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Getting a job an interpretive inquiry.

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RÉCU
GETTING A JOB: AN INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY

by

Naushad Isuf

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1982
DEDICATIONS

For my mother, who cannot read nor write, for my father, who barely can, for dearest Mileva who definitely can, all of them caring and loving me in so many ways and also for little Marisa who has just begun to understand. Even though you may never read it, it's all for you.

What I have written is but a statement of how far I have come emotionally and intellectually as a person. It bears fond, strong and moving memories.

My love and blessings for all of you beautiful people.

Naushad
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Deane Crowley, Stuart Surlin, Ivan Kernisky, Jim Peck, Peter Deck, Bo Johnston, Martin Gorski, Vince Kennedy and Joe Wilson - here is one from the heart - thanks for believing in my work.

Finally to all those people over the years who have influenced my thinking but are not mentioned here and to those students who have been kind enough to be used as subjects for the study, I say thank you.

I hope what I have put forward as the study (to the extent that my subjective self permitted) will be understood in the context of the 'researcher' as human and corrigible.
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Introduction

How students go about getting summer jobs is the central concern of this study. Specifically it seeks to collect and organize varied bits of information into a report that can be read in retrospect as a reflexive account of the making of a Thesis.

The sequential ordering of the exposition must not be seen as a static linear construction of how different cognitive processes were discovered or took place during this study. For example, I did not see theorising and methodologising as distinctively different kinds of activities requiring separate investigation. It is only in the telling that the properties of language dictate the linear unfolding of the manifold cognitive processes. For in the life-world of the researcher all of the cognitive operations are massively available at any given time. In short, often the credibility and validity of a researcher’s efforts depend on the ordering of these cognitive operations.

Firstly, different sociological approaches are discussed briefly to reveal their underlying assumptions. Secondly, these assumptions are then linked to methodology in a way that the making of observations and organizing of those observations are dependent on the very assumptions one holds of social interaction. How questions are asked in different situations and their relations to various forms of responses are examined. While perception involves some form of conception of what one is perceiving, the incoming
perception informs the total stock of conceptions and thus they are inextricably bound.

Finally, the findings of the study are presented in a mode that reflected a method to the madness, an orientation that challenges this humble beginner in the sociological enterprise to use good research procedure. A summary account at the end recapitulates the bewildering paths taken into the doing of this research and perhaps exhibits the most coherence of my total effort.
THE STUDY

This study centers around the process of job-getting for a sample of students in three Departmental Faculties at the University of Windsor. One hundred and sixty students (n = 160) were approached and asked a number of questions pertaining to their job-getting orientations. Specifically, questions were asked of the students to reveal their understanding of various experiences they have had in the past when seeking summer jobs. They were asked to tell of their personal experiences of the job-hunt and their perceptions of how they conceive of other student job orientations.

In this study, students seeking summer jobs as opposed to full-time jobs, are the focus of this study. Forty-percent of the sample (n = 160) were majoring in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. The remaining sixty percent of the sample were equally divided between the Faculty of Business Administration and Faculty of Engineering. Of the total sample, 40% were female. The data was obtained through informal conversations and semi-structured interviews over a period of eighteen months between 1980 and August 1981. The interviews were conducted on campus in the cafeteria, student lounges and the library. Generally the interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to seventy-five minutes and were tape recorded.

The main objectives of the present undertaking can be conceptually seen as initially hoping to address the following problems, concerns
and beliefs:

1. Obtain accounts from students on job-getting perceptions.

2. Display these student perceptions through an interpretive analysis of the data.

3. Communicate the results of the above analysis for intersubjective perusal and discourse.

4. That the interpretive approach adopted in this study can reveal substantial information for a meaningful understanding of students' orientations.
CHAPTER I

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All sociological inquiry relies on some substantive domain of organized knowledge. Often stated as formal theories, it dictates the logic to be used in the explication of the problem (Schutz, 1970: 16). In the conduct of empirical research, whether the quantitative or qualitative method is adopted, the researcher relies on the 'literature' or what has been written on the area of study.

At the stage of formulating the problem the researcher takes into consideration the 'substantive' theories directly related to the problem and then works out a research design for its investigation.

An implication of the above 'idealized' version of how the dominant modes of research are conducted is that there is no escape from theory. In fact it can be stated that a 'presupposition less inquiry' is impossible to conceive (Mehan & Griffin, 1980:362) Phenomenologically-oriented sociologists, however, claim that a special epoche procedure, when correctly executed, minimizes interference from pre-conceived notions or theories (including what everyone knows). Luckmann (1978:8) writes of this epoche as an ideal to be yet achieved but nevertheless constantly strived for:

It neutralizes, as best it can without abandoning language as a recording device for its descriptions, the heavy overlay of 'theory' without which scientific as well as common-sense 'facts' are plainly unthinkable.
The point so far is not the seeming inundation of sociological theories in the sociological enterprise but the relatively few sociologists that make explicit the meta-theories or the assumptions underlying sociological investigations prior to the act of substantive theorising. Yet, as this research will later show, the assumptions, and beliefs of the researcher are intimately interwoven with the socialization received from the discipline and the socialization "as member of society with its political, cultural and economic conditioning" (Mehan & Griffin, 1980: 362; Kuhn, 1970). The present chapter describes some key assumptions and preconceptions underlying the different theoretical orientations in sociology. Methodological considerations are seen to be informed by the very kind of implicit model one holds of social interaction. This dynamic interplay between theory and method is the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

As a way of orientation to the researcher's occasioned social stock of knowledge, a central question within the sociological enterprise, that is, the 'how, 'the what' in social interaction is examined. This examination will seek out the main underlying presuppositions of the normative and interpretive paradigms. The claim here is that these often unstated beliefs direct the chosen mode of inquiry.

Paradigm Call

Much of sociological theorizing makes use of the assumption that social interaction is made possible because participants agree on social rules. Social activities are rule-governed-and
may take the form of motives, norms, folkways, expectations which are in turn seen as causes of sociologically relevant actions. The above mode of theorizing is seen by Wilson (1970) as the basic assumption of the more dominant 'normative paradigm.'

Subsumed under this 'paradigm' are the implied theoretical perspectives of structural-functionalism, social behaviourism, symbolic interactionism and their preferred method of surveys, experiment and field research. These perspectives explain social interaction in terms of a model that has three core components: the actor, the situation, and rules. Mehan and Wood (1975: 75) describe the interplay of these core concepts in the following:

Actors are thought to enter situations, define them, recognize which rules are applicable and act automatically.

(emphasis mine)

In effect, the appeal to the rules that 'govern' a situation is seen to be a method of locating social causes. Action is caused. The study of social interaction in this 'normative' conception explains behaviour in terms of social 'rules' that are independent of situation and participants (Douglas, 1977:166).

Wilson (1970:59-61) upon a careful examination of the approaches subsumed under this paradigm, describes the key meta-theoretical assumptions as:

(1) In the process of socialization, individuals acquire dispositions, such as values, attitudinal sets, needs and conditioned responses.
(2) Objective and external constraints, a kind of Durkheimian fact, as sanctioned expectations, usually in the form of role expectations, are binding on individuals.

To account for an individual's behaviour, a 'rule' linking 'dispositions' and expectations (roles) is thought to be operative. Further, since these individuals are socialized in a 'common' culture, the cognitive consensus attained through reciprocal orientations provides the necessary base for the operation of these social rules.

As a consequence of viewing social interaction as rule-governed, literal description of social acts is possible in this paradigm. Meaning is not sought from member's cognition of the situation but from externalities usually in the form of perceivable features which any competent member can see as instances of a class of objects, i.e. events. Yet ambiguity in the "reflexive elaboration of sign-sense-content makes literal description of a behaviour's meaning, i.e. of action impossible" (Heap, 1980:73). The perceived features are crude signs for assigning meaning to such behaviours. At the most they are general guides. However, acts literally described as cheating, trespassing, rape, annoying, do not seek the meaning of these acts from the actor, rather they are designated and recognized as such acts where "convention melds sign and sense, behaviour and action" (Heap, 1980:94). In these cases, deductive explanations are given, as self-understandings of the actor are not criterial for the attribution of meaning. While this form of explanation may be possible for the genuine cases in which sign and
sense, and it is rather rare in the social world to find such agreement. Since the majority of social acts and personal social behaviour are not visible enough to be literally described, independent of those described, description can only be interpretive, as researcher or observer has to interpret just what the other is saying in a continuous way to come to some kind of understanding. By seeing acts as purposeful and motivated, this alternative conception of social interaction has given rise to a growing body of critique. Essentially this body of critique can be called the 'interpretive paradigm', a species of Weber's Verstehen approach to the study of human action. The underlying metatheoretical idea is that 'social interaction' is possible through the continuous use of interpretive or common-sense procedures in generating and sustaining meaningful behaviour. The salient features of this interpretive paradigm are:

1) Social interaction is an interpretive process, that is, there is no automatic following of 'social rules'. (Blumer, 1969; Garfinkel, 1967; Cicourel, 1974; Wilson, 1970). The situation or the context of which the activity is part, partially provides 'cues' for the interpretation of these social rules (Leiper, 1980: 194; Douglas, 1977: 166).

2) There is no denial that actors make use of social rules to guide activities. However, these rules once formulated, whether of the formalistic, e.g. legal types or informal (uncodified) varieties (social norms) are not unequivocally applied by actors. Mehan & Wood (1975: 75) describes this ceaseless interpretive work by actors of social rules and situations: Rules, like actors and situations do not appear except in a web of practical circumstance. Intertwined, the actor, rules and the present definition of the situation constitute the situation. No single one of these can be abstracted out and treated as either cause or effect.

(emphasis mine)
(3) The negotiated and processual nature of social interaction is facilitated by individual's use of the Documentary Method of Interpretation.2 Elaborating on K. Manheim's (1952) and A. Schutz's (1967) early discussion of the concept, Garfinkel argues that the use of this method produces a 'sense' of social structure for the individual.

(4) For ethnomethodologists, the constitutive practices of the Documentary Method are called variously 'interpretive rules', (Cicourel, 1970) or 'interpretive procedures' (Mehan & Wood, 1976).3 They are properties of common sense reasoning. Essentially those interpretive devices are thought to be trans-situational in their use or they show properties that are invariant. Cicourel (1970:167) expresses the 'gist' of these properties of practical reasoning when he writes:

> The interpretive procedures provide for a common scheme of interpretation that enables members to assign contextual relevance; norms and values are invoked to justify a course of action, 'find' the relevance of a course of action, enable the member to choose among particulars for constructing an interpretation others can agree to for an interpretation....

The implications of this alternative conceptualization of the social interaction process for the conduct of this study can be summarized as follows:

(1) 'Meaning' must be studied from the actor's point of view, since each individual interprets and articulates social rules uniquely.

(2) For example, to recover the 'meaning' of a student's job searching efforts by an a priori 'imagining yourself in the other's
place' does not tell 'how' the student organises his 'stock of knowledge' for the job hunt - nor do the sociological constructs assembled prior to the investigation as in prestructured questionnaire schedules.

(5) All 'reality' is constructed by certain standard methods. These methods are displayed through the activity of reality construction, employing common-sense reasoning procedures. As pointed out before, these are the interpretative procedures. With the theoretical knowledge of the workings of these procedures, the 'stated' institutional hiring practices and biographical and contextual particulars of each student an 'account' can be re-constructed of the job-hunting process.

(4) Certainly a qualitative style employing an ethnographic approach could be considered as an appropriate method for studying 'unique' individuals' job-searching activities.

(5) This account of the research process is 'interpretively' produced. Literal description is not possible nor attempted here.

The brief sketch of two 'models' of research necessarily 'glosses' the 'fine' workings or divisions within each paradigm. Clearly the aim is not an inventory of conceptual bodies of knowledge but to show how key assumptions of different theoretical perspectives influence research styles. Implicitly, the 'sketch' points to distinctions in modes of reasoning and their interplay in actual research.

For example, as the student 'makes' plans (vague ideas) for earning money in the summer, common-sense ideas, or 'what everyone knows' are supposedly what guides him in the temporal unfolding of the job-hunting process. He needs a job, therefore
he makes best use of his social stock of knowledge or what he
'knows'. His interest is in getting a job. He translates into
action this pragmatic interest (motive). It is only through 'con-
versation' or semi-structured 'interviews' that the sequence of
events can be reconstructed.

Essentially the researcher wants to 'understand' how the
subject 'puts it all together'. The student wants a job. Common-
sense ideas are used as a resource for these two tasks. One task
is in 'action', the other in 'understanding' this action. The
researcher makes his topic of 'interest' the task of understanding.
And since he is interested in the inter subjective communication
of this account with colleagues, 'good research procedures are
recommended'. Perhaps it is at this juncture that the research
interest makes available to the researcher a conceptual scheme from
which to view things and take a methodological stance. In the pursuit
of objectivity, scientific methods are available to the researcher.

often to decide which among the competing paradigms should be
followed, common-sense reasoning is used to inform the making of
such decisions. Common sense is used as a resource for an individual's
pragmatic orientations in everyday life. Even in science, common
sense ideas are used implicitly. Both the scientist and the student
utilize common-sense ideas, whether in the design of the questionnaire
for the researcher or the student seeking a job. So pervasive is
common-sense knowledge that any attempt to study any aspect of the
life-world is dependent on its use.
It is in this commonality between the two modes of activity that phenomenological sociology recommends itself to 'bracket' the 'common-sense' views of how jobs are perceivably obtained by students and let students 'tell' of their past job seeking activities.

Therefore common-sense theories (how jobs are given) are in the adoption of this theoretic stance, not used as a resource initially, only later in the analysis when examined from the reported 'perception' of 'others' getting a job. Hence common-sense ideas of the process are compared to the 'reported' job seeking efforts of students.

In conclusion, much is missed or ignored when research uses common-sense ideas as a resource without making explicit their role in the conduct of the inquiry in terms of the relevant metatheories. While it is premature to say how these different modes of theorizing operate in practice for other studies, in this chapter, the modest hope was to show the crucial role of theories in various styles of research and to shed some light on the two-way dynamic interplay, the commerce that goes between theory and practice. The next chapter provides some of the actual routes taken on this two-way cognitive map of theorizing and scientific method.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The last chapter mentioned how tacit assumptions and pre-theoretical notions inform substantial theorizing in sociology. This line of inquiry is developed further, by showing that the "methods" employed to collect and organize "data" are related to the ideas and theories used in the research. If the relationship between method and theory is conceived in this manner, then methods are not "neutral" techniques available to the sociologist for the study of the social world. Observational neutrality is impossible, according to Popper, since "the world is not available to us in a raw state, but always constituted theoretically, a function of our ideas or expectations" (Tilley, 1980:32).

Methodology, here, is not conceived as an "ideal" set of procedures to be followed in the collection and organization of "data" (Blasi et al, 1978: 205). Rather, on reflection, it is seen as "artful strategies employed to elicit any relevant "material" or the presentation of that "material"" (so thought of as "data"). Each strategy entails a number of "cognitive" operations.

Furthermore, the strategies articulated in the field for the elicitation of "accounts" are not "new" to the researcher, in that their "adequacy" at the pragmatic level has been noted on a number of occasions in previous social encounters. Part of these strategies, which will be elaborated later on in this chapter has to do with the kinds of questions to be asked, the 'artful' introduction of "topics" in the flow of the conversation, the questions or probes stated as "comments" etc.
This presumed "interactional competence" on the part of the researcher, to be "part" of the student sub-culture facilitates 'talk' production on the topic of getting a job. The talk produced, whether on the more "guided" questioning variety on aspects of personal efforts of jobgetting or the talk constitutive of naturally occurring conversations, are viewed as crucial pieces of "data" for the later reflection and assembly of student "efforts".

The natural attitude, which treats 'topics' generally in student life as a means of "passing time" becomes a focus of interest, including the topic of job getting. This focus is necessary as the researcher recognizes that the topic of interest to the researcher may at the most be 'glossed' over by conversants in the 'natural attitude'. Therefore some 'structure' to the ongoing conversation is necessarily imposed through various 'devices' including seemingly casual questions. When Natanson (1978:12-13) writes that the epoché is the necessary:

condition to all other phenomenological procedure for it guarantees the freedom of a starting-point which refuses to remain within the metaphysical orientation of common sense, (emphasis mine)

The problem seems to be 'how' to move away from or bracket these (metaphysical) common sense orientations.

To do this requires the "bracketing" or "suspension" of stocks of conceptual and practical knowledge that have been
acquired "prior" to the encounter. Difficult as this may be to carry out, the argument here is "that even to recognize" what is happening, e.g. (casual conversation) or even the contrived subtle manipulation of the interaction, requires not "suspension" or "bracketing" of these common sense orientations but their continuous use for the elicitation and recognition of such "talk", as constitutive of such encounters.

As discussed in the previous chapter, common sense knowledge or the practical "knowhow" of interactional exchanges is always used to sustain a "normal" exchange of the more "structural" type. Therefore, the beliefs one holds of social reality become often the "guide" in the "doing" of social interaction or the "lenses" with which to view such exchanges.

In this way, the commerce between theory and practice is tied in a "unified" approach to the study of the life-world. The Mehan and Griffin (1980) study of social interaction in classrooms recognized the false dichotomy of theory and method as separate activities. Their description of the confluence of approaches top-down (theory-driven) and bottom-up (data-driven) approaches used in the study of school children's socialization leads them to suggest that:

A close examination of the actual conduct of research shows that the top-down and bottom-up approaches involve a false dichotomy - an over-simplified portrayal of the research process. In actual practice research makes the journey between theory and observations often. The issue seems to be the extent to which this commerce is made an explicit part of
the research enterprise.

(Mehan and Griffin, 1980:365)
(emphasis mine)

Problem Formulation

The idea for this research project arose initially from a series of observations made in and around campus of concerns pertaining to student life. While concerns are necessarily varied and complex, an inevitable part of the routine of school life involves encounters with other students. This may occur in class, between classes in the library, the residence halls, at parties, or in the various recreational facilities available on campus (pub, cafeteria, gym, games room). Some typical concerns often center around grades, course loads, relevance and quality of courses; financing of education whether through employment, government assistance; plans for the upcoming summer and those of a more intimate type, e.g. boredom, making friends, getting a date or the general "sociability coefficient" of the campus and a number of other areas. Which "concern" or "concerns" will be typical in any given interaction cannot be determined before-hand (though friends may talk on "topics" that they are familiar with or wish to resume). This indeterminacy of talk or different "concerns" seemed to be lessened however in the months approaching summer. Certain topics were observed to be raised relatively frequently among students. They concern 'plans' for the summer, "touching" on the job (market) situation.

At about the same period of time in two classes where the researcher was the teaching assistant, certain recurrent "pieces"
of "talk", folk "wisdom" or "common sayings" were "found" in the conclusion of assignments. Specifically the students were asked to comment on the raw reported percentages of students' 'attitudes' and 'values' towards education across the different socio-economic groups of their parents. Recurrent in a number of accounts was the notion that Today what one knows is not as important as who one knows, or slight variations on this theme. The following quote is from a student, presumably giving an "explanation" for the variance of student attitude and values concerning education across social groups:

The economic problems of our country are probably the prime reasons for the decrease in the value of education. It is very expensive to become educated and one is not assured a steady job in a particular area of study even after graduation with an A+ average. Today what one knows is not as important as who one knows.

My curiosity was aroused by this maxim. Quietly questions began to form in my mind. Among the first faltering thoughts blossoming into embryonic questions for this research were:

1. What is the sense of this maxim?

2. Why did this dictum repeatedly emerge in their accounts?

Those questions initiate the further asking of questions of the 'how' and 'what' of 'popular' saying in general. How does one go about doing the research? What theory of man do I subscribe to? These beliefs are the substance that informs the 'research act.'
The 'idea' for the research could be said to have been suggested by the foregoing questions which collectively could be read as **beginnings**. To move the inquiry along requires a progression of operations to delineate the kinds of questions to be asked of students. These operations become more structured as strategies are continuously generated and revised in a progression of cognitive procedures to determine some core questions to form the central focus of this study.

In a preliminary way, it seems clear that the varied personal accounts of individual student efforts should form the initial data base. The 'points of view' of students are what I had to collect. Thus as in the hypothetical illustration to follow extreme care must be taken when deciding on choice of questions, so as not to reveal the researcher's preconceptions of what presumably goes on in society.

A questionnaire can be constructed to elicit responses to the following questions:

1. **What methods have you used in the past for securing jobs?**

2. **How often have you used the 'Dictum' of connections to secure jobs?**

Along with other "demographic" questions, a frequency of use of the Dictum, and the kinds of methods used can be obtained. However, these responses do not indicate **why one method is preferred over another** or how a piece of folk wisdom, the Dictum may become incorporated into personal accounts. On careful reflection, the above procedure is found to be inadequate at the "level of meaning" from the student's
perspective.

It is here that the study, *Is the Die Cast* (Anisef et al., 1980) raised questions relating to jobs and their potential use as "guides" for the construction and elicitation of responses for the sample of students chosen for this study. In that study, the questions on the original questionnaire prove to be inadequate for the understanding of the "how" of job getting. The responses were supplied by the researchers for the questions asked. How or where those response categories originate is left out of their account.

Such questions only reveal the researcher's use of question frames to represent the respondent's knowledge and conception of the world. The respondent's everyday world and talk are not studied.

(Cicourel, 1980:20)

As argued before, this type of research design, comprising fixed-choice response categories dictates or directs the respondent's attention to what the researcher "knows" or believes as the indicators or signs of that which is measured. (Mehan & Wood, 1975: 45). Explanation, then is given in terms of these indicators.

The present research rejects this model of research procedure which assumes a direct correspondence of indicators and phenomenon of study. Fletcher (1974:68) summarizes this disenchantment with quantitative sociology in the following:

The core criticism is that the quantitative method in sociology replaces scepticism with ignorance. The researcher is not sure what he has got or what to make of his results. Or, more simply, how his method works.

(emphasis mine)
The central task can be stated clearly as how best a "reasonable" re-construction of students' strategies can be made at the level of meaning for the students and possibly to a speech community to which the researcher belongs. This dilemma, it is claimed, can be resolved if the program of phenomenologically oriented sociologies is employed, that is, if a particular theoretic stance is adopted. Yet, as claimed before, this "operation" is fraught with difficulties for the unwary or the uninitiated. To get at the "how" and "why" of job getting and the different job-seeking methods used by students, questions of a different order must be asked. The last section provides a description of the types of ethnographic"contents" which facilitate asking different questions of students' understanding of various issues on job getting.

On Asking Questions

Asking questions is fundamental in the sociological enterprise. Observations, descriptions, interpretations, explanations and predictions all utilize in one form or the other, the asking of questions. Knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them, however, do not assure the researcher of unequivocal responses.

One must find out not only what questions to ask but also the procedures that respondents use, and that the researcher will use to translate an answer into its intended meaning. (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979:47)

Often now a question is asked is contingent upon situational particulars such as nature of the topic, the perceived content and intent of the questions, the perceived relationship between questions and respondent, etc.
Generally the kinds of questions asked by a researcher depend on the research design employed. For example the mailed questionnaire assumes that each question will be read and understood unambiguously by all respondents in an identical fashion. Here, no contextual detail surrounding the "filling" out of the questionnaire are known. On the other hand, these very contextual details become massively available for the researcher as participant and observer (not known to his subjects). These contextual details can provide the initial base for making inferences on the validity and coherence of what is being reported.

In between these two extreme forms of gathering information there are the researcher as participant in naturally occurring conversations (closer to the subject); the unstructured face-to-face interview and the structured face-to-face interview (questions and response categories are given by the interviewer). This research utilizes the naturally occurring type along with the unstructured informal variety of interview.

(The Natural Conversation)

Conversation as an ideally free form of talk, is the gloss by which topics are produced in the occasioned ways that they are...(Adato, 1980:48)

Topics do not come "out of the blue" according to a study of naturally occurring conversations (Adato, 1980:49). They usually arise out of contexts that have a known-in-common character to the conversants. Typically, "elements" copresent in the situation are
constitutive of the "topic" talk by conversants. On campus, talk or the raising of a topic does not necessarily depend on immediate context for its occurrence. (In a school cafeteria one might talk on a test completed or coming up in a few hours or on going away for the weekend.) Why "talk" does not follow the "typical" copresent situational particulars for students may be due to the peculiar "circumstances" or status that a student is placed in while at school (e.g. limited budget).

It has been observed that a typical concern around mid-winter for students is the question of what one will do in the summer (work, going to school or taking a vacation). The following is not an exchange between researcher and a single student, but can be considered as embodying typical elements that the researcher noted in many encounters between acquaintances, friends, students in laboratory classes during the winter semester.

1. **Researcher:** Hey Tony! What's going on?

2. **Tony:** Not much, just "doing time."

3. **Researcher:** I know what you mean. Hey I am checking out the cafeteria for a quick coffee, wanna come?

4. **Tony:** Let me see - OK, just a short one.

5. **Researcher:** So what you doing this summer?

6. **Tony:** Working.

7. **Researcher:** You got a job already?

8. **Tony:** Not really, but last summer it was easy.
9. **Researcher**: What do you mean?
10. **Tony**: I didn't look too hard.
11. **Researcher**: Why? How come?
12. **Tony**: This place where my dad worked, I got the job.
13. **Researcher**: Did he help you? (or, I guess he helped you.)
14. **Tony**: Yeah, he put in a word.
15. **Researcher**: You don't mind him helping you?
16. **Tony**: No, not at all, not with the way things are going these days.

Variants of this type of conversation can be "manufactured" depending on the "context" with other students. They are considered naturally occurring or flowing for the simple reason that the way this "piece of talk" is inserted among other items in the conversation, it can be seen on reflection as just another topic among topics that are spoken about. However, there are a number of limitations when trying to ascertain information in this manner.

1. Only limited "aspects" of the central question posed in the research can be "naturally sustained" in the conversation.

2. As a result the responses given by the students are often direct and vague (in need of further elaboration, e.g. line 14).

3. This "vagueness" or "direct answer" is often related to the way the questions are posed. (line 13)

4. This "method" can be used only with students you are acquainted with or who are friends of acquaintances.

However, the attempt to focus attention in an unfocussed way in casual encounters, notwithstanding the difficulties or
limitations of the responses, does point out "aspects" of the central questions in the study. These questions can be further elaborated upon by the other strategy used, that is, the face-to-face informal interview.

(The Informal Interview)

Unstructured interviews generate naturally occurring talk. But this talk is rarely about the specific research topic.

(Mehan and Wood, 1975:60)

To avoid the above "shortcomings", various strategies in the formulation and the asking of questions were used. Schwartz & Jacobs (1979:45) summarize the form of questioning used in the face-to-face encounter:

1. A body of questions covering the major areas of inquiry are decided upon in advance.

2. These questions are open-ended with respect to answers.

3. The kind of responses given in the course of questioning may require further probing.

4. Finally, questions may be added spontaneously during the interview because they appear relevant or important.

The advantages of this form of questioning when compared to naturally occurring conversations and the more fully structured interviews were found to be the following:

1. An "ethnographic context" can be constructed partially by asking questions prior to the central questions of the study. Through this "ethnographic
"grid" the student responses could be "better" interpreted.

(2) The control and use of recursivity and feedback in the interview situation provided an ongoing "monitoring" as the questions unfold together with what meaning to be imputed to the responses.

(3) Although a definite "Structure" was imposed in this kind of face-to-face informal interview, the flexibility given to the sequential ordering of questions, and the unlimited time for responses, gave the interview situation an "informal air".

(4) The interviews were recorded using a tape-recorder thus providing, when required, repeated opportunities for review.

In conclusion, the questions asked in the different face-to-face contexts reflect the researcher's understanding (theories of social interaction) of the variability in response in terms of contents and the situational (imputation) construction of meaning. It is in this way theory and method become inseparable. By a triangulation of methods this variability in accounts was investigated for any "pattern" of students making sense of their efforts in job getting. Just what these sense-making activities are, is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

An analytic interpretation of the other's self-understanding requires the researcher to go beyond 'the conventional notions' as revealed through 'talk' as part of the production of an account. As 'talk' it reveals, initially, the other's conceptions of the common saying, 'it is who you know and not what you know.' Initially the content of such 'talk' can provide the researcher with a data-driven base for preliminary inferences (tentatively constructed) on the empirical employment of the Dictum in the social world. These inferences, in turn, can be used along with the analyst's cultural stock of knowledge to make propositions or statements concerning higher-order predicates about norms, roles, rules and social organization at the macro-sociological level.

The embeddedness of the 'content' of a text in the analyst's 'conceptions' or theories, is often left implicit in accounts according to Cicourel (1980:27)

Some conception of ethnography or social organization is always presupposed in the analysis of single utterances, social interaction and macro-notions of social structure

Within the limits conceived by this research, a limited interpretative display of students' reported understandings of the Dictum is the focus of the next section.
As an Excuse

Sometimes people use that as an excuse. A lot of people are lazy. They easily get put down. Job search is a constant put down. They get discouraged too quickly. (Respondent).

This perception 'shows' the symbolic nature of the Dictum.

As a 'common saying' it is perceived by some students as used circumstantially to account for an individual's inability (frustration) to secure employment. It is invoked on occasion as an explanation to give to others (including the internal dialogue with self) for why the social organization of the job market deprives one of a job.

Many of the respondents who share the above 'perceptions' of how the Dictum is used by a particular group of students (as an excuse) do not deny the use of the 'Dictum' in acquiring jobs for themselves.

They recognize that the 'job search' is a process that calls on all available faculties of a student, as the searching experience can be demoralizing. As one student remarked "it's a 'constant sales job' and many of us do not make good salesmen."

An implication of the 'account' is the implicit pointing out of perceptions of how others go about seeking jobs and the ego-processes involved in the recruitment of students (workers).

Unfair Practice, But...

I don't think it is fair. Okay, because I know a few times, I know I was better - someone else got it. I don't think it should be continued - but if everyone is subjected to it, then it is fair.

(Respondent 2)
Here the 'Dictum' is recognized as a practice or 'strategy' that students use for securing jobs. Also there is an implicit acknowledgement (recognition) that establishments accommodate students who utilize this informal route. This in turn raises the question of 'what' are the hiring criteria of establishments.

A focus on the formal list of hiring criteria objectified as minimum requirements are insufficient for an interpretive understanding of a students' getting a job. The perception shows how students articulate these 'formal' criteria into a personal strategy often comprising informal and additional criteria (including the Dictum) for acquiring jobs.

As a 'practice' according to this group of respondents, it should be discontinued since it allocates opportunities unequally. ('I know I was better'). While the majority of students interviewed and casually talked to, on the one hand, expressed their disapproval of this 'backdoor' kind of entry into the labour force, on the other hand, having recognized its pervasiveness as a practice, they justified its continued usage on pragmatic grounds. It is said that on moral grounds they do not approve of the practice but when pragmatic considerations are taken into account, it is justified. Seen from a functional perspective the practice becomes useful to employ because of its wide acceptance by hiring institutions as a legitimate way of securing a job.
The Mentor Concept

Look, everybody needs somebody. It is good to have contacts. You start and get involved in your career. You have to know somebody. You do need that somebody. In this type of system, someone has to give a little finger, a little push.

(Respondent 3)

In this line of reasoning, having 'contacts' and using them for getting a job is functional in the sense that a student's occupational socialization often depends on 'who you know'. The reference to the 'system' implicitly reveals students' perceptions of social institutions and their functional organization. Therefore a little push or the use of a mentor, many students reason, will give one that necessary help, which 'everyone' needs, in order to be in an advantageous position in securing a job.

Of importance here are the following considerations:

(1) For occupational mobility, cultivating 'contacts', e.g. 'networking' is advisable for one's continued career growth.

(2) Students who have acquired 'street smarts' or knowledge of how the job market functions, roughly devise lines of action to give them a competitive edge over the others. 'Name dropping' is one such practice.

(3) The majority of those who feel this way have not only used this strategy but have been selectively cultivating contacts for present and future references.
(4) In this way common-sense ideas are transformed into personal strategies through the careful articulation and coordination of what 'everyone knows' to be true with one's variously conceived lines of action.

**Only a Human Condition**

When everything is working nicely it's easy to go by the book. When things aren't going too good one becomes individualistic. Survival techniques are utilized. When a situation arises one desperately needs a job, and one can get a job through contacts, one will take the job over someone else - rather than trying to satisfy the objective criteria. This is a human condition.

(Respondent 4)

Here there is a perception that explicitly links the macro-sociological 'structures' the economy with an individual's response or orientation to those structures. For example, many students believe that the *dictum* is used more frequently when the economy is performing poorly; that is, the number of jobs available are few compared to the number desiring these jobs. According to this view, it is the 'nature' of individuals to resort to this practice when 'creature comforts' are threatened. Furthermore, the appeal to something innate points to the inevitability of the use of this practice, when certain 'structural conditions' are perceived to be operative in the economy.

Of importance here is that the *dictum* would not be used by this group if jobs were in abundance, as objective 'criteria' would then be used. An implication of this view, is that this strategy is
generated initially from external factors (poor working of the economy) which invoke a natural response in an individual.

Pulling of Strings: Some Reflections on the Dictum

The presentation, thus far, concentrates mainly on students' general perceptions of the 'Dictum'. In a number of 'accounts' the mode of utilization or how they thought they used it in concrete instances were made explicit. Drawing on these dual sources of information and the researcher's 'cultural memory' (the 'selection and signification of the structure of experience' Darroch & Silvers, 1980:11), a re-constructed meaning of the Dictum can be attempted (Leiter, 1980:153). These descriptions therefore must be seen as interpretive and tentative.

By interpretational is meant going beyond the phenomenal aspects of the Dictum as revealed by students' accounts, by re-constituting these 'constitutive elements' with the explicit help of the researcher's cultural memory. In the preceding chapters, the 'biography' or 'cultural memory' of the researcher, that is,

a cultural returning to what we hold with others as part of the collective form that we share with others

(Darroch & Silvers, 1980:11)

has been made explicit in many different forms.

The task set out here can be described as an attempt at recovering the proximate knowledge arising from the manifold cognitive encounters with others. This task is described by Darroch and Silvers (1980:11)
in the following.

A showing and understanding of the subjective dimension of the social world in the experience of others is insufficient. It is to the knowing, to the objectivation of that knowing as a knowledge, if a cultural memory, that the inquiry is directed.

Reconstructions

(1) As an informal exchange of information between students seeking summer jobs and those in positions of hiring, the practice can be seen to be providing a communicational vehicle for directing potential employees to job positions available. In this way, it is functional from the employers perspective, since the method is direct, cost efficient and quick. Also by having an insider acting as a referee, credibility is obtained by the hired employee, (compare here the admission to graduate school, which relies partially on recommendations by reputable professors). However, should the new employee prove to be 'incompetent', the employee's stay on the job may be shortened or he may be fired. This is a rare occurrence since the person who has obtained the job through such a process, tacitly recognizes that his benefactor's integrity is at stake and thus does not act irresponsibly.
(2) Because of the short period available during the summer months a student's immediate family and friends are used as resources initially, since a job obtained early in the summer provides the much-wanted income for immediate expenses. A substantial amount is often saved by the student for school expenses. The recent study of students reveals that forty percent of the student's financing of education was obtained from summer employment (Anisef et al, 1980:XIV). From the students spoken to in this study, this trend of relying on summer earnings has continued, with this reliance increasing to over fifty percent in the sample of students surveyed.

This fact points to the importance of finding well paying jobs to cover the rising cost of education, e.g. obsolescence in costly textbooks, housing costs, increased tuition yearly, more stringent requirements for loans and grants. The alternatives open to the student who receives little financial help from family, is the careful cultivation of 'artful' strategies (the focus of the next section) in order to continue in school.

(3) Knowledge of the job process, that is, what a student knows about it (its organizational features) have led many to see their success in the job search as not so much on 'who they know' but a function of 'what they know' of the requirements for well paying jobs in the summer.
The Relationship Between 'Modes of Encounter' And

How the Dictum is Currently Used

For any given student at the level of 'talk' it was possible for them to remember the 'first times' some crude form of recall of the Dictum took place, whether through parents (father's remarks in or conversation in the home in the presence of children) gleaning it from the popular media, 'television', or more frequently from descriptions of how first job was obtained (usually through parents). The mode of the initial encounter with the common saying and how it is used currently by a student: what connection can be made of the two temporally and spatially separated occurrence events? Or, more specifically, does one event prior in time influence the later use of the Dictum; if so, in what ways? If there is a case for a causal connection (relationship), then how is this postulated relationship to be determined or interpreted?

In this research study, from the 'accounts' collected no 'claim' can be made for a causal asymmetrical relationship, except from a hypothesized analytic 'framework' of the researcher. Nevertheless, one significant point can be made from the observation that in the past, acquisition of first few jobs, especially those obtained when still in high school, are mainly from parents and family connections. At the university level, reliance on these 'familial' 'connections' becomes significantly less, as the student is exposed to career and guidance centre and formal courses. Here, guidance and career workshops are organized so that students can recognize for themselves the choices to make.
Lasting relationships are often made at school. Finding a spouse is not uncommon and these may nurture over the years to form a brotherhood (e.g. alumni of the fraternities and sororities.) The essence of the Dictum is preserved at this later stage for the student, by the kind of informal network he has with associates. The mentor may no longer be parents and first-friends. In residences a student's roommate or work mate in projects may be the ones who claim to know you best and are willing to stand by you by the knowledge ascertained in school years of the other.

Artful Practices

In the preceding sections of this chapter, the analysis revealed specific perceptions, self-understandings and usage of the 'Dictum' at different stages of biographic socialization. Specifically it was claimed that between the mode of encounter and its later use for a given student, no causal connection could be made. However, the usage of the 'Dictum' when combined with other biographical and ethnographic details varies. This variation in use can be used as a schema for typologising (or the social construction of social types); and also the pointing of possible 'pictures', or 'conceptions' of institutions in society by students.

Sense of Social Structure

By 'pictures' is meant students' sense of social structure. These are the reified common-sense understandings of social institutions and the associated perceptions of the multiplexity of intermeshing relationships. It provides for the student, "the taken-for-granted
facticity necessary for constructing everyday activities" (Leiter, 1980:164). For a student, this means his or her 'world view' or frameworks of 'possible' meaning of social processes. It may include, recipe knowledge for routine affairs (e.g., going to Manpower Centres after all other efforts at securing a job have failed; knowledge of normative structures, regulations and the 'means' of acting on these various bodies of sedimented knowledge. They form the basic reserve of an individual personal stock of knowledge.)

Cicourel states in a recent paper that sociological references to the concept of social organization or social structure 'normally imply the existence of normative rules that govern some set of practices, policies, or institutionalized activities...' (Cicourel, 1980:19). He argues they tend to stress the 'idealized' features of these normative constraints. Later, in the paper, he points to the limitation of this practice, saying that they

Do not tell us much about 'how' participants of social interaction manage to produce practical action, as part of a locally defined set of circumstances.

(Cicourel, 1980:19)

On the basis of the explicitness of what was implicit in students' minds, the accounts together with the ethnographic particulars, the personal biographies, allows for the social construction of social types. Note here the practice of constituting types must be seen only as a reconstruction of unique individuals' self-reported constructions
of their past pragmatic social activity of getting jobs. The necessary abstraction involved in the 'types' constituted differs from that involved in survey models in that 'suggestions' for the construction, are directly taken from reported accounts, instead of the categorical imposition of pre-structured types.

The Social Construction of Types

The acquired knowledge is only in part 'independently' acquired. It is to a great extent socially derived.

(Luckman: 1978:320)

Knowledge that is common or 'what everyone knows' in a given culture is made possible through various modes of intersubjective communication where language is central. Events, actions, objects, persons are all known through typification of some sort already constituted in originary situations often in face-to-face encounters.

Perception of others such as a 'waitress', 'policeman' or 'postman' becomes possible through the prior sedimentation of these 'terms' in the cultural encyclopedia of human experiences. A newborn infant, therefore, is socialized into recognizing these socially derived types in order to acquire practical competence in everyday affairs. Hence at the very outset of one's life, types and pre-constituted formulae are employed to apprehend situations, insofar as it is compatible with a person's subjective meaning construct. The 'typifications' useful in the past may prove to be inadequate for the correct apprehension of a person or an event on the basis of 'perceived' discrepancies. (Schutz, 1967:193)
In a similar way all scientists use naturally occurring typifying constructs as a resource for studying human societies. From these lay accounts as first order constructs a second-order account can be constructed. Many researchers employ these second order concepts or the conceptual umbrella of previous research efforts for the study of the life-world. In this research, the liberty was taken to construct second order concepts, e.g. the various types of coping strategies described. Their formulation, however, was crucially dependent on the first-order accounts of students.

And if they are congruent with member constructs at the level of meaning then a species of validity can be claimed. This means when the member's activities are described, those very members must be able to view the account as a reasonable reconstruction of their activities. The criteria for establishing the validity of the account are not only those of logical consistency, the clarity of the concepts and the coherence of the account but depend in a retrospective fashion, on the arbitration of those studied, that is, how reasonable does the study appear to them.
The Types

Students, in their accounts, gave details such as the amount of money they have earned over past summer jobs, the literature on the job market they have read and how satisfied they were with their jobs. These four kinds of information are grouped under disclosures. They further revealed how they used their 'contacts' e.g. name-dropping and how they organize their job search, e.g. sending out resumes, how early. These are grouped under artful practices. They also gave their perceptions e.g. of the 'Dictum' and how they thought the job market is organized. These are grouped under 'Respondent's perceptions. Finally, on a subjective level, the researcher's perceptions of things such as the level of articulation, general presentation of self and 'perceived' confidence. These are grouped under Researcher's perceptions. These four sub-headings, then, subsume different kinds of information, which in turn are used heuristically to form a unified construct such as: (1) go-getters (10%) (2) Come what may' (80%) and (3) Disenchanted - not so happy (10%).

(1) Go-Getter or Confident Orientation

Disclosures —

(1) They believe that they made more money or were able to secure better wages than the average student over the last three summer jobs.

(2) They had a choice of more than one job offer from which
they made their selection usually in terms of proximity to home, adventure, rate of pay and its relation to their studies.

(3) The level of job satisfaction was high in terms of what their functional tasks were, the 'working' conditions obtained and amount of money paid.

(4) Most of these students have either read an article or 'recipe' books on the job market or have attended a lecture or participated in a course relating to career and self-improvement.

Artful Practices

(1) They start out very early in the year 'doing traditional things', such as sending out resumes; sending out applications to potential employers. They often make liberal use of terms, phrases from 'cookery' (recipe) books in the compilation of their resumes and responses in job interviews. As one student remarked the way these books help him was: "It gave me key words and vocabulary to explain when you are writing your resume and even when taking in interviews."

(2) They often start out by taking a 'self-inventory' and 'realize what the situation is.' They develop or build on strategies that have worked well in the past.
Their approach in any given job search for an upcoming summer is not static or dependent on luck or chance but rather incorporates specific bits of information learned over the immediate past, e.g. job market trends.

(3) In their interview specially for a job they want, most of them try to convince the interviewer that not only do they have the requirements to do the job but that they are good workers or if the job is not directly related to their area of interest, that they are quick learners, good workers and welcome the challenges.

(4) They definitely use 'connections' but do not rely entirely on this method as they reason that one does not acquire the necessary organizational and interpersonal skills so necessary for full-time jobs after the completion of school. They are selective of the people who they socialize with by carefully courting a loose network of important people. They accomplish this through various strategies such as 'name dropping', and making 'significant' others know that they are or will be looking for a job, e.g., 'Let people in important places know I am looking for a job - you know, a little name dropping'.
Respondents' Perceptions

(1) They are generally 'critical' of other students' approaches to the job market. They feel most students do not persevere in their job search efforts. They feel many students are lazy and thus complain about the lack of available jobs or will have to take 'last chance' jobs at the Manpower Centres.

(2) They feel good jobs are 'out there' for those who are willing to seek them out. They do not believe there are more students looking for jobs than the number of jobs objectively available during the summer.

(3) "Your goal has to be reachable. I realistically set my goals. I plan." As a group they perceive themselves as more rationally inclined as indicated by the amount of planning they put into their job search. They also see themselves as personable and projecting a sense of 'confidence' to others (Coffman's act), e.g. 'If I hadn't been that kind of person I wouldn't get the job. I could do good work.'

(4) They not only use 'connections' but do not see the practice as unfair since it helps a student's upward climb through his career development. However, they are critical of students who only utilize this method
to obtain jobs. "You are not spending much time on job search, so you do not learn, they just accept lesser jobs."

Researcher's Perceptions

(1) One of the first things about these students as a group, whether they were spoken to casually or in the context of an informal interview, is the 'speaking style' in which they gave their responses to questions asked by the researcher. Often they are direct in their responses and considerably more articulate in terms of coherence and logical clarity than the average student. One can only infer from the way they gave their account in their interviews with the researcher, that when it comes to their being actually interviewed for a job, that care and smoothness in their presentation must be an essential part.

(2) Come What May Type

Disclosures -

(1) As a group, on the average, they make less money than the previous group. In fact, it is not uncommon for many to secure jobs that pay minimum wage. As a result many seek part-time jobs during the school year to make up for the low pay in the summer.

(2) Job offers are few for this group. Usually the first
job they can get, they take.

(3) As a consequence of this 'first offer, first take' their level of job satisfaction remains low. Many 'hated' the jobs they did, but felt that's the best they could get. Many reported that they will not work on those jobs again.

(4) They are not aware of 'cookery or pop' books on successful 'job hunting' and even those who were aware felt no need to have a look at it for possible tips in securing better jobs.

(5) The jobs obtained are often not related to their area of study. Generally they are of the manual type, e.g. general labour, waitress.

Artful Practices

(1) Very little planning for the summer. They are 'late' in sending out resumes and applications.

(2) They spend a large portion of their time while in school on course related tasks.

(3) They usually complain of the heavy course loads they are carrying.

(4) They do not go 'out of their way' to make new friends.
(5) Generally keep to themselves or have only a few friends at school, who usually share similar notions of sociality.

(6) 'Apathy' level high on issues such as student politics.

Respondent Perceptions

(1) They are more fatalistically oriented. For instance they think getting good jobs is largely a function of 'luck'.

(2) They believe jobs are few in the summer for students. For them not everyone can get a job.

(3) They believe that most jobs are obtained through the use of 'contacts'.

Researcher's Perceptions

(1) This group is by far the largest. They see school as a place to obtain a number of 'credits'. 'Electives' are looked down on as 'bird' courses, e.g. sociology and psychology.

(2) Their communication skills are rather undeveloped compared to the go-getters.

(3) Their delivery of their responses to questions is
not 'smooth', often lacking in coherence and understanding of questions asked.

(4) They are more of the 'following' type; initiative levels seem to be low.

(3) Not-So-Happy

General Characteristics

This group of students, for a variety of reasons, have encountered difficulties in locating jobs. Many claim, especially women, that the few jobs they could have obtained they were excluded from for reasons they think of as discriminatory in nature. They think most jobs are given through 'connections', hence their lack of success. Apart from attributing 'structural' factors, e.g. few available jobs for their present conditions, they start seeing themselves as 'losers' or that something must be wrong with them. Some even blame themselves or peculiar physical characteristics, e.g. obesity.

Because of the lack of success for reasons on which this research did not focus many cope with their unfortunate position or predicament by returning to school in the summer.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the preceding chapters, the intention behind the description was to invite the reader into the life-world of the doing of research and the reporting of those research efforts. Each chapter sought to delineate the theoretical and substantial work required of the research project. In retrospect, they represent my understanding of the social world and a possible version or orientation for its investigation.

In these last few pages I will summarize briefly the efforts and arguments made thus far in the presentation of the research. Emerging from these arguments and the provisional findings of the study, certain implications for student job seekers and sociology are discussed.

The central interest in this study revolves around student job seekers, specifically their efforts in securing summer employment. By obtaining "accounts", stories, recollections of past and present efforts together with a series of observations of students' job seeking orientations, an overview of job seekers was possible. Specifically drawing from both sexes, the sample included students from the various departmental faculties of Business Administration, Engineering and the Social Sciences.

This reconstruction became possible as a result of the careful asking of different questions of students' efforts. The
arrival of the summer months for the majority of students renders the possibility of full-time employment. For many, it is the sole means of financial support for their continued education. And since they perceive the number of jobs available during the summer months as fewer than the number of students seeking those jobs, the potential job seeker, in such a tight job market, must articulate his or her social stock of knowledge, to his or her advantage. It is to this organizing and strategizing of what individual students believe to be true of jobs and their acquisition, that this study was undertaken.

The chapter titled Methodological Considerations sought to underline the interwovenness of method and theory. Method it was claimed not only involves the construction of a research design and the following of its inherent logic but as a series of cognitive operations in the process making the journey to substantial bodies of theories and meta-theories quite often. Yet this reflexive elaboration of what one perceives involves theories; for example, the attribution of meaning or some sign or act is contingent upon the beliefs one holds of social reality or the conventions intersubjectively agreed upon.

It is in this way that the various questions asked, whether of the respondents in this study or questions of a more fundamental nature, such as the choice of theoretical perspectives (interpretive paradigms for this study), depends especially on what I believe to be relevant for the pursuit of the research question. Adequacy of the
research was pursued not in terms of its conforming to a body of truth (which assumes the possibility of literal description), but in terms of a truth apparent to these students.

This slant pursued in the research results from the nature of the questions asked which require among other contextual particulars, the respondent's self-understandings of their efforts. Because as of now, there is no direct access to these self-understandings, independent of the respondents, their "versions" or self understandings were criterial for description. Descriptions therefore, in this research are interpretive, hence corrigible and defeasible.

Finally the claim was made that not only the asking of question is fundamental to the research enterprise, but that in the interpretive tradition they are constantly in the process of emerging and this emergent nature makes available to the researcher the fulcrum to make tentative judgements or inferences on what has been revealed hitherto in the research. Put in another way, a pre-structured questionnaire schedule limits the researcher to questions already formulated and thus force him to ignore the reflexivity and flexibility of further questioning the incoming responses in the immediate context.

Chapter One on Theoretical Considerations firstly is an attempt to locate the researcher in the doing of research by pointing out the role of theories and beliefs in the formulation of the research problem and the collection of information and secondly, to point out the underlying assumptions beneath these various modes of theorizing
in sociology.

Specifically, research was shown to be following the more dominant normative paradigm, which essentially explains behaviour in terms of the known in common social rules governing the situation. This appeal to social rules for the loci of socially relevant behaviour denies the possibility of an actor attributing sense to the behaviour or action. In this paradigm "meaning" is not sought from the actor's point of view, rather it is from conventions agreed upon by sociologists independent of any given situation and actor. In this way, man as an active subject is denied or ignored and instead is replaced by a "cultural dope."

On the other hand, the assumption underlying the interpretive paradigm renders possible the study of socially relevant actions from the point of view of the actors. Social rules are at best vague guidelines for the understanding of social acts. Rules, the definition of the situation and the actor's cognitions are all used in this alternative conceptualization for making sense of another's behaviour.

Finally, the role of common-sense knowledge was examined. It was claimed that both researchers and subjects rely on common-sense procedures for accomplishment of practical tasks. Yet in most studies they are left implicit. In this study the role of common-sense procedure were briefly discussed.

In the body of the study a number of observations and findings were discussed in detail. In brief, I would like to point out a couple of these:
(1) Those students who are better organized and feel "confident" about themselves feel they secure jobs that are satisfying and high paying.

(2) The lower paying job where job satisfaction is very low are obtained by the majority of students, who essentially place less emphasis on the organization of an effective job hunt strategy. Often, this failure to obtain, the better paying jobs results from a limited knowledge of the organizational features of the job market.

Some of the major implications in the study are the following: Firstly, any research project which seeks to capture the "sense" or "meaning" of another's action should start out with the self-understandings of that person of the act in question. A qualitative style utilizing an ethnographic approach is suggested for making sense of what the other is saying.

Secondly, there is no single recipe to be followed for success in seeking jobs in the summer. This is so because students make use of what they perceive as potentially available to them at that time, when faced with the arduous task of getting a job. This situatedness of particular moves stemming from the ceaseless defining of the situation points to man as actively engaged in constructing his or her reality.
Thirdly, it is found that in the quest for understanding of
other's behaviour, a priori formulated concepts are particularly useless
tools for the pursuit of the research problem. Instead when access
is possible, the lay assertions can provide the necessary elements
for the formulation of concepts. In this way the concepts are grounded
in the milieu of human experience.

In conclusion, I would argue that much is missed or ignored when
rigid mechanistic research frameworks are used to study man and his
social world. This denial of man as active subject and the architect
of his actions, implicitly cast a dark cloud of fatalism over those
who (suffer most in our society) consider themselves unfortunate
in modern society. As one student said, "Never mind what the statistics
show, jobs are there for everybody, you just got to go for it."
FOOTNOTES

1. Cicourel has argued that this common value system so necessary for the working of this model is often not present during explicit conflict, yet concerted action takes place. For him interpretive procedures are being used. These crucially mediate between shared symbols (rules) and courses of action. Cicourel (1970:167).

2. Garfinkel (1967:78) describes this method thus:

   The method consists of treating an actual appearance on 'the document of', as 'pointing to', as 'standing on behalf of' a presupposed underlying pattern. Not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences, in their turn are interpreted on the basis of 'what is known' about the underlying pattern. Each is used to elaborate the other.


4. This is the annual campus survey conducted by the Department of Sociology, University of Windsor. It is administered to first year sociology students. Among the items listed in the questionnaire twenty-six social behaviours are listed as "deviant" or the violation of norms, e.g., getting drunk, masturbation. These activities are all assumed a priori to be deviant behaviour. Yet, as discovered by the researcher, while as T.A., many of these "behaviours" were considered "normal" and nothing deviant by the very students who were forced to respond to the categories supplied by the researcher.

5. From here on it is referred to as the "Dictum".
6. a. What was the main method(s) you used in successfully finding your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Most Important (Circle one only)</th>
<th>Second Most Important (circle one only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through friends.......................01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through part-time or summer jobs.......02</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through family connections............03</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University or college placement office........................................04</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement program while at community college.............................05</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Manpower Centre................06</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement in newspaper, magazine, radio, etc............................07</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement in professional journal...........................................08</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private employment company............09</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal effort (e.g., contacted firms, placed ads in newspapers, etc.)....10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other action(s) (specify); First: _________________________________11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Among the following which do you think was the most important criteria used by your employer when hiring you for your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Reason</th>
<th>Second Important Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Circle one only)</td>
<td>(Circle one only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your personality or how you presented yourself</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your high school qualifications</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your university qualifications</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your community college qualifications</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications obtained elsewhere</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your relationship to a friend connected with the employer</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your relationship to an influential relative</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your performance on tests</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other criteria (specify):</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. In everyday society, we make judgements of others appresentationally often on mode of dress, colour or accent in speech, only to change these 'first impressions' after being around that person. Instead of seeing that person as a 'punk', goof, nigger, faggot (all pre-constituted stereotypes,) other types more benign in connotation such as friend, eccentric and warm may be substitute.
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