18 is too young to go to university. I think people should have a year out, do other things, get a bit of a life, instead of coming straight from school. I think they are too young, too young to cope with the responsibility of (*pause*) well, handing essays in. A lot of that is having the responsibility for yourself. Doing it at school or college, people are doing it because they have to, or because their parents are making them and it's expected of them. Very few of them are doing things for themselves, because they want to do them. A break would give them the chance to think about why - whether or not they want to go, or whether they're just going because their friends are going, whether they want to do something in particular ... I mean, especially with the way things are at the moment, jobs-wise. You can't just walk into a university, have three years and walk out and pick up a job. It seems to be the easy option in terms of choice. I wouldn't say people should be forced to take a year out, but I certainly would advise them to take a year or two out and do other things.

Tony: I would say that us older students, we're more organised - because we *need* to be. I've got a wife, a house and kids to look after. The younger students won't have that extra worry.

Roni: Well, I'm glad I've done it now, and not at 18, because now I know what life's about. Coming to university as a mature student is a bonus. I look at the 18 year olds and they don't know themselves. They don't know what they're doing or where they're going. They're just following the pattern.

Marilyn: I've noticed that having worked I can manage my time better than the 18 year olds. I guess for the younger ones there's more pressure to go out and socialise, but at my age there's a tendency to be more, well, *sensible* I guess.

Toby: I think mature students get more out of university than the school leavers. We know why we're here, they're just doing the `next thing'. Twenty-five is a good age to be a student. I think they (*school leavers*) should do something like national service. I don't mean a boot camp or anything like that, but they should have half their wage for two years to pay for their education. They're not going to miss out, on two years.

Molly: It's quite an advantage being a mature student, because you don't feel you have to be going out at night.

Bill: Certainly there's a difference in motivation. I think someone coming from school would be well advised to take a year or two years out, otherwise they'll waste their time at university. They'll come out with a £4,000 overdraft and a 2:2 or a 3rd to show for it.

Stan: It's been a good experience. I really do think though that people should think about taking a couple of years out before they come. It would increase their motivation. They'd have a better idea of why they're doing it.

Additionally, Claire (35, Russian and German, J.M.U.) and Wendy (30, geography, Liv.U.) bemoaned the lack of support networks for mature students:

Claire: There does need to be more support for mature students because we can be very isolated. There should be more things for us to do together.

Wendy: It would be nice to see some sort of drop-in centre in the university for mature students. I think a lot of mature students find the students union a rather intimidating place.

It certainly seemed that despite the many, often entirely justifiable, complaints that the students in this sample made during the course of this research, the overwhelming mood was one of optimism. It seemed that these students had not merely resigned themselves to being `ageing undergraduates', but were positively embracing

their new identity, suggesting that Nadia's extreme (and extremely *unpleasant*) experience of university was a minority one.

Looking to The Future

As was seen in chapter five, in each of the faculties, between half and three quarters of respondents agreed that career enhancement was their primary motivation for study. As suggested earlier, it appeared that even the arts and social sciences were being treated as vocational subjects by the students in this sample.

However, it is worth adding a note of caution: despite the apparent evidence of table A19, where 88.5% of the respondents perceived their degrees to be of value in enhancing their career prospects, many of the interview participants appeared to have developed a certain level of resigned cynicism regarding their future employability. Witness Nicky (33, urban management, J.M.U.), Chris (29, sociology, Liv.U.), Edith (40, business administration, J.M.U.), Claire (35, Russian and German, J.M.U.), Marilyn (25, Communications, Liv.U.) and Molly (29, Psychology, Liv.U.).

Nicky: Being like 33 now, you've always got that age element pushing you. I mean if I fail now, what do I do? I'll be too old, won't I? The age at which you become employable, or rather *un*employable, is getting younger ... I was told by a friend that I'll just go from one course to another, because I'll never get a job, but who knows?

Chris: Hopefully (*I'll have*) quite a lot (*of job opportunities*), but professional qualifications are coming to the fore, and I would have done one of those without doing the degree if I'd known.

Edith: People have told me to be positive, but I just don't know.

Claire: It's very foggy actually (*the future*). I'm unsure as to whether I'll be able to get a job. I might have to go on and do something else (*another course*).

Marilyn: To be honest, I don't really know if it (*the degree*) will help.

Molly: I don't know, but I hope it (*the job market*) will be better. I'm tired of being a dog's-body.

Thus, it seems that the apparent career optimism regarding the 'value added' nature of having a degree was sometimes cautious. West (1996, p2) found similar dichotomies between initial response (questionnaire) and later response (interview) and explained the dichotomy in terms of respectability. He posits that when asked to justify their actions in returning to education, most adults will offer a 'vocational' rather than a purely 'personal' explanation, simply because they feel that their 'personal' explanations will not be acceptable justifications. He also notes, somewhat depressingly, how the findings of such research are often used to reinforce the ideology that states that higher education should serve vocational rather than personal ends. The danger of this, he notes, is that the most important part of the 'story', the personal motivation for returning

to education, is lost entirely. Thus, one could surmise from this that despite the evidence suggesting that vocational motivation was paramount, personal reasons for a return to education may well have been under-reported by this sample, and thus their pessimism regarding future employability could be explained as their own assessments of the market worth of their degrees. However, if the marketability of the degree is not the most important factor (as West suggests) then this will be less of a problem, from a psychological point of view at any rate.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

i) For the whole sample

The research sample was made up overwhelmingly of single people (70.3%) and overwhelmingly also of local people (74%). Despite the fact that the sample was randomly selected from the age range of 21 to 40 years at entry, the sample was predominantly under 30 years of age (74%) and there were more females in the sample than males (59.9% to 40.1%).

By social class, there were more white collar than blue collar students in the sample, which makes the mature students in this sample at first glance appear not dissimilar to the traditional student. However, other trends were apparent. There was a tendency for all students to be concentrated at the lower ends of the white collar and blue collar career ladders, with 26.6% from Goldthorpe's "Lower Service" class, 29.2% (the largest single group) from the Routine White Collar class and 19.8% from the Semi/Unskilled Manual class. When sex is added to the equation, the effects of being in a relationship appears - contrary to my initial hypothesis - to work in favour of female students. Supportive husbands were reported by female respondents. A slight numerical bias in favour of white collar females who were in a relationship was noted. The lack of blue collar males relative to all other groups will require further research.

From the univariate and bivariate data, a two-fold ideal typology emerged. 'Late' students are between 21 and 30 at entry, single, from any region and without children.

'Returning' students on the other hand are between 31 and 40 at entry, have children and are from the local area.

ii) For Ideal Types

Mature student numbers appear to diminish drastically in number after the age of 30 - there are 118 lates but only 35 returnings here. However, within this, the gender ratio changes from females being in a slight majority (55.1%) of lates to an overwhelming majority (80%) of returnings. Social class remains fairly constant across the two groups, although routine white collar females appear over-represented in both. Marital status changes between groups, from a huge majority of single people (93.2%) in the late group to a majority of married people (57.1%) in the returning group. Additionally, there are far more 'no longer married' females than males (35.7% against 1.9%).

Liv.U. students appear to be the 'youngest', with the largest proportion of late students (72%) and the smallest number of returnings (2.9%). The 'age' of the students appears to rise as the status of the institution, and possibly the expectation of age-based discrimination, lessens. J.M.U. has more returning and fewer late students than Liv.U. and Hope has more returning and fewer late students than J.M.U.. In terms of subject choice, lates are the majority in all faculties (which is natural given their greater numbers to begin with) except Education, where returnings (and specifically returning females) are in the ascendant.

Regarding the biographical variables, returnings are less happy with their school experience than lates, but are more satisfied with their careers to date. Very little

difference was found regarding motivations for entry, although very few returnings claimed that coming to university was something they had always intended (8.6% of returnings against 35.6% of lates). Very little difference was noted between the groups regarding experience of teaching in university (generally positive) or relationships with other students (extremely positive).

Neither group appeared to have been subject to the 'push' factor of redundancy. Granted, in both groups the majority cited career enhancement as a motivation (and 'enhancement need not mean ending unemployment, it could mean exactly what it suggests), but also the majority in both groups cited interest as a motivation. Thus, the notion that the 'returning' students are doing so because of lack of other, more appealing, employment options, does not appear to apply. For the 'late' students, motivation appears to be dissatisfaction with their present jobs rather than an absence of them. Thus, unemployment appears not to have been a significant factor in motivation here.

Let us contextualise this data. The lates were the more likely to express job dissatisfaction, but their occupational class profile was not inferior to that of the returning students. The lates were more dissatisfied with similar jobs - generally a mixture of lower service class, routine non-manual and non-skilled manual. However, the lates were less likely to have disliked school. In this respect there was less of a barrier to overcome in returning to education. They were also the better-qualified academically, typically with A-levels. There was a fairly even sex balance in this group, men and women who were mostly still single, whose careers had not made the progress that they had possibly expected, or at least hoped for. A significant minority had always

felt that eventually they would proceed into higher education. The catalyst appeared to be career frustration. Very few had become skilled workers, or risen into the service class proper. No doubt some were hitting a 'graduate barrier' which they intended to overcome.

The returning students had been doing similar jobs, but expressed less dissatisfaction with these. They were mostly women, either married or no longer married, typically with dependant children. They appeared to have been rethinking their life situations and life chances. Most had disliked school, and had been glad to leave, and at the time most seemed to have been satisfied with their decisions and the adult lives into which they embarked. In their thirties, however, many appeared to have re-assessed their situations. They seemed to have realised that they could have been higher achievers educationally, and in employment. They still had the greater part of their adult lives ahead and had decided to give their life chances a boost, initially by returning to further education and testing out their capabilities, typically on Access courses. As we shall see in the next chapter, most of these thirty-something females were in domestic situations which made career breaks, while they resumed full-time education, a realistic option.

Policy Issues

> "Physically the institution (*university*) is alien to the local population. They dare not stray onto the campus to see what it is about, and the residential halls seem like private hotels for another kind of being. Spiritually, the institution is alien. The local people - of course - could have no interest in questions of life, judgement, value." (Kee, 1970, p195).

The problem both for mature students and for the universities themselves (assuming they do see it as a problem) is the very cultural metaphor that is the term 'university'. As Kee (p192) pointed out, a university is an institution imbued with mystique - of superiority and scientific detachment and so on - which fends off any outside interference into its workings. This could just possibly be seen as a good thing - the temptations of falling into 'ivory tower' indulgences notwithstanding. After all, it is safe to assume that universities themselves know how best to run universities - although Kee described management at the time as an "impressive amount of fiddling with knobs and shouting of orders" but little else. Hoggart (1996, p42) suggested that universities should have three constituencies; the international, the national and the local. He argues that in all but a very few of the post-war British universities, the third constituency was not even acknowledged, and instead of finding new and challenging ways of reaching out, these universities almost immediately slipped into an 'elite' role;

> "With the Baedecker* spirit went also the broad-acres-out-of-town spirit: Two hundred acres and a few cows, about three or four miles out ... Some places did better than others, some did a fair amount to suggest to the natives that this was 'their' university, (*but*) no new English universities established themselves in the middle of the city and gave main attention to local students studying part-time. London University's Birkbeck College has no successor."

* Hoggart is referring to the fondness of the post war universities for cathedral cities and their historic names. Hoggart gives the examples of choices of location for these 'new' (as they were then) universities such as Canterbury (Kent), East Anglia (Norwich), and most especially Warwick University, which is not, in truth, located in Warwick at all - it is actually in Coventry (a city name with no such romantic overtones). One could also add the example of York University, which is actually in Selby.

Similarly, Ainley (1994, p45) quoting A.H. Halsey, notes the way that the post war universities were designed "... like the medieval cathedral ... for the admiration of the peasantry without regard to their public pocket". Contrast this view with one offered elsewhere in the same book (Ainley is this time quoting Eric Robinson) of the polytechnics as an "educational soup kitchen for the poor." Thus, the (traditional) universities were designed (if the above quote is correct, quite literally) for local people to look up to in awe, with their student body being drawn from far afield, whilst the polytechnics*, regardless of how noble their original intentions, became seen as 'good enough' for local people (and those who could not get into the universities).

People were marginalised by their local institutions, reduced tc the status of 'filler' students on courses which could not be filled during the annual clearing rush in the case of full timers, and to an even lower status in the case of part-timers, who were not even eligible for a local authority grant. As such, the part-time local students gave the most in terms of personal finances but in terms of pastoral care received the least from their institutions. Elliot et al (1996, pxvii) describe such people (and, in the case of those on 'extra mural' courses, often their departments too) as being 'out on a limb' in their institutions.

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* Ainley (1990, p10) pointed out that polytechnics were modelled on the Soviet idea of combining practical learning with theory, rather than being dedicated to pure theory, as was the case with the universities. It is worth also noting that the polytechnics became merely the most recent example of 'academic drift': Andrews (1996) has pointed out that the Redbricks' original reason for being was for the education of their local populations. Similarly, Simey (1996, pp26/27) has noted that Liverpool University was set up by local philanthropists (notably the Rathbone family) for the education of working people *from the Liverpool area.*

At the time of writing, the £1000 additional annual fee to be charged to undergraduates from 1998 is likely have a profound effect upon *all* students and potential students. Wagner (1995, p23) has suggested that the introduction of top-up fees will have several negative effects. Higher status institutions could charge more than lower status ones - thus reinforcing a social hierarchy and making it an economic one. This might have a devastating effect upon mature students who are less likely to be able to travel to a higher status institution if their local one is insufficient to meet their needs (for example, because the student requires a very specific course). Wagner suggested that opportunities for full-time study for students in their twenties at their local institutions would diminish, as places would be offered to those who could afford the fees (that is, the children of the more than moderately well-off) with scholarships offered to a small number of high fliers.

Wagner goes on to suggest that the main knock-on effect in the future will be a decline in the number of applications for full-time study will decline, and King (1995, p120) goes so far as to suggest that the distinction between full-time and part-time will disappear, as mature students become self-financing - and hence nearly all mature students will need to maintain jobs outside university and become *de facto*, part-time students anyway. However, despite the awareness of the existence of alternatives to the usual full-time study arrangement (part-time study in a university,part-time franchised degree work in a further education college, Open University etc. , this is an area upon which this thesis does not touch, because of the entirely full-time nature of the sample. The implications of the prophecies offered by both Wagner and King for

my research is that it may soon date and become something of a historical piece, with the data herein becoming merely a snap-shot of mature student life in the mid 1990s.

Given the increasing disparity between state student funding and the expenses of being a student for at least three years, the prospect of study at one's local institution is likely to become more and more attractive to more and more applicants of all ages - but most especially mature returning students, who are already, if my research here is anything to go by (see previous chapters), loathe to move far from their roots anyway. It is how the universities themselves respond to this new student agenda which will be interesting.

The University in the Twenty First Century

The first thing that universities will need to do in the coming years is to rethink their mission statements. As Hoggart suggested shows, British universities (particularly the 'post-war', pre-1992 ones) have historically had three constituencies: the international, the national and the local and, in the vast majority of cases, the third of these was never even accepted by these institutions. The polytechnics, of course, did better and to a large extent the removal of the binary divide has meant that local people attending their 'university' is no longer as unusual as once it was.

It will be necessary for all universities to take their role as *local* institutions seriously. By this I mean a 'local' identity must be more than just an excuse given by an institution unable to attract national and international students. It should be *deliberate policy* to attract local students. If they are to pay anything more than the merest lip-service to notions of lifelong learning then, as a pre-requisite, a sincere

embracing (as opposed to a grudging acceptance) of mature students from a variety of backgrounds by universities will be essential.

Unfortunately, as was noted earlier the sample in this study was mainly of white collar origin. Given that Merseyside has a higher ratio of blue collar to white collar workers in the population compared with both the North West in general and the national figures, this is a worrying fact. Universities will need to find a way of reaching these people. For a genuine lifelong learning/community university, the institution should reflect the demographics of its constituency. The reality, as reflected in this sample, is that less than 1% of the sample was from the upper service class. The question is, why? The answer will lie in the members of this class having been traditional students, or having no need of higher education to attain and secure their positions. From the self-employed category, there were only two people in the sample (1%). Likewise, from the manual supervisory category there were only eight people (4.2%) which left them drastically under-represented. Maybe these groups had no need of higher education. But what about the skilled working class? Maybe they were sufficiently served by vocational (non-university) continuing education. Perhaps surprisingly, the non-skilled working class was reasonably represented. Maybe the social class backgrounds of mature students correspond with need and demand. These are issues that require further exploration. A study of mature students may explain their motivations but is unable to come to conclusions about groups who are simply not present.

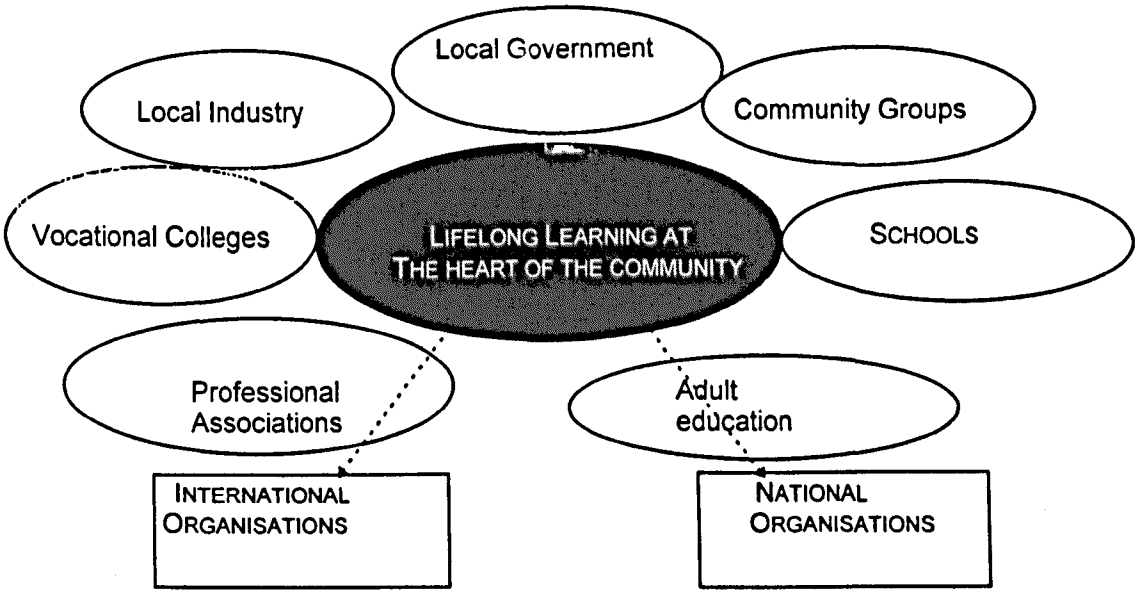
However, some of the findings give cause for concern. A poor experience of school can have the negative consequence of putting an individual off further study

regardless of his or her innate academic potential or ability to benefit. There does, in fact, appear to be a class-based relationship to the pleasantness, or otherwise, of the school experience. Table A63 shows that in the lower service class and the routine white collar class, those who perceived school as pleasant were the largest group (41.2% and 37.5% respectively) whilst for *all* of the blue collar groups those who perceived school as unpleasant were the largest group (44.7% of semi/unskilled manual, 61.5% of skilled manual, 50% of manual supervisory and 100% of self-employed manual, although as has been stated already, these last two were very small groups). This could suggest that Willis' (1977) findings are still relevant, and that working class children see their future non-negotiably as working class adults and that consequently school is a waste of their time to be endured until they can leave at the earliest opportunity. It could also suggest that Bernstein's (1971) hypothesis still holds true and that middle class teachers with their 'elaborate' speech codes are clashing with working class children and their 'restricted' ones.

What I suspect is that the working class school leaver uses education differently. Skilled manual workers will usually require practical college courses (City and Guilds and suchlike) to enter their chosen trades, so their lack of university education will not be a rejection of education per se; quite the reverse in fact, it may well be an embracing of education on their own terms. Such people are likely to view education in terms of its direct usefulness and applicability, and thus these are the people who are likely to resent having to do school work in such 'useless' areas as the arts and humanities.

Alongside this embracing by the universities of local people should come national encouragement for students of all ages to attend one of their local institutions. FIG 7.1 (below) is taken from Longworth and Davies (1996, p106) and shows a potential scenario for a twenty first century university.

FIG 7.1: The Lifelong Learning University at The Heart of The Community (Longworth and Davies, 1996, p106)



As can be seen, Longworth and Davies envision a university which is truly at the centre of its community, embracing industry, government, schools, colleges and professional associations as part of its remit, whilst simultaneously remaining part of a national and international university community (no mean feat). Crucially, Longworth and Davies stress the vital importance of lifelong learning to this university:

> One of the most powerful philosophies of our time is lifelong learning. Its influence in opening up new opportunities and new horizons, empowering people and expanding ideas, concepts and actions makes it a prime target for research. The university which does not want to be part of that scene is indeed an ivory tower, fossilised, full of its own intellectual self-importance - and

> irrelevant ... Lifelong learning forces governments, society and the universities themselves to examine closely the distinctions between the university and non-university sectors, between fundamental and applied research, between theoretical and vocational training. (Longworth and Davies, 1996, p107)

As such, the university must embrace its local constituency and embrace lifelong learning or else become a dinosaur.

The financial incentives for staying in one's local area are obvious for both traditional and mature students - in the case of the former, the possibility will exist for students to pay much lower rent (or indeed none at all) and for the matures, the need to uproot and to disrupt family life would be removed.

It is understood, however, that some students will need to travel to other parts of the country to do their degrees (those from the Isle of Man, the west of Scotland and Cornwall leap to mind), but if more students are staying at home, then less state (and indeed parental) subsidy will be needed in terms of grants or loans for living expenses, so these people could be more adequately catered for.

Similarly there will be those who have chosen to attend Oxford or Cambridge. However, given the elite status of these institutions (which may or may not be deserved) it would surely make more sense to do something about the cultural hegemony these institutions are able to exert. Ainley, for example (1994, p179: 1995, p55) has suggested turning the whole of Oxford and Cambridge Universities into 'Ruskin' style adult residential colleges - thus removing the stranglehold of elitism

maintained by two institutions over the rest and at the same time providing a wealth of opportunity for adults to return to education.

Indeed, it would make sense for a culture to be encouraged whereby one attended one's local institution for one's bachelor degree and then moved to wherever was best for one's particular interests for masters and/or doctoral level work, should the desire for such work exist.

Relative levels of perceived excellence are another problematic area for 'localised' study. Attending one's local institution is fine if one lives in Manchester, Liverpool, Durham, London or Edinburgh but this is less fine if your local institution is low status. There is no easy solution to this problem, but more equitable funding arrangements recognising teaching strength as well as research strength would be helpful. It is probably fair to say, however, that perceptions of status need not be related to the actual quality of the institution. One of the facets of British snobbery is that it values older institutions automatically more than newer ones* (as in Oxford being better than Manchester which is better than Sussex which is better than all of the 1992 universities). The very fine reputations of both Warwick and York universities - both were established in the 1960s and ranked joint eighth nationally in the Times Good University Guide (O'Leary and Cannon, 1993, p67) - should have put paid to this, but snobbery is persistent.

* Barnett (1990, p107) notes, with apparent regret, that a third class Oxbridge degree is still prized over a first from another institution, and that an Oxbridge 'sporting blue' is prized above all else.

Similarly, choice of subject area will (at present) limit one's geographical area of study. For example, if one wishes to study oceanography one needs to be on a coast (or near to it). Certainly financial provision should be made for students of such subjects to travel to and live at the necessary location. However, for most subjects, geographical situation is irrelevant, and where there are institutional gaps in subjects (if, for example a given university does not offer a politics degree) then the institution should either open a department (or a sub-department within a larger one), or pool resources with another nearby institution and help plug the gaps that the other may have. Delivery of courses could be done on an exchange basis (staff from one institution travelling to the other) or electronically - delivering lectures via the internet and seminars via internet 'conference' facilities. In this way, duplication of resources would be unnecessary - and, of course, the knock on effect of teaching the use of the World Wide Web to students could only have positive consequences for their future employability.

Unfortunately for the implementation of lifelong learning, in the case of mature students, university appears to be seen as a once only event. Witness the guarded hopes that their new graduate status will help them in the job market. This is, of course, not necessarily to imply that careerism is their sole motivation for mature study. The hypothesised inverse relationship between career motivation and academic interest was manifestly unsupported in this research. As Table A72 shows, a massive 70.4% of the sample claimed *both* as motivating factors. This *could* suggest a genuine level of interest in the academic subjects and a hope, rather than genuine belief, that their study would enhance career prospects. Certainly this is what is suggested by the very cautious responses to the issue of future employability in chapter 6. Lifelong

learning would be problematic in the case of this sample because of its very 'vocationalist' implications. Taken to its logical conclusions, lifelong learning implies that all courses must be directly and quantifiably useful, which could mean the end to the classical ideal of an 'academic' education, and the possibility of studying a so-called 'useless' subject could be limited*. However, this is, I admit, an extreme scenario.

The Communitarian Challenge

> (The) idea of universities as communal beings needs to be redrawn. The old sense of community, the monastic tradition, is introspective and exclusive. It is too narrow, too elitist and too ignoring of responsibilities. Whilst it might have sufficed for charitable institutions funded by endowment, donation and fee, it is unreasonable for institutions to expect such a tradition to be preserved by inputs of public funding without recognising a concomitant public responsibility. *The idea of universities as communal beings must be redefined to embrace not simply responsibility to the community within but responsibility to the community without.* (Andrews, 1996, p116, my emphasis)

The idea of the university being a 'community' institution is not a new one. However, the links with the most proximate community (local people) appear to have been lost in the academic introspection of which Andrews (above) speaks. Mohan (1996, pp93-96) suggests that universities, both here and in the U.S. (where he suggests the dislocation between local people and universities is worse, but that the U.K. is catching up fast) need to rethink their relationships with their external communities. He cites a history of arrogance and insensitivity by the universities over usage of space - land clearance for ever expanding and ever more numerous university

* Longworth and Davies' model appears to offer little room for education for its own sake, which I would argue, on the evidence of this sample, is crucial to tempting adults back into education.

buildings - as well as insularity regarding the social problems of their 'local' areas* . Indeed, Mohan suggests that where universities have become involved in local issues, such as rising crime, it has been out of self-interest. Partly this is in the nature of the university as an institution. Mohan (1996, p101) suggests that in Britain the funding of universities creates its own insularity. The limited range, as he sees it, of sources of funding available in comparison to the U.S.A. (where endowments, charitable donations and alumni contributions are the norm) create a situation whereby;

> ...institutions who conceive of themselves, rightly or wrongly, as research universities, are highly unlikely to develop meaningful community links beyond symbolic gestures, since their financial viability depends almost entirely on how well they perform in research terms.

Which is much the same as the point made earlier by Hoggart (1996) about universities ignoring their local constituencies in favour of the national and international. Mohan continues;

> Community involvement seems unlikely to infuse the research and teaching activities of most traditional British universities** in this Darwinian environment. And it is highly unlikely that institutions will unilaterally develop the kind of initiatives reported here - a classic prisoner's dilemma. It is significant, for instance, that institutional reports and plans make much of the volunteer involvement of students, despite the fact of minimal institutional support for such activities and the almost total absence of their integration into the curriculum.

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* This is perhaps less true of the out-of-town 1960s campuses, but nevertheless, the physical exclusivity of these places brings with it a certain mindset not dissimilar to the city universities.

** Mohan notes that the former polytechnics, while they were still partly under local authority control for funding, did a rather better job of involving themselves in local issues, but with the removal of the binary divide (and the consequent levelling of funding criteria) they are likely to be as bad as the traditional universities.

In other words, it seems that universities would like their students to become more involved in local issues, but are not prepared (or not *able*) to support them in it.

Mohan (1996, p95) suggests that undergraduates should undertake some kind of voluntary community service. This would have the twin effects of making the student an active part of the local community (rather than the quasi-parasitic role which exists at present) and at the same time bringing the local people into greater involvement with the university. He states that by 1995 there were over 5000 such schemes in American universities, and the U.K., whilst having a much smaller number, was beginning to adopt them.

From the point of view of the mature student, these schemes can only be beneficial, bringing together the academic world (and removing its intimidating 'otherness') and the local area, which the mature student is far more likely to be a member of than the more geographically mobile traditional age student. It would also have the beneficial effect of introducing an element of vocationalism into all university level courses. By this I do not mean that the intellectual content would (or should) be reduced, or that adult learning should be held in place by the narrow constraints of vocationalism. That would be the quickest pathway back to the ageist idea of, 'Why educate adults when it would be more morally appropriate to educate young people instead?' where one educates people only for what they are going to be doing in the 'outside' world. Instead, the university and all of its departments should begin to see themselves as being for everyone's use and for everyone's benefit. If nothing else, universities would then have a far better moral claim to an increase in public funding.

Certainly the evidence of this particular sample appears to be that the vocational/academic dichotomy is a false one. These mature students are reading for degrees in subjects in which they have an interest and in the hope that a degree - any degree - will be of use in the job market. Hence it is the act of studying *itself* which is vocational, rather than the degree subject. Thus a vocational element in all courses could prove beneficial to students such as these.

Continuing the theme of 'vocationalism' in its broadest sense, it will be necessary for universities and employers to develop a realistic linking of the academic world and the world of work. Evidence offered by Graham throughout this thesis shows how inimical potential employers tend to be regarding mature graduates. Similarly Tight (1993, p25) has noted that many potentially excellent adult students are put off the idea of university by its image as a place solely for well qualified teenagers - this could be interpreted as a fear of prejudice at both institutional and personal levels of course. A greater degree of involvement by employers may go some way towards eliminating this stereotype. If employers* could be encouraged to offer sabbaticals (or better still *funding*) for employees to study (if only to update skills) then more adults would be likely to attend university.

Crucially, the universities need to reach out to potential adult students because, for all of the reasons highlighted here, these adults are unwilling and/or unable to do

* I had initially hypothesised that unemployment would be a motivation for mature study, but in this research it appears not to have been the case, as the majority appear to have come having left jobs behind. Hence, employer attitudes will be more important than I would have considered earlier.

so themselves. Both John Moores University and Liverpool Hope have gone some way towards doing this already. John Moores has an 'education bus' which drives around Merseyside to shopping centres and similar places where local people can visit and examine what is available. John Moores also has a 'study shop', a short walk from the city centre, which fulfils a similar (albeit static) purpose. Liverpool Hope has established its own coffee shop named 'On The Waterfront' at Liverpool's redeveloped Albert Dock where, as well as purchasing coffee and cakes and so on, visitors can read (and take away) college prospectuses and course details, watch videos about the college which are continuously played on the wall-screen, and can even buy Liverpool Hope T-shirts and sweat shirts.

As to how far these developments have encouraged adult participation, it is perhaps too early to tell. One suspects that 'On The Waterfront', whilst it is in a very attractive location, is less likely to attract local people than tourists who are travelling between the Maritime Museum and the Beatles Museum. However, they are a start.

Higher and Further Education: A New Partnership?

Given the funding crises which are striking at the very heart of both higher and further education in the 1990s, one could reasonably wonder if there was a way in which both could work together for mutual support and reward.

Harvey (1996, p4) has posited the model of the 'federal omniversity', whereby all local further and higher education institutions work together under a single institutional label, without giving a pre-eminence to three-year degree courses at the expense of other branches of post-compulsory learning. As it stands (see Schuller,

1995, p12), further education is under-funded in comparison with all other educational sectors. It may well be advantageous for potential mature students to have a well-funded further education sector with grants and/or scholarships which can be made available to help people to qualify for university level work. However, Harvey's idea is appealing in that it takes away the hierarchical barriers between further and higher learning (and for that matter between vocational and non-vocational study, since in many cases this is the self-same divide anyway). Harvey noted that these changes will probably happen anyway, whether F.E. and H.E. tutors like them or not, but that they would be far more efficacious if viewed as a positive way forward. King (1995, p121) has noted that unless a form of regional co-operation is begun, and the hierarchy between the two sectors eroded, then a great deal of destructive competition will take place in which both sectors (not to mention the students) will ultimately be the losers. Kennedy (1997, p27) notes that already much of what is designated 'higher' education takes place in further education colleges, and much of what is (very loosely) deemed 'further' education takes place in schools and universities; hence the 'secondary', 'further' and 'tertiary' labels may, to an extent, be arbitrary, and thus perhaps subject to eventual erosion.

On Merseyside, Wirral Metropolitan College appears already to be working to a principle similar to Harvey's, with three sites and a spread of qualifications from G.C.S.E. to degree level and both vocational and non-vocational. If this college was to form institutional links with Liverpool and John Moores Universities and with Liverpool Hope University College, then Merseyside would have its own federal 'omniversity' offering every level of post-compulsory learning to local people - and so doing would remove the elitist sheen that universities have in comparison with

colleges, making them less intimidating to adult learners. On a related note, the Dearing Committee (Coffield and Vignoles, 1997, p15) states that higher education institutions should publish all possible entrance requirements for given courses, thus removing the damaging and off-putting A level hegemony which helps to maintain the status of universities as 'young people's' places, as well as taking university education out of the 'social age' categorisation described by Littler (1997, p11) where education, along with marriage, voting rights and sexual activity becomes socially enforced as belonging to specific age-cohorts (in the case of the universities, teenagers and early 'twenty-somethings').

Future Research

The relative dearth of post-30 year old males in the sample is particularly worrying, especially with regard to the present and changing nature of the labour market, and especially with regard to the Labour government's proposals (most especially the U.f.I.). It would appear that despite these labour market changes, mature males see little role for themselves within education.

Tight (1993, pp23-25) suggests that the biggest problem is simple lack of awareness of what is available. He suggests that most adults do not realise that they can in fact have face-to-face teaching in a college or a university on a part-time basis should they want it, and that learning can be combined with work or domestic responsibilities. As such, much of the reason for adult non-participation in further and higher education is self-exclusion. Tight therefore concluded that the adults engaged in higher education at present are unrepresentative of the general adult population - a conclusion which is supported by my own findings in this research.

I would suggest that it is to adults, and in particular these *males*, that higher education needs to reach out. A bottom-up analysis of the attitudes of mature males - those who choose not to go into higher education - would be necessary to facilitate policies to improve not merely mature *access* per se, but also their desire to *attempt* such access in the first place. However, therein lie several methodological problems.

A potential difficulty would be the nature of the desired sample. Moore (1996*) has identified the problem of a general mistrust of officialdom on the part of inner-city people. He suggests that such people have been under siege from politicians and right wing academics for some time now, and that the people who live in the inner cities have been punished by politicians and civil servants for social problems which are largely not of their making.

> ...rather than being treated as citizens, they have found themselves increasingly treated as parasites and potential criminals. Surveillance and control have become increasingly obvious features of their lives whether it be in D.S.S. offices or on the streets.

This is likely to be a problem endemic in inner cities in general, but it is also a possibility that in Liverpool the problem is more acute than elsewhere. "Liverpool" in mass media terms (and in terms of headlines, sub-categories such as "Toxteth" and "Speke") is something of a red-flag term, an all encompassing label for a region of

* Sociological Research On-line. http://www.socresonline.org.uk/

mythologised and demonized others and otherness*. Lane (1987, p13) cites a 1982 Daily Mirror article which suggested that:

> They should build a fence around (Liverpool) and charge admission. For sadly it has become a 'showcase' for everything that has gone wrong in Britain's major cites.

Lane claims that Liverpool is the only city in Britain where the people themselves are reckoned to be part of its problem. Perhaps because of this, Liverpudlians are even less inclined to trust those who appear to represent officialdom than other inner city dwellers. Moore (1996) cites evidence that Liverpudlians are tired of being the objects of other people's research which offers no solution to their problems.

> They have answered questions for years, but nothing changes ... Perhaps willingness to co-operate in research belongs to a more corporatist period in which people believed in the state's willingness and capacity to take beneficial action.

Clearly, this is a belief no longer widely held in Liverpool, as the response rate in Moore's study was not only low but negligible. A study of low participation rates in higher education is likely to meet with similar attitudes. Nevertheless, this is a necessary piece of research which must be undertaken.

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* Honey (1989 pp 126 and 127) cites evidence that the Liverpudlian accent is one of the least desirable in terms of both social mobility and character perception, claiming that a "scouse" accent is used by the media to symbolise the "New Brutalism" in advertising - he offers the evidence of a series of commercials from 1987 about the perils of drug use vis-à-vis AIDS. *All* of the drug users had Liverpool accents.

Conclusions

There is much about the experiences of mature students in Merseyside which is positive. Many of my initial hypotheses regarding social inequalities have been confounded, most especially those surrounding gender. Adult females appear not to have especially severe difficulty in gaining access to higher education, and most appear to have supportive partners. On the other hand, it appears very hard for adult males to gain access. Reasons have been suggested for this throughout this thesis, but ultimately this will need further study. My hypothesis at this point is that it is a gender based image of themselves as 'breadwinners' which prevents males from re-entering education (and which makes them happy to support their female partners in doing so).

What is certainly clear is that whilst the sample was representative of other students, they were not fully representative of the local populatio~ There were very low numbers of ethnic minorities and disproportionately high numbers of white collar individuals, as well as the aforementioned gender imbalance.

More needs to be done to encourage participation by such underrepresented groups of adult learners. However, care must be taken not to establish 'learning ghettos' of the kind alluded to in a recent Times Higher Education Supplement editorial (31/10/97, p11, no author cited) where Thames Valley University was criticised for an administrative decision to award passes to large numbers of students who had failed their finals.

> T.V.U. is praised by the Prime Minister. It admits students with non-conventional qualifications and has been innovative in its teaching methods. Such a university, if its degrees are to be respected must be prepared to see students fail.

Whilst it is possible to detect a certain aroma of elitism in this editorial - its implication that non-conventional students are more likely to fail than standard A level entrants is unsupported by any evidence - it raises important issues. Adults are unlikely to want to study (or to continue studying once they have started) if they feel they are being patronised in this way. As numerous studies cited in chapter one (Knowles, 1983: Lucas and Ward, 1985: Hartley and Lapping, 1992) have shown, on balance, mature students regularly do at least as well and often much better than their traditional age peers. Hence, the problem appears to be persuading adults to come to university, not in getting them to do well once there. If lifelong learning is to become a long-term reality - and indeed, if the government's University for Industry is to be more than short-term - then it is vital that the culture of ageism is lost forever from higher education, and more adults are persuaded of the very real benefits of study. Despite the expansions of both the Robbins era and the late 1980s/early 1990s, academia remains wasteful of the talents of the majority of the population. Again, I would stress that if the universities are to have any moral claim to more public money (it is certainly needed if the academic infrastructure is to remain intact) then more of the public must be given the opportunities that universities afford.

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APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Lifestyle Survey

Office Use Only

"The Mature Student Experience"

Principal subject(s) you are studying ..... _____

Sex (please circle) M / F _

Age ..... ___

Year of study (please circle) 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 _

Marital status (please circle) Single / Married / Separated / Widowed / Divorced _

Ethnic Group: (please tick)

Bangladeshi ....

Black African ....

Black Caribbean ....

Black other ....

Chinese ....

Indian ....

Pakistani ....

White ....

Any other .... _

Number of Children,

0 - 4 years .....

5 - 9 years .....

10 - 14 years .....

15 - 19 years .....

20 + years .....

Main Previous Occupation - with approximate dates

.....

.....

.....

Country of birth .....

Town and county raised .....

Please indicate which of the following qualifications you possess:-

(Academic)

G.C.S.E./ O Level ....

A Level ....

Access ....

First Degree (BA/BSc etc.) ....

Ph.D/ M.A./ other higher degree ....

Other (please indicate) ....

(Vocational)

GNVQ/NVQ levels 1 or 2 .... _

ONC/BTEC National (or equivalent) .... _

HNC (or equivalent) .... _

HND (or equivalent) .... _

Other (please indicate) ..... _

The following questions will require an answer on a 5 point scale, thus:

1) Strongly agree

2) Agree

3) Neither agree nor disagree

4) Disagree

5) Strongly disagree

1) I found my previous study to be a useful preparation for university level work. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	_

2) School was a pleasant experience. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	_

3) Coming to university was always my intention after leaving school. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

4) My job/career after leaving school was satisfying to me. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

5) University was my last resort. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

6) University has, so far, been a useful experience. Do You ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

7) Career enhancement was my primary motivation for coming to university. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

8) I think my career prospects will be improved for having done this degree. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

9) Interest in the subject was my primary motivation for coming to university. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

10) Gaining admission to university was not a problem. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

Additional Comments .....
.....

11) The teaching on my course is always helpful. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

Additional Comments .....
.....

12) Relationships with other students are good. Do you ...

1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	
Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	__

Additional Comments .....
.....

13) Have you noticed any changes in relationships with family or friends since coming to university?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14) What are your plans for after graduation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15) What difference (if any) do you think the degree will make to your career?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire, could you please return it to me at Department of Sociology, Liverpool University, or c/o Phoebe Lambert, Roscoe Court, J.M.U., or c.o. Jill Armstrong, Director of Teaching and Learning, Liverpool Hope. If you are willing, I may also welcome the chance to conduct a fact to face interview. The interview will take approximately half an hour to complete and you would not be expected to do anything embarrassing or unethical. Any data used in writing up will be pseudonymously used and total discretion is guaranteed. I will attempt to make the process as informal and hopefully as pleasurable as possible. I welcome your contribution. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Marks

.....

"Yes, I would be prepared to be interviewed"

Name .....

Term Address .....

.....

.....

Telephone .....

Please give three times and dates during the first semester which would be the most convenient for you:-

First Choice .....

Second Choice .....

Third Choice .....

APPENDIX TWO: RESULTS TABLES

1) Univariate Data

Table A1: Institution of Attendance

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Liv U.	1	109	56.8	56.8	56.8
JMU	2	23	12.0	12.0	68.8
HOPE	3	60	31.3	31.3	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A2: Sex of Participants

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Male	1	77	40.1	40.1	40.1
Female	2	115	59.9	59.9	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A3: Age Breakdown of Respondants

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
21	1	.5	.5	.5
22	10	5.2	5.2	5.7
23	8	4.2	4.2	9.9
24	23	12.0	12.0	21.9
25	18	9.4	9.4	31.3
26	16	8.3	8.3	39.6
27	19	9.9	9.9	49.5
28	15	7.8	7.8	57.3
29	19	9.9	9.9	67.2
30	13	6.8	6.8	74.0
31	7	3.6	3.6	77.6
32	4	2.1	2.1	79.7
33	9	4.7	4.7	84.4
34	4	2.1	2.1	86.5
35	3	1.6	1.6	88.0
36	3	1.6	1.6	89.6
37	3	1.6	1.6	91.1
38	1	.5	.5	91.7
39	7	3.6	3.6	95.3
40	6	3.1	3.1	98.4
41	2	1.0	1.0	99.5
42	1	.5	.5	100.0
Total	192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A4: Respondent's Year of study

Year	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
1	25	13.0	13.0	13.0
2	102	53.1	53.1	66.1
3	57	29.7	29.7	95.8
4	6	3.1	3.1	99.0
5	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A5: Marital Status of Respondants

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Single	1.00	135	70.3	70.3	70.3
Married	2.00	42	21.9	21.9	92.2
N/L Married	3.00	15	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A6: Ethnic Origin of Respondents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Black-Car	3	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
Black-Other	4	2	1.0	1.0	2.6
White	8	184	95.8	95.8	98.4
Other	9	3	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A7: Respondents' Parental Status

Children?	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	.00	123	64.1	64.1	64.1
Yes	1.00	69	35.9	35.9	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A8: Social Class (Goldthorpe: 1980) of Respondents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Missing	0	23	12.0	12.0	12.0
Upper Service Class	1	1	.5	.5	12.5
Lower Service Class	2	51	26.6	26.6	39.1
Routine White Collar	3	56	29.2	29.2	68.2
Self Employed Manual	4	2	1.0	1.0	69.3
Manual Supervisory	5	8	4.2	4.2	73.4
Skilled Manual	6	13	6.8	6.8	80.2
Semi/Unskilled Manual	7	38	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A9: Respondents' Region of Origin

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
North West	1	142	74.0	74.0	74.0
North East	2	10	5.2	5.2	79.2
South West	3	7	3.6	3.6	82.8
South East	4	14	7.3	7.3	90.1
Midlands	5	7	3.6	3.6	93.8
Scotland	6	3	1.6	1.6	95.3
Wales	7	5	2.6	2.6	97.9
N.Ireland	8	2	1.0	1.0	99.0
Unspecified	9	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A10: Non Vocational Qualifications Held by Respondents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
None	0	1	.5	.5	.5
O Level/ C.S.E./ G.C.S.E only	1	31	16.1	16.1	16.7
A Level	2	89	46.4	46.4	63.0
Access	3	54	28.1	28.1	91.1
Other	4	3	1.6	1.6	92.7
O and A Level and Access	5	14	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A11: Vocational Qualifications (Level of) Held by Respondents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
None	0	103	53.6	53.6	53.6
Intermediate Level	1	51	26.6	26.6	80.2
Higher Level	2	16	8.3	8.3	88.5
Other	3	22	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A12: "Previous study was a useful preparation"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	134	69.8	69.8	69.8
Neither	2.00	24	12.5	12.5	82.3
Disagree	3.00	34	17.7	17.7	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A13: "School was a pleasant experience"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	66	34.4	34.4	34.4
Neither	2.00	53	27.6	27.6	62.0
Disagree	3.00	73	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A14:"Coming to university was always my intention"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	52	27.1	27.1	27.1
Neither	2.00	21	10.9	10.9	38.0
Disagree	3.00	119	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A15: "My job/career was after leaving school was Satisfying"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	54	28.1	28.1	28.1
Neither	2.00	42	21.9	21.9	50.0
Disagree	3.00	96	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A16: "Coming to university was my last resort"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	31	16.1	16.1	16.1
Neither	2.00	23	12.0	12.0	28.1
Disagree	3.00	138	71.9	71.9	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A17: "University, so far, has been a useful experience"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	164	85.4	85.4	85.4
Neither	2.00	20	10.4	10.4	95.8
Disagree	3.00	8	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A18: "Career enhancement was my primary motivation for coming to university"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	137	71.4	71.4	71.4
Neither	2.00	23	12.0	12.0	83.3
Disagree	3.00	32	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A19: "My Career prospects will be improved for having done my degree"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Agree	1.00	170	88.5	88.5	88.5
Neither	2.00	17	8.9	8.9	97.4
Disagree	3.00	5	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A20: "Interest in the subject was my primary motivation for coming to university"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	125	65.1	65.1	65.1
Neither	2.00	37	19.3	19.3	84.4
Disagree	3.00	30	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A21: "Gaining admission to university was not a problem"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	123	64.1	64.1	64.1
Neither	2.00	37	19.3	19.3	83.3
Disagree	3.00	32	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A22: "The teaching on my course(s) is always helpful"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	95	49.5	49.5	49.5
Neither	2.00	57	29.7	29.7	79.2
Disagree	3.00	40	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A23: "Relationships with other students are good"

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Agree	1.00	156	81.3	81.3	81.3
Neither	2.00	26	13.5	13.5	94.8
Disagree	3.00	10	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A24: Respondents' Type of subject/ Faculty of Study

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Arts	1	40	20.8	20.8	20.8
Science	2	32	16.7	16.7	37.5
Soc Science	3	50	26.0	26.0	63.5
Engineering	4	18	9.4	9.4	72.9
Law	5	9	4.7	4.7	77.6
Education	6	20	10.4	10.4	88.0
Other (Non Voc)	7	2	1.0	1.0	89.1
Other (Voc)	8	21	10.9	10.9	100.0
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A25: Respondents' Age on University Entrance

Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
21.00	16	8.3	8.3	8.3
22.00	15	7.8	7.8	16.1
23.00	22	11.5	11.5	27.6
24.00	12	6.3	6.3	33.9
25.00	16	8.3	8.3	42.2
26.00	18	9.4	9.4	51.6
27.00	13	6.8	6.8	58.3
28.00	17	8.9	8.9	67.2
29.00	16	8.3	8.3	75.5
30.00	5	2.6	2.6	78.1
31.00	2	1.0	1.0	79.2
32.00	9	4.7	4.7	83.9
33.00	4	2.1	2.1	85.9
34.00	3	1.6	1.6	87.5
35.00	4	2.1	2.1	89.6
36.00	3	1.6	1.6	91.1
37.00	6	3.1	3.1	94.3
38.00	3	1.6	1.6	95.8
39.00	6	3.1	3.1	99.0
40.00	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total:	192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 192 Missing cases 0

Table A26: "Ideal Typology" of Respondents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Late	1.00	118	61.5	77.1	77.1
Returning	2.00	35	18.2	22.9	100.0
	.	39	20.3	Missing	
Total		192	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 153 Missing cases 39

2) Bi-variate data
a) Ideal typology

Table A27: Ideal Typology by Institution

ITYPE		INST			Row Total
		Liv. U	JMU	Hope	
Late	*Count*	85	7	26	118
	Row Pct.	72.0	5.9	22.0	77.1
	Col Pct.	98.8	43.8	51.0	
Returning	*Count*	1	9	25	35
	Row Pct.	2.9	25.7	71.4	22.9
	Col Pct.	1.2	56.3	49.0	
	Column	86	16	51	153
	Total	56.2	10.5	33.3	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A28: Ideal Typology by Sex

ITYPE		SEX		Row Total
		Male	Female	
Late	*Count*	53	65	118
	Row Pct.	44.9	55.1	77.1
	Col. Pct.	88.3	69.9	
Returning	*Count*	7	28	35
	Row Pct.	20.0	80.0	22.9
	Col. Pct.	11.7	30.1	
	Column	60	93	
	Total	39.2	60.8	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A29: Ideal Typology by Marital Status

ITYPE						Row Total
		Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	
Late	*Count*	110	7	1		118
	Row Pct	93.2	5.9	0.8		77.1
	Col Pct	95.7	25.9	20.0		
Returning	*Count*	5	20	4	6	35
	Row Pct	14.3	57.1	11.4	17.1	22.9
	Col Pct	4.3	74.1	80.0	100.0	
	Column	115	27	5	6	153
	Total	75.2	17.6	3.3	3.9	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A30: Ideal Typology by Class

ITYPE		CLASS							Row Total
		u.serv	l.serv	r.w.coll	man. sup	skill. ml	ssk/usk		
Late	*Count*	12	1	33	40	3	6	23	118
	Row Pct.	10.2	0.8	28.0	33.9	2.5	5.1	19.5	77.1
	Col Pct.	70.6	100.0	82.5	75.5	60.0	85.7	76.7	
Returning	*Count*	5		7	13	2	1	7	35
	Row Pct.	14.3		20.0	37.1	5.7	2.9	20.0	22.9
	Col Pct.	29.4		17.5	24.5	40.0	14.3	23.3	
	Column Total	17	1	40	53	5	7	30	153
		11.1	0.7	26.1	34.6	3.3	4.6	4.6	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A31: Ideal Typology by Non-Vocational Qualifications

ITYPE		NONVOC						Row Total
			Ord.	Adv.	Access	Other	O.A. Acc	
Late	*Count*		22	63	22	2	9	118
	Row Pct		18.6	53.4	18.6	1.7	7.6	77.1
	Col Pct		81.5	84.0	59.5	100.00	81.8	
Returning	*Count*	1	5	12	15		2	35
	Row Pct	2.9	14.3	34.3	42.9		5.7	22.9
	Col Pct	100.0	18.5	16.0	40.5		18.2	
	column Total	1	27	75	37	2	11	153
		0.7	17.6	49.0	24.2	1.3	7.2	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A32: Ideal Typology by Vocational Qualifications

ITYPE		VOC				Row Total
			Interm	Higher	Other	
Late	*Count*	63	33	8	14	118
	Row Pct.	53.4	28.0	6.8	11.9	77.1
	Col Pct.	81.8	80.5	53.3	70.0	
Returning	*Count*	14	8	7	6	35
	Row Pct.	40.0	22.9	20.0	17.1	22.9
	Col Pct.	18.2	19.5	46.7	30.0	
	Column Total	77	41	15	20	153
		50.3	26.8	9.8	13.1	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A33: Ideal Typology by Faculty of Attendance

ITYPE		SUBJECT								Row Total
		Arts	Science	Soc Science	Engineering	Law	Education	Other (NVOC)	Other (VOC)	
Late	Count	27	16	37	12	5	7		14	118
	Row %	22.9	13.6	31.4	10.2	4.2	5.9		11.9	77.1
	Col %t	93.1	69.6	80.4	92.3	83.3	41.2		77.8	
Returning	Count	2	7	9	1	1	10	1	4	35
	Row %	5.7	20.0	25.7	2.9	2.9	28.6	2.9	11.4	22.9
	Col %	6.9	30.4	19.6	7.7	16.7	5.8	100.0	22.2	
	Column Total	29 19.0	23 15.0	46 30.1	13 8.5	6 3.9	17 11.1	1 0.7	18 11.8	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A34: Ideal Typologies by "Career enhancement was my primary motivation"

ITYPE		NENHANCE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	Count	84	15	19	118
	Row Pct.	71.2	12.7	16.1	77.1
	Col. Pct	77.1	75.0	79.2	
Returning	Count	25	5	5	35
	Row Pct.	71.4	14.3	14.3	22.9
	Col. Pct	22.9	25.0	20.8	
	Column Total	109 71.2	20 13.1	24 15.7	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A35: Ideal Typologies by "Interest was my primary motivation"

ITYPE		NINTERST			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	Count	79	24	15	118
	Row Pct.	66.9	20.3	12.7	77.1
	Col. Pct.	79.0	75.0	71.4	
Returning	Count	21	8	6	35
	Row Pct.	60.0	22.9	17.1	22.9
	Col. Pct.	21.0	25.0	28.6	
	Column Total	100 65.4	32 20.9	21 13.7	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A36: Ideal Typologies by "My Degree will be useful to my career"

ITYPE		NDEGREE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	102	12	4	118
	Row Pct.	86.4	10.2	3.4	77.1
	Col. Pct.	75.6	92.3	80.0	
Returning	*Count*	33	1	1	35
	Row Pct.	94.3	2.9	2.9	22.9
	Col. Pct.	24	7.7	20.0	
	Column Total	135 88.2	13 85.5	5 3.3	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A37: Ideal Typologies by "School was a pleasant experience"

ITYPE		NSCHOOL			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	50	27	41	118
	Row Pct.	42.4	22.9	34.7	77.1
	Col. Pct.	87.7	67.5	73.2	
Returning	*Count*	7	13	15	35
	Row Pct.	20.0	37.1	42.9	22.8
	Col. Pct.	12.3	32.5	26.8	
	Column Total	57 37.3	40 26.1	56 36.6	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A38: Ideal Typologies by "My job/career before coming to university was satisfying"

ITYPE		NJOB			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	22	24	72	118
	Row Pct.	18.6	20.3	61.0	77.1
	Col. Pct.	61.1	66.7	88.9	
Returning	*Count*	14	12	9	35
	Row Pct.	40.0	34.3	25.7	22.9
	Col. Pct.	38.9	33.3	11.1	
	Column Total	36 23.5	36 23.5	81 52.9	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A39: Ideal Typologies by "My relationships with other students are good"

ITYPE		NSTUDENT			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	96	15	7	118
	Row Pct.	81.4	12.7	5.9	77.1
	Col. Pct.	78.0	68.2	87.5	
Returning	*Count*	27	7	1	35
	Row Pct.	77.1	20.0	2.9	22.9
	Col. Pct.	22.0	31.8	12.5	
	Column Total	123 80.4	22 14.4	8 5.2	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A40: Ideal Typologies by "University has, so far, been a useful experience"

ITYPE		NUSEFUL			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	101	13	4	118
	Row Pct.	85.6	11.0	3.4	77.1
	Col. Pct.	75.9	92.9	66.7	
Returning	*Count*	32	1	2	35
	Row Pct.	91.4	2.9	5.7	22.9
	Col. Pct.	24.1	7.1	33.3	
	Column Total	133 86.9	14 9.2	6 3.9	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A41: Ideal Typologies by "The teaching on my course is good"

ITYPE		NTEACH			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	54	41	23	118
	Row Pct.	45.8	34.7	19.5	77.1
	Col Pct.	75.0	82.0	74.2	
Returning	*Count*	18	9	8	35
	Row Pct.	51.4	25.7	22.9	2.9
	Col Pct.	25.0	18.0	25.8	
	Column Total	72 47.1	50 32.7	31 20.3	153 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A42: Ideal Typologies by "Coming to university was my last resort"

ITYPE		NRES			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	19	12	87	118
	Row Pct.	16.1	10.2	73.7	77.1
	Col Pct.	70.4	63.2	81.3	
Returning	*Count*	8	7	20	35
	Row Pct.	22.9	20.0	57.1	22.9
	Col Pct.	29.6	36.8	18.7	
	Column	27	19	107	153
	Total	17.6	12.4	69.9	100.0

Number of *Missing Observations:* 39

Table A43: Ideal Typologies by "Previous study was a useful preparation"

ITYPE		NPREV			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	82	17	19	118
	Row Pct.	69.5	14.4	16.1	77.1
	Col Pct.	76.6	77.3	79.2	
Returning	*Count*	25	5	5	35
	Row Pct.	71.4	14.3	14.3	22.9
	Col Pct.	23.4	22.7	20.8	
	Column	107	22	24	153
	Total	69.9	14.4	15.7	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

Table A44: Ideal Typologies by "Coming to university was always my intention"

ITYPE		NINTENT			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Late	*Count*	42	9	67	118
	Row Pct.	35.6	7.6	56.8	77.7
	Col Pct.	93.3	60.0	72.0	
Returning	*Count*	3	6	26	35
	Row Pct.	8.6	17.1	74.3	22.9
	Col Pct.	6.7	40.0	28.0	
	Column	45	15	93	153
	Total	29.4	9.8	60.8	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 39

b) Sex

Table A45: Sex by Institution of Attendance

SEX		INST			Row Total
		Liv U.	JMU	Hope	
Male	*Count*	54	12	11	77
	Row Pct.	70.1	15.6	14.3	40.1
	Col. Pct.	49.5	52.2	18.3	
Female	*Count*	55	11	49	115
	Row Pct.	47.8	9.6	42.6	59.9
	Col. Pct.	50.5	47.8	81.7	
	Column Total	109 56.8	23 12.0	60 31.3	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A46: Sex by Age at Degree Commencement

SEX		NNAGE			Row Total
		21-25	26-30	31-40	
Male	*Count*	39	27	11	77
	Row Pct.	50.6	35.1	14.3	40.1
	Col Pct.	48.1	39.1	26.2	
Female	*Count*	42	42	31	115
	Row Pct.	36.5	36.5	27.0	59.9
	Col Pct.	51.9	60.9	73.8	
	Column Total	81 42.2	69 35.5	42 21.9	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A47: Sex by Marital Status

SEX		NMAR			Row Total
		Single	Married	No Longer Married	
Male	*Count*	61	14	2	77
	Row Pct.	79.2	18.2	2.6	40.1
	Col Pct.	45.2	33.3	13.3	
Female	*Count*	74	28	13	115
	Row Pct.	64.3	24.3	11.3	59.9
	Col Pct.	54.8	66.7	86.7	
	Column Total	135 70.3	42 21.9	15 7.8	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A48: Sex by "Previous study was a useful preparation"

SEX		NPREV			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	52	7	18	77
	Row Pct.	67.5	9.1	23.4	40.1
	Col Pct.	38.8	29.2	52.9	
Female	*Count*	82	17	16	115
	Row Pct.	71.3	14.8	13.9	59.9
	Col Pct.	61.2	70.8	47.1	
	Column Total	134 69.8	24 12.5	34 17.7	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A49: Sex by "School was a pleasant experience"

SEX		NSCHOOL			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	28	20	29	77
	Row Pct.	36.4	26.0	37.7	40.1
	Col Pct.	42.4	37.7	39.7	
Female	*Count*	38	33	44	115
	Row Pct.	33.0	28.7	38.3	59.9
	Col Pct.	57.6	62.3	60.3	
	Column Total	66 34.4	53 27.6	73 38.0	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A50: Sex by "Coming to university was always my intention"

SEX		NINTENT			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	21	9	47	77
	Row Pct.	27.3	11.7	61.0	40.1
	Col Pct.	40.4	42.9	39.5	
Female	*Count*	31	12	72	115
	Row Pct.	27.0	10.4	62.6	59.9
	Col Pct.	59.6	57.1	60.5	
	Column Total	52 27.1	21 10.9	119 62.0	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A51: Sex by "My job/career before coming to university was satisfying"

SEX		NJOB			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	24	14	39	77
	Row Pct.	31.2	18.2	50.6	40.1
	Col. Pct.	44.4	33.3	40.6	
Female	*Count*	30	28	57	115
	Row Pct.	26.1	24.3	49.6	59.9
	Col. Pct.	55.6	66.7	59.4	
	Column Total	54	42	96	192
		28.1	21.9	50.0	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A52: Sex by "Coming to university was always my intention"

SEX		NRES			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	12	13	52	77
	Row Pct.	15.6	16.9	67.5	40.1
	Col. Pct.	38.7	56.5	37.7	
Female	*Count*	19	10	86	115
	Row Pct.	16.5	8.7	74.8	59.9
	Col. Pct.	61.3	43.5	62.3	
	Column Total	31	23	138	
		16.1	12.0	71.9	100.00

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A53: Sex by "Previous study was a useful preparation"

SEX		NUSEFUL			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	66	9	2	77
	Row Pct.	85.7	11.7	2.6	40.1
	Col. Pct.	40.2	45.0	25.0	
Female	*Count*	98	11	6	115
	Row Pct.	85.2	9.6	5.2	59.9
	Col. Pct.	59.8	55.0	75.0	
	Column Total	164	20	8	192
		85.4	10.4	4.2	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A54: Sex by "Career enhancement was my primary motivation for coming to university"

SEX		NENHANCE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	58	5	14	77
	Row Pct.	75.3	6.5	18.2	40.1
	Col. Pct.	42.3	21.7	43.8	
Female	*Count*	79	18	18	115
	Row Pct.	68.7	15.7	15.7	59.9
	Col. Pct.	57.7	78.3	56.3	
	Column Total	137	23	32	192
		71.4	12.0	16.7	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A55: Sex by "My degree will be useful to my career"

SEX		NDEGREE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	74	2	1	77
	Row Pct.	96.1	2.6	1.3	40.1
	Col. Pct.	43.5	11.8	20.0	59.9
Female	*Count*	96	15	4	115
	Row Pct.	83.5	13.0	3.5	59.9
	Col. Pct.	56.5	88.2	80.0	
	Column Total	170	17	5	192
		88.5	8.9	2.6	100.00

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A56: Sex by "Interest was my primary motivation for coming to university"

SEX		NINTEREST			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Male	*Count*	54	15	8	77
	Row Pct.	70.1	19.5	10.4	40.1
	Col. Pct.	43.2	40.5	26.7	
Female	*Count*	71	22	22	115
	Row Pct.	61.7	19.1	19.1	59.9
	Col. Pct.	56.8	59.5	73.3	
	Column Total	125	37	30	192
		65.1	19.3	15.6	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A57: Sex by Faculty of Attendance

SEX		SUBJECT								Row Total
		Arts	Science	Soc Science	Engineering	Law	Education	Other (Non Voc)	Other (Voc)	
Male	*Count*	14	15	15	17	4	4	1	7	77
	Row %	18.2	19.5	19.5	22.1	5.2	5.2	1.3	9.1	40.1
	Col %	35.0	46.9	30.0	94.4	44.4	20.0	50.0	33.0	
Female	*Count*	26	17	35	1	5	16	1	14	115
	Row %	22.6	14.8	30.4	0.9	4.3	13.9	0.9	12.2	59.9
	Col %	65.0	53.1	70.0	5.6	55.6	80.0	50.0	66.7	
	Column Total	40	32	50	18	9	20	2	21	192
		20.8	16.7	26.0	9.4	4.7	10.4	1.0	10.9	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A58: Sex by Vocational Qualifications

SEX		VOC				Row Total
		None	Intermediate	Higher	Other	
Male	*Count*	38	25	10	4	77
	Row Pct.	49.4	32.5	13.0	5.2	40.1
	Col Pct.	36.9	49.0	62.5	18.2	
Female	*Count*	65	26	6	18	115
	Row Pct.	56.5	22.6	5.2	15.7	59.9
	Col Pct.	63.1	51.0	37.5	81.8	
Column Total	*Column Total*	103	51	16	22	192
		53.6	26.6	8.3	11.5	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A59: Sex by Non-vocational Qualifications

Sex		NonVoc						Row Total
		None	'O' Level Only	'A' Level	Access	Other	O, A Level & Access	
Male	*Count*	1	17	34	22	-	3	77
	Row %	1.3	22.1	44.2	28.6	-	3.9	40.1
	Col %	100.0	54.8	38.2	40.7	-	21.4	
Female	*Count*	-	14	55	32	3	11	115
	Row %	-	12.2	47.8	27.8	2.6	9.6	59.9
	Col %	-	45.2	61.8	59.3	100.0	78.6	
	Column Total	1	31	89	54	3	14	192
		0.5	16.1	89	54	3	14	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A60: Sex by Vocational Qualitication by Non-vocational Qualifications

a) Males

VOC		NONVOC					Row Total
		None	O Level	A Level	Access	O, A Level & Access	
None	*Count*	-	3	19	15	1	38
	Row Pct.	-	7.9	50.0	39.5	2.6	49.4
	Col Pct.	-	17.6	55.9	68.2	33.3	
Intermediate	*Count*	-	9	7	7	2	25
	Row Pct.	-	36.0	28.0	28.0	8.0	32.5
	Col Pct.	-	52.9	20.6	31.8	66.7	
Higher	*Count*	1	5	4	-	-	10
	Row Pct.	10.0	50.0	40.0	-	-	13.0
	Col Pct.	100.0	29.4	11.8	-	-	
Other	*Count*	-	-	4	-	-	4
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.0	-	-	5.2
	Col Pct.	-	-	11.8	-	-	
	Column Total	1 1.3	17 22.1	34 44.2	22 28.6	3 3.9	77 100.0

b) Females

VOC		NONVOC					Row Total
		None	O Level	A Level	Access	O, A Level & Access	
None	*Count*	2	33	20	2	8	65
	Row Pct.	3.1	50.6	30.8	3.1	12.3	56.5
	Col Pct.	14.3	60.0	62.5	66.7	72.7	
Intermediate	*Count*	7	9	7	-	3	26
	Row Pct.	26.9	34.6	26.9	-	11.5	22.6
	Col Pct.	50.0	16.4	21.9	-	27.3	
Higher	*Count*	3	2	1	-	-	6
	Row Pct.	50.0	33.3	16.7	-	-	5.2
	Col Pct.	21.4	3.6	3.1	-	-	
Other	*Count*	2	11	4	1	-	18
	Row Pct.	11.1	61.1	2.2	5.6	-	15.7
	Col Pct.	14.3	20.0	12.5	33.3	-	
	Column Total	14 12.2	55 47.6	32 27.8	11 9.6	11 9.6	115 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

c) Class

Table A61: Class by Institution of Attendence

CLASS		INST			Row Total
		Liv U.	JMU	Hope	
	Count	16	1	6	23
	Row Pct.	69.6	4.3	26.1	12.0
	Col. Pct.	14.7	4.3	10.0	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	100.0
	Col. Pct.	0.9	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	30	8	13	51
	Row Pct.	58.8	15.7	25.5	26.6
	Col. Pct.	27.5	34.8	21.7	
r.w.coll	*Count*	29	4	23	56
	Row Pct.	51.8	7.1	41.1	29.2
	Col. Pct.	26.6	17.4	38.3	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	-	-	2	2
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.00	1.0
	Col. Pct.	-	-	3.3	
man.sup	*Count*	3	-	5	8
	Row Pct.	37.5	-	62.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	2.8	-	8.3	
skill.ml	*Count*	9	4	-	13
	Row Pct.	69.2	30.8	-	6.8
	Col. Pct.	8.3	17.4	-	
ssk/usk	*Count*	21	6	11	38
	Row Pct.	55.3	15.8	28.9	19.8
	Col. Pct.	19.3	26.1	18.3	
	Column Total	109	23	60	192
		56.6	12.0	31.3	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A62: Class by Sex

CLASS		SEX		Row Total
		Male	Female	
	Count	9	14	23
	Row Pct.	39.1	60.9	12.0
	Col. Pct.	11.7	12.2	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	1.3	-	
l.serve	*Count*	25	26	51
	Row Pct.	49.0	51.0	26.6
	Col. Pct.	32.5	22.6	
r.w.coll	*Count*	11	45	56
	Row Pct.	19.6	80.4	29.2
	Col. Pct.	14.3	39.1	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	-	2	2
	Row Pct.	-	100.0	1.0
	Col. Pct.	-	1.7	
man.sup	*Count*	5	3	8
	Row Pct.	62.5	37.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	6.5	2.6	
skill.ml	*Count*	11	2	13
	Row Pct.	84.6	15.4	6.8
	Col. Pct.	14.3	1.7	
ssk/usk	*Count*	15	23	38
	Row Pct.	39.5	60.5	19.8
	Col. Pct.	19.5	20.0	
	Column Total	77 40.1	115 59.9	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A63: Class by "School was a pleasant experience"

CLASS		NSCHOOL			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	11	6	6	23
	Row Pct.	47.8	26.1	26.1	12.0
	Col. Pct.	16.7	11.3	8.2	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	1.5	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	21	14	16	51
	Row Pct.	41.2	27.5	31.4	26.6
	Col. Pct.	31.8	28.3	27.4	
r.w.coll	*Count*	21	15	20	56
	Row Pct.	37.5	26.8	35.7	29.2
	Col. Pct.	31.8	28.3	27.4	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	-	-	2	2
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.0	1.0
	Col. Pct.	-	-	2.7	
man.sup	*Count*	2	2	4	8
	Row Pct.	25.0	25.0	50.0	4.2
	Col. Pct.	3.0	3.8	5.5	
skill.ml	*Count*	3	2	8	13
	Row Pct.	23.1	15.4	61.5	6.8
	Col. Pct.	4.5	3.8	11.0	
ssk/usk	*Count*	7	14	17	38
	Row Pct.	18.4	36.8	44.7	19.8
	Col. Pct.	10.6	26.4	23.3	
	Column Total	66 34.4	53 27.6	73 38.0	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A64: Class by "My job/career before coming to university was satisfying"

CLASS		NJOB			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	8	8	7	23
	Row Pct.	34.8	34.8	30.4	12.0
	Col. Pct.	14.8	19.0	7.3	
u.serv	*Count*	-	1	-	1
	Row Pct.	-	100.0	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	-	2.4	-	
l.serve	*Count*	14	14	23	51
	Row Pct.	27.5	27.5	45.1	26.6
	Col. Pct.	25.9	33.3	24.0	
r.w.coll	*Count*	13	8	35	56
	Row Pct.	23.2	14.3	62.5	29.2
	Col. Pct.	24.1	19.0	36.5	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	3.7	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	4	1	3	8
	Row Pct.	50.0	12.5	37.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	7.4	2.4	3.1	
skill.ml	*Count*	6	2	5	13
	Row Pct.	46.2	15.4	38.5	6.8
	Col. Pct.	11.1	4.8	5.2	
ssk/usk	*Count*	7	8	23	38
	Row Pct.	18.4	21.1	60.5	19.8
	Col. Pct.	13.0	19.0	24.0	
	Column Total	54 28.1	42 21.9	96 50.0	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A65: Class by "Coming to university was my last resort"

CLASS		NRES			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	1	2	20	23
	Row Pct.	4.3	8.7	87.0	12.0
	Col. Pct.	3.2	8.7	14.5	
u.serv	*Count*	-	-	1	1
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.0	0.5
	Col. Pct.	-	-	0.7	
l.serve	*Count*	9	2	40	51
	Row Pct.	17.6	3.9	78.4	26.6
	Col. Pct.	29.0	8.7	29.0	
r.w.coll	*Count*	9	8	39	56
	Row Pct.	16.1	14.3	69.6	29.2
	Col. Pct.	29.0	34.8	28.3	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	-	-	2	2
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.0	1.0
	Col. Pct.	-	-	1.4	
man.sup	*Count*	1	2	5	8
	Row Pct.	12.5	25.0	62.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	3.2	8.7	3.6	
skill.ml	*Count*	3	2	8	13
	Row Pct.	23.1	15.4	61.5	6.8
	Col. Pct.	9.7	8.7	5.8	
ssk/usk	*Count*	8	7	23	38
	Row Pct.	21.1	18.4	60.5	19.8
	Col. Pct.	25.8	30.4	16.7	
	Column Total	31 16.1	23 12.0	138 71.9	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A66: Class by "University has, so far, been a useful experience"

CLASS		NUSEFUL			Row Total
	Count	19	4	-	23
	Row Pct.	82.6	17.4	-	12.0
	Col. Pct.	11.6	20.0	-	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	0.6	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	41	6	4	51
	Row Pct.	80.4	11.8	7.8	26.6
	Col. Pct.	25.0	30.0	50.0	
r.w.coll	*Count*	50	3	3	56
	Row Pct.	89.3	5.4	5.4	29.2
	Col. Pct.	30.5	15.0	37.5	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.2	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	8	-	-	8
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	4.2
	Col. Pct.	4.9	-	-	
skill.ml	*Count*	12	-	1	13
	Row Pct.	92.3	-	7.7	6.8
	Col. Pct.	7.3	-	12.5	
ssk/usk	*Count*	31	7	-	38
	Row Pct.	81.6	18.4	-	19.8
	Col. Pct.	18.9	35.0	-	
	Column Total	164	20	8	192
		85.4	10.4	4.2	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A67: Class by "Career enhancement was my primary motivation"

CLASS		NENHANCE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	20	1	2	23
	Row Pct.	87.0	4.3	8.7	12.0
	Col. Pct.	14.6	4.3	6.3	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	0.7	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	29	8	14	51
	Row Pct.	56.9	15.7	27.5	26.6
	Col. Pct.	21.2	34.8	43.8	
r.w.coll	*Count*	40	7	9	56
	Row Pct.	71.4	12.5	16.1	29.2
	Col. Pct.	29.2	30.4	28.1	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.5	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	7	-	1	8
	Row Pct.	87.5	-	12.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	5.1	-	3.1	
skill.ml	*Count*	12	-	1	13
	Row Pct.	92.3	-	7.7	6.8
	Col. Pct.	8.8	-	3.1	
ssk/usk	*Count*	26	7	5	38
	Row Pct.	68.4	18.4	13.2	19.8
	Col. Pct.	19.0	30.4	15.6	
	Column Total	137 71.4	23 12.0	32 16.7	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A68: Class by "My degree will enhance my career prospects"

CLASS		NDEGREE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	22	1	-	23
	Row Pct.	95.7	4.3	-	12.0
	Col. Pct.	12.9	5.9	-	
u.serv	*Count*	1	-	-	1
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	0.5
	Col. Pct.	0.6	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	43	5	3	51
	Row Pct.	84.3	9.8	5.9	26.6
	Col. Pct.	25.3	29.4	60.0	
r.w.coll	*Count*	48	6	2	56
	Row Pct.	85.7	10.7	3.6	29.2
	Col. Pct.	28.2	35.3	¬0.0	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.2	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	8	-	-	8
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	4.2
	Col. Pct.	4.7	-	-	
skill.ml	*Count*	13	-	-	13
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	6.8
	Col. Pct.	7.6	-	-	
ssk/usk	*Count*	33	5		38
	Row Pct.	86.8	13.2	-	19.8
	Col. Pct.	19.4	29.4	-	
	Column Total	170	17	5	192
		88.5	8.9	2.6	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A69: Class by "Interest was my primary motivation for coming to university"

CLASS		NINTERST			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
	Count	15	4	4	23
	Row Pct.	65.2	17.4	17.4	12.0
	Col. Pct.	12.0	10.8	13.3	
u.serv	*Count*	-	-	1	1
	Row Pct.	-	-	100.0	0.5
	Col. Pct.	-	-	3.3	
l.serve	*Count*	34	9	8	51
	Row Pct.	66.7	17.6	15.7	26.6
	Col. Pct.	27.2	24.3	26.7	
r.w.coll	*Count*	37	10	9	56
	Row Pct.	66.1	17.9	16.1	29.2
	Col. Pct.	29.6	27.0	30.0	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.6	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	5	2	1	8
	Row Pct.	62.5	25.0	12.5	4.2
	Col. Pct.	4.0	5.4	3.3	
skill.ml	*Count*	11	2	-	13
	Row Pct.	84.6	15.4	-	6.8
	Col. Pct.	8.8	5.4	-	
ssk/usk	*Count*	21	10	7	38
	Row Pct.	55.3	26.3	18.4	19.8
	Col. Pct.	16.8	27.0	23.3	
	Column Total	125 65.1	37 19.3	30 15.6	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A70: Class by Vocational Qualifications

CLASS		VOC				Row Total
			Intermediate	Higher	Other	
	Count	14	5	-	4	23
	Row Pct.	60.9	21.7	-	17.4	12.0
	Col. Pct.	13.6	9.8	-	18.2	
u.serv	*Count*	-	-	-	1	1
	Row Pct.	-	-	-	100.0	0.5
	Col. Pct.	-	-	-	4.5	
l.serve	*Count*	28	12	6	5	51
	Row Pct.	54.9	23.5	11.8	9.8	26.6
	Col. Pct.	27.2	23.5	37.5	22.7	
r.w.coll	*Count*	28	13	7	8	56
	Row Pct.	50.0	23.2	12.5	14.3	29.2
	Col. Pct.	27.2	25.5	43.8	36.4	
s.emp.ml	*Count*	1	1	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	50.0	50.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.0	2.0	-	-	
man.sup	*Count*	5	1	2	-	8
	Row Pct.	62.5	12.5	25.0	-	4.2
	Col. Pct.	4.9	2.0	12.5	-	
skill.ml	*Count*	4	8	1	-	13
	Row Pct.	30.8	61.5	7.7	-	6.8
	Col. Pct.	3.9	15.7	6.3	-	
ssk/usk	*Count*	23	11	-	-	38
	Row Pct.	60.5	28.9	-	-	19.8
	Col. Pct.	22.3	21.6	-	-	
	Column Total	103	51	16	22	192
		53.6	26.6	8.3	11.5	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A71: Class by Non-Vocational Qualifications

CLASS		NONVOC						Row
			Ord	Adv	Access	Other	O, A, Acc	Total
	Count	-	-	16	5	-	2	23
	Row %	-	-	69.6	21.7	-	8.7	12.0
	Col. %	-	-	18.0	9.3	-	14.3	
u.serv	*Count*	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Row %	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	0.5
	Col. %	-	-	1.1	-	-	-	
l.serve	*Count*	1	12	27	8	-	3	51
	Row %	2.0	23.5	52.9	15.7	-	5.9	26.6
	Col. %	100.0	38.7	30.3	14.8	-	21.4	
r.w.coll	*Count*	-	8	29	13	1	5	56
	Row %	-	14.3	51.8	23.2	1.8	8.9	29.2
	Col. %	-	25.8	32.6	24.1	33.3	35.7	
s.emp. ml	*Count*	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
	Row %	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col.%	-	-	-	3.7	-	-	
man. sup	*Count*	-	1	2	5	-	-	8
	Row %	-	12.5	25.0	62.5	-	-	4.2
	Col. %	-	3.2	2.2	9.3	-	-	
skill.ml	*Count*	-	6	1	5	-	1	13
	Row %	-	46.2	7.7	38.5	-	7.7	6.8
	Col. %	-	19.4	1.1	9.3	-	7.1	
ssk/usk	*Count*	-	4	13	16	2	3	38
	Row %	-	10.5	34.2	42.1	5.3	7.9	19.8
	Col. %	-	12.9	14.6	29.6	66.7	21.4	
	Column	1	31	89	54	3	14	192
	Total	0.5	16.1	46.4	28.1	1.6	7.3	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A72: "Interest was my primary motivation ..." by "Career Enhancement was my primary motivation"

NINTERST		NENHANCE			Row
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Total
Agree	*Count*	88	16	21	125
	Row Pct	70.4	12.8	16.8	65.1
	Col. Pct.	64.2	69.6	65.6	
Neither	*Count*	30	3	4	37
	Row Pct	81.1	8.1	10.8	19.3
	Col. Pct.	21.9	13.0	12.5	
Disagree	*Count*	19	4	7	30
	Row Pct	63.3	13.3	23.3	15.6
	Col. Pct.	13.9	17.4	21.9	
	Column Total	137 71.4	23 12.0	32 16.7	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A73: "Interest was my primary motivation ..." by "Career Enhancement was my primary motivation" by Sex

a) Males

NINTERST		NENHANCE			Row
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Total
Agree	*Count*	39	5	10	54
	Row Pct	72.2	9.3	18.5	70.1
	Col. Pct.	67.2	100.0	71.4	
Neither	*Count*	13	-	2	15
	Row Pct	86.7	-	13.3	19.5
	Col. Pct.	22.4	-	14.3	
Disagree	*Count*	6	-	2	8
	Row Pct	75.0	-	25.0	10.4
	Col. Pct.	10.3	-	14.3	
	Column Total	58 7.3	5 6.5	14 18.2	77 100.0

b) Females

NINTERST		NENHANCE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Agree	*Count*	49	11	11	71
	Row Pct	69.0	15.5	15.5	61.7
	Col. Pct.	62.0	61.1	61.1	
Neither	*Count*	17	3	2	22
	Row Pct	77.3	13.6	9.1	19.1
	Col. Pct.	21.5	16.7	11.1	
Disagree	*Count*	13	4	5	22
	Row Pct	59.1	18.2	22.7	19.1
	Col. Pct.	16.5	22.2	27.8	
	Column Total	79 68.7	18 15.7	18 15.7	115 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A74: "Interest was my primary motivation ..." by Faculty of Attendence

NINTERST		SUBJECT								ROW Total
		Arts	Science	Soc Science	Eng.	Law	Educ.	Other (Non Voc)	Other (Voc)	
Agree	*Count*	23	24	32	9	7	16	2	12	125
	Row %	18.4	19.2	25.6	7.2	5.6	12.8	1.6	9.6	65.1
	Col %	57.5	75.0	64.0	50.0	77.8	80.0	100.0	57.1	
Neither	*Count*	8	6	12	5	-	2	-	4	37
	Row %	21.6	16.2	32.4	13.5	-	5.4	-	10.8	19.3
	Col %	20.0	18.8	24.0	27.8	-	10.0	-	19.0	
Disagree	*Count*	9	2	6	4	2	2	-	5	30
	Row %	30.0	6.7	20.0	13.3	6.7	6.7	-	16.7	15.6
	Col %	22.5	6.3	12.0	22.2	22.2	10.0	-	23.8	
	Column Total	40 20.8	32 16.7	50 26.0	18 9.4	9 4.7	20 10.4	2 1.0	21 10.9	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A75: "Interest was my primary motivation ..." by "My degree will enhance my career prospects"

NINTERST		NDEGREE			Row Total
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	
Agree	*Count*	130	4	3	137
	Row Pct	94.9	2.9	2.2	71.4
	Col. Pct.	76.5	23.5	60.0	
Neither	*Count*	17	4	2	23
	Row Pct	73.9	17.4	8.7	12.0
	Col. Pct.	10.0	23.5	40.0	
Disagree	*Count*	23	9	-	32
	Row Pct	71.9	28.1	-	16.7
	Col. Pct.	13.5	52.9	-	
	Column	170	17	5	192
	Total	88.5	8.9	2.6	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A76: "Career Enhancement was my Primary motivation ..." by Institution of Attendence

NENHANCE		INST			Row Total
		Liv U	JMU	Hope	
Agree	*Count*	73	18	46	137
	Row Pct	53.3	13.1	33.6	71.4
	Col. Pct.	67.0	78.3	76.7	
Neither	*Count*	15	2	6	23
	Row Pct	65.2	8.7	26.1	12.0
	Col. Pct.	13.8	8.7	10.0	
Disagree	*Count*	21	3	8	32
	Row Pct	65.6	9.4	25.0	16.7
	Col. Pct.	19.3	13.0	13.3	
	Column	109	23	60	192
	Total	56.8	12.0	31.3	100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A77: "Interest was my primary motivation ..." by Institution of Attendence

NINTERST		INST			Row
		Liv U	JMU	Hope	Total
Agree	*Count*	77	18	46	137
	Row Pct	55.4	13.45	31.15	73.45
	Col. Pct.	67.0	78.3	76.7	
Neither	*Count*	15	2	6	23
	Row Pct	70.55	12.52	11.1	12.0
	Col. Pct.	13.7	8.7	12.2	
Disagree	*Count*	22	1	8	31
	Row Pct	66.25	13.52	23.8	16.14
	Col. Pct.	19.25	12.52	15.2	
	Column Total	114 59.3	21 10.9	60 31.25	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A78: "Career Enhancement was my primary motivation ..." by Institution of Attendence by Sex

a) Males

NENHANCE		INST			Row
		Liv U	JMU	Hope	Total
Agree	*Count*	40	9	9	58
	Row Pct	69.0	15.5	15.5	75.3
	Col. Pct.	74.1	75.0	81.8	
Neither	*Count*	4	1	-	5
	Row Pct	80.0	20.0	-	6.5
	Col. Pct.	7.4	8.3	-	
Disagree	*Count*	10	2	2	14
	Row Pct	71.4	14.3	14.3	18.2
	Col. Pct.	18.5	16.7	18.2	
	Column Total	54 70.1	12 15.6	11 14.3	77 100.0

b) Females

NENHANCE		INST			Row Total
		Liv U	JMU	Hope	
Agree	*Count*	33	9	37	79
	Row Pct	41.8	11.4	46.8	68.7
	Col. Pct.	60.0	81.8	75.5	
Neither	*Count*	11	1	6	18
	Row Pct	61.1	5.6	33.3	15.7
	Col. Pct.	20.0	9.1	12.2	
Disagree	*Count*	11	1	6	18
	Row Pct	61.1	5.6	33.3	15.7
	Col. Pct.	20.0	9.1	12.2	
	Column Total	55 47.8	11 9.6	49 42.6	115 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A79: "Career enhancement was my primary motivation ..." by Faculty of attendance

NINTERST		SUBJECT								ROW Total
		Arts	Science	Soc Science	Eng.	Law	Educ.	Other (Non Voc)	Other (Voc)	
Agree	*Count*	27	25	32	16	6	16	2	13	137
	Row %	19.7	18.2	23.4	11.7	4.4	11.7	1.5	9.5	71.4
	Col %	67.5	78.1	64.0	88.9	66.7	80.0	100.0	61.9	
Neither	*Count*	4	3	7	-	1	2	-	6	23
	Row %	17.4	13.0	30.4	-	4.3	8.7	-	26.1	12.0
	Col %	10.0	9.4	14.0	-	11.1	10.0	-	28.6	
Disagree	*Count*	9	4	11	2	2	2	-	2	32
	Row %	28.1	12.5	34.4	6.3	6.3	6.3	-	6.3	16.7
	Col %	22.5	12.5	22.0	11.0	22.2	10.0	-	9.5	
	Column Total	40 20.8	32 16.7	50 26.0	18 9.4	9 4.7	20 10.4	2 1.0	21 10.9	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Table A80: Region of Origin by Institution of Attendance

REGION		INST			Row
		Liv U	JMU	Hope	Total
North West	*Count*	68	18	56	142
	Row Pct.	47.9	12.7	39.4	74.0
	Col. Pct.	62.4	78.3	93.3	
North East	*Count*	6	2	2	10
	Row Pct.	60.0	20.0	20.0	5.2
	Col. Pct.	5.5	8.7	3.3	
South West	*Count*	6	1	-	7
	Row Pct.	85.7	14.3	-	3.6
	Col. Pct.	5.5	4.3		
South East	*Count*	14	-	-	14
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	7.3
	Col. Pct.	12.8	-	-	
Midlands	*Count*	6	1	-	7
	Row Pct.	85.7	14.3	-	3.6
	Col. Pct.	5.5	4.3	-	
Scotland	*Count*	3	-	-	3
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.6
	Col. Pct.	2.8	-	-	
Wales	*Count*	3	1	1	5
	Row Pct.	60.0	20.0	20.0	2.6
	Col. Pct.	2.8	4.3	1.7	
N. Ireland	*Count*	2	-	-	2
	Row Pct.	100.0	-	-	1.0
	Col. Pct.	1.8	-	-	
Unspecified	*Count*	1	-	1	2
	Row Pct.	50.0	-	50.0	1.0
	Col. Pct.	0.9	-	1.7	
	Column Total	109 56.8	23 12.0	60 31.3	192 100.0

Number of Missing Observations: 0

Correlation Variables

Table A81

Correlations	ITYPE	CLASS	SEX	SUBJECT	NMAR	NNAGE
ITYPE		-0.0019	*0.2143	0.1810	**0.7451	**0.8517
CLASS	-0.0019		-0.0016	-0.0010	-0.0672	-0.0068
SEX	*0.2143	-0.0016		-0.0067	*0.2497	*0.2376
SUBJECT	0.1810	-0.0010	-0.0067		0.0320	0.0892
NMAR	**0.7451	-0.0672	*0.2497	0.0320		**0.6848
NNAGE	**0.8517	-0.0068	0.2376	0.0892	**0.6848	
VOC	0.1486	-0.1095	0.0430	-0.0655	0.0833	0.1562
NONVOC	0.0651	0.1156	0.1516	-0.0380	0.0168	0.0454
NPREV	-0.0210	0.0058	-0.0812	0.0130	-0.0351	0.0032
NSCHOOL	0.1490	0.1745	0.0406	-0.0083	0.1938	0.1107
NINTENT	*0.2086	-0.0139	0.0422	-0.0030	*0.2259	*0.2129
NJOB	**-0.2890	0.1154	-0.0057	-0.1987	**-0.2958	**-0.2877
NRES	-0.1263	-0.1776	0.0754	-0.1014	-0.0927	-0.1575
NUSEFUL	-0.0315	-0.0817	-0.0342	0.0055	-0.0772	-0.0035
NENHANCE	-0.0115	-0.0505	0.0477	-0.0576	0.0032	-0.0240
NDEGREE	-0.0801	-0.0590	0.1834	-0.1038	-0.1080	-0.0182
NINTERST	0.0660	-0.0578	0.0743	0.0162	0.1697	0.0151
NSTUDENT	0.0089	0.0143	-0.0520	0.0159	-0.0437	0.0140

Correlations	VOC	NONVOC	NPREV	NSCHOOL	NINTENT	NJOB
ITYPE	0.1486	0.0561	-0.0210	0.1490	*0.2086	**-0.2890
CLASS	-0.1095	0.1156	0.0058	0.1745	-0.0139	0.1154
SEX	0.0430	0.1516	-0.0812	0.0406	0.0422	-0.0057
SUBJECT	-0.0655	-0.0380	0.0130	-0.0083	-0.0030	-0.1987
NMAR	0.0833	0.0168	-0.0351	0.1938	*0.2259	**-0.2958
NNAGE	0.1562	0.0454	0.0032	0.1107	*0.2129	**-0.2877
VOC		*-0.2271	-0.1489	-0.0300	-0.0770	-0.1324
NONVOC	*-0.2271		-0.1067	0.0761	-0.0008	0.2066
NPREV	-0.1489	-0.1067		-0.0055	-0.0093	0.0361
NSCHOOL	-0.0300	0.0761	-0.0055		**0.2826	-0.0619
NINTENT	-0.0770	-0.0008	-0.0093	**0.2826		0.1052
NJOB	-0.1324	0.2066	0.0361	-0.0619	0.1052	
NRES	-0.0922	0.1021	-0.1416	-0.1615	-0.0573	-0.0156
NUSEFUL	-0.0168	-0.0359	0.0392	-0.0459	0.1843	-0.0110
NENHANCE	-0.0600	0.1273	0.1152	0.1467	0.0844	0.0636
NDEGREE	-0.0098	0.1047	0.0492	0.1411	0.0130	0.0765
NINTERST	0.0055	-0.0682	0.0740	-0.0054	-0.0324	-0.0413
NSTUDENT	-0.0523	-0.0139	0.1715	0.1162	0.1767	0.0856

(Continues below)

Correlations	NRES	NUSEFUL	NENHANCE	NDEGREE	NINTERST	NSTUDENT
ITYPE	-0.1263	-0.0315	-0.0115	-0.0801	0.0660	0.0089
CLASS	-0.1776	-0.0817	-0.0508	-0.0590	-0.0578	0.0143
SEX	0.0754	0.0342	0.0477	0.1834	0.0743	-0.0520
SUBJECT	-0.1014	0.0055	-0.0576	-0.1038	0.0162	0.0159
NMAR	-0.0927	-0.0772	0.0032	-0.1080	0.1697	-0.0437
NNAGE	-0.1575	-0.0035	-0.0240	-0.0182	0.0151	0.0140
VOC	-0.0922	-0.0168	-0.0600	-0.0098	0.0055	-0.0523
NONVOC	0.1021	-0.0359	0.1273	0.1047	-0.0682	-0.0139
NPREV	-0.1416	0.0392	0.1152	0.0492	0.0740	0.1715
NSCHOOL	-0.1615	-0.0459	0.1467	0.1411	-0.0054	0.1162
NINTENT	-0.0573	0.1843	0.0844	0.0130	-0.0324	0.1767
NJOB	-0.0156	-0.0110	0.0636	0.0765	-0.0413	0.0856
NRES		-0.1006	0.1062	-0.0772	-0.1941	-0.0760
NUSEFUL	-0.1006		0.1014	0.1934	0.2009	0.1433
NENHANCE	0.1062	0.1014		*0.2340	0.1219	0.0665
NDEGREE	-0.0772	0.1934	*0.2340		0.0385	*0.2560
NINTERST	-0.1941	0.2009	0.1219	0.0385		0.0606
NSTUDENT	-0.0760	0.1433	0.0665	*0.2560	0.0606