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SMALL SHOP SURVIVAL: THE DAIRY-GROCERY AS A
CASE IN POINT

A thesis submitted to
The Department of Sociology
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in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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by

Steve Maharey

ERRATA

Page.

- 20 Markin (1974) should read Markin (1968)
32 "This is being done"
40 "explanatory" should read "exploratory"
140 "stay" should be "say"
142 "begin" should be "being"
146 Ritzer (1972) should be (1971)
165 "extensive pattern" should be "extension pattern"
176 "coluntary" should read "voluntary"
184 "guage" should be "gauge"
197 Hearn and Stoll (1974) should be (1975)
202 "Recapitualation" should be "Recapitulation"
233 F. Parkin (ed) Social Analysis of Class Structures
234 Davis, D. A History of Shopping

ABSTRACT

The study of dairy-grocers presented here goes some way toward filling the gap in social science knowledge of small shops in particular and small businesses in general. The aims of the study were:

1) to outline the broad environmental forces which have, in recent years, provided an unfavourable background for small business operation; 2) to give an account of the experiences of small shopkeepers in the context of their work; and 3) to examine how the experiences in question could best be collated as a theory which might explain the position of small shops and small shopkeepers in society.

It was concluded, from the case study of dairy-grocers, that small shops and their owners are becoming structurally marginal. By structurally marginal is meant:

/....the condition of persons for whom institutionalised roles are not readily available, and who, as a consequence, suffer from a deficiency of social worth (Wittermans and Kraus, 1974:351).

In view of the conclusions reached in the study, it is argued that current attempts to provide aid for the small shop will be unsuccessful in many instances unless small shops can be reintegrated into society as an important component of the retailing hierarchy.

The research was qualitative in nature and took the form of a case study. The case study approach was adopted to allow an in depth analysis of the problems at hand. The major research technique used was that of intensive interviewing.

The research was perceived of as exploratory and was therefore not guided by formal hypotheses. It is hoped that the great deal of descriptive data that was generated in the search for a theoretical explanation of the small shopkeeper in society, will be of use to researchers from the sociological areas of work, occupations, economic activity and the family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of a piece of work such as this, which is the first major research effort I have undertaken, is only possible with the help and encouragement of one's teachers. In this respect I am grateful to my research supervisor, Professor G.S. Fraser. He not only gave me valuable guidance during the research, but also originally stimulated my interest in sociology.

In carrying out the field work for the research I was dependent on the goodwill of many people. I am especially indebted to the dairy-grocery owners of Palmerston North, particularly those who took part in the longer interviews, and to those people connected with the retail trade who discussed the research with me.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife and colleague, Margaret, for her assistance and patience throughout the course of the study.

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CHAPTER I

THE SMALL SHOP IN SOCIETY (1)

During this century, retailing, in urban, industrialised nations has undergone a 'revolution' similar in magnitude to that experienced by manufacturing in the last century, although without the same profound effect on society (Davis, 1966). This revolution has meant the replacement of small shops and personal service by large scale forms of retailing and self-service techniques of merchandising. These new developments have undermined the position of the small shop in society and given cause for comment and speculation as to the future of small shops. Writing on this issue Bechhofer et. al. (1971:161) state:

Both Marx and Alfred Marshall played Cassandra and predicted the demise of the small shopkeeper, while writers like H.G. Wells and George Orwell, apparently concurring in this assessment of the storekeeper's fate, depicted in graphic detail the miseries and deprivations of the undercapitalised retailer eking out a living by dragooning his family into the business, working all hours of the day and night and treating his customers with simpering deference in a vain attempt to retain his clientele.

More recently the efforts of some sociologists, economists and journalists have provided a more empirical

(1) It must be emphasised at the outset that the entire research is concerned with non-specialist small shops and, in particular, refers to neighbourhood shops. There are many small shops specialising in narrow segments of the market which have flourished in recent years. The experiences of these stores are qualitatively different to those selling general merchandise.

assessment of the position of small shopkeepers, but the image of imminent doom remains (Beresford, 1969; Eden, 1972) - not least amongst the retailers themselves (Bugler, 1970).

Despite the pessimism (or perhaps because of it) which surrounds the future of the small shop there is currently a resurgence of interest in small businesses on the part of governments and researchers. Most of this interest is directed at small manufacturers (2), but in Europe especially the small retailer is also attracting attention (3). Concern for small businesses takes place within a milieu of uncertainty about the social costs incurred through the introduction of large scale forms of retailing, which cause the centralising of facilities and introduce self-service techniques of merchandising. It is now the opinion of a growing minority that the demise of the small shop will not only be detrimental to those who own the shops, but also to those who would patronise them. In a recent article summarizing the concern planners have for the current trends in retailing toward hypermarkets, the author concluded that:

.....it would appear that shoppers needs would best be met by the improvement of existing high street or neighbourhood shopping centers where facilities are grouped, where this is already a community focus, and which are more accessible to all shoppers..... (Hillman, 1976:91).

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- (2) For an example of the current interest in small manufacturers see M. Stanworth and J. Curran Management Motivation in the Small Business, Essex: Gower Press (1973).
 - (3) For comments on the need for interest in smaller retailers see D. Lock 'Small Shop Survival' Built Environment Quarterly (Sept. 1976) pp. 207-209.

The problem facing planners is how to ensure that small shops do survive despite the increasing dominance of big business in the area of retailing. This is an issue which has now begun to involve New Zealanders who have, in the last decade, had to deal with their own retailing revolution (4).

The present research is intended as a sociological contribution to the understanding and perhaps overcoming of problems facing small shops. Currently there are only a handful of sociological studies which relate directly to small shops and their owners (5). For the most part these studies are concerned with the position of the shopkeeper in the class structure and they are therefore unable to contribute to the wider problem of the small shop in society.(6).

The present chapter is designed to provide background for the research by outlining evidence for the assertion that small shopkeepers are indeed in a precarious position. In what follows four broad questions are examined.

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- (4) See I.F. Grant 'The Retail Decade: Following Overseas Trends at a Safe Distance' NBR Marketplace No. 3 (1974) pp. 20-22.
 - (5) The occupations involved in retailing are seldom discussed within sociology. For example, as part of this research the eleven texts and readers available on occupational sociology were reviewed. Only three contained a section on retailing, and of these only one had substantial coverage.
 - (6) There is a scattered literature available on the shopkeeper in the class structure. For a reference work in this area see F. Bechhofer et. al. 'The Petite Bourgeoisie in the Class Structure: The Case of the Small Shopkeeper' in F. Parkin (ed) The Social Analysis of Class Structure London: Tavistock Publishers (1974) pp 103-128.

1. How has the position of the small shopkeeper in the distribution system been influenced by certain broad changes in the environment of business in recent years?
2. What is the present market situation of the small shopkeeper in New Zealand?
3. How have small shopkeepers sought to combat the various pressures to which they have been exposed?
4. Why should the small shop be preserved?

The chapter is not a final analysis of the questions which inform the research; rather it is intended that the discussion should provide a setting for the in depth investigation of small shopkeepers undertaken in Chapters II through VII, and the sociological theory of the position of small shops and their owners in society which is outlined in Chapter VIII.

Environmental Forces Influencing Small Shops

All business organisations operate within a business environment, and small shops are no exception. The state of activity within this competitive, or business, environment can and does affect the 'health' of the business organisation. In its turn the organisation reacts back on its environment making a satisfactory relationship between the two a matter of compatibility. Stacey and Wilson (1965) argue that until as late as the Second World War the small

shop and its environment were compatible. Since the 1950's, however, this situation has changed markedly. Just how marked a change has taken place can be illustrated by looking at the decline in numbers of small shops.

In New Zealand, where developments in retailing have only recently begun to take effect, the decline in numbers of small shops is becoming clear. Between 1968 and 1973 the numbers of shops increased by 4.3 per. cent. from 29,331 to 30,586 (Kalafatelis, 1976). This rate of increase does not, however, keep pace with the growth in population. According to the New Zealand Official Yearbook (1975) the population increased by 8.0 per. cent. from 2,755,092 to 2,974,657 between 1968 and 1973.

In many other countries there has already been a decline in absolute numbers of shops. In Britain, for example, between 1966 and 1971 the number of shops was reduced by 3.8 per. cent. from 504,412 to 485,346 (Kirby 1975). By referring to the relative decrease in persons per retail outlet it can be seen that New Zealand may soon follow the British trend. In 1968 there were 93.9 persons per retail outlet, while in 1973 there were 97.3 persons per retail outlet.

The clearest indication of a decline in store numbers can be found amongst the largest of principle store-types, Food and Drink. In this category, store numbers fell by 7.0 per. cent. during the 1968 to 1973 period, which is a drop of 5.2 per. cent. in total store numbers. Within this group the 1972-73 Census of Distribution shows the Grocery-Dairy group to be in the greatest decline. Numbers in this

group fell by 10.4 per. cent. from 5560 to 4983 between 1968 and 1973. In relative terms this subgroup of the Food and Drink category of stores now accounts for only 16.3 per. cent. of the total store numbers, 2.7 per. cent. less than in 1968. (Kalafatelis, 1976).

Thus the pattern would seem to suggest that the number of shops is not increasing and in some areas of retailing shop numbers are in decline. The greatest absolute decline has occurred in the food and drink sector and consequently the following comments relate particularly to the problems of those involved with the sale of food and drink.

Demographic Trends Influencing Small Shops

The demographic forces at work today in the economy of New Zealand are viewed with optimism by those involved with big business. Indeed, the remarkable changes which have taken place in the postwar era in terms of overall growth in population, size and composition of families, and trends towards population decentralisation, have fostered a favourable climate for many business enterprises. But these changes have not been to the advantage of small shops which have been unable to keep pace with the range of merchandise required by an increasingly diverse public.

Growth in population: Population is one of the two key elements that stimulate the market. The other, of course, is income, which will be discussed subsequently.

Historically, the retail trade in New Zealand has been slow to adopt new retail systems. The New Zealand retail trade has lagged as much as 10 to 20 years behind developments in Australia, Europe and the United States (Kalafatelis, 1976).

In part, the slow development of new retail systems in New Zealand can be attributed to the small size and low density of the population. However, since the 1960's changes in the population have created conditions suited to the introduction of large scale forms of retailing.

In 1961, 59.6 per. cent. of the total New Zealand population lived in urban areas, and by 1971 the figure stood at 67.4 per. cent. (Thomson, 1973). Much of this change resulted from the migration of people from rural to urban or suburban living arrangements. The effect of this on rural areas may be measured by the decrease in population of small towns. Of 54 towns with 1,000 - 4,999 inhabitants 19 declined in numbers between 1966-1971 compared with 7 between 1961-1966.

When large numbers of people leave rural areas for urban residences the result is a greater reliance on retail stores for goods. An urban population constitutes the dominant market for consumer goods, including such items as food and non-food lines sold by small shops.

In March 1971 the population of New Zealand was 2,860,475, an increase from 2,594,420 in 1966. This small population could not provide New Zealand with the mass market needed to support a retail system comprised of large stores. However, in recent years the effects of a small

population have been offset by an increasingly high density of population as people have continued to move into the cities and to the North Island. Retailers in the larger urban areas are now servicing a substantial group of consumers who are completely dependent on them for goods. The stage is now set for New Zealand to adopt new retailing systems (7).

In many ways the interest in population changes is heightened when the changes in households are analysed, rather than just number of persons. For marketing purposes the change in number of households (households include both families and individuals living alone) is of extreme importance. Certainly the household remains the primary buying unit for many commodities including both food and general merchandise items.

There were 801,686 households in permanent private dwellings at the census in 1971, which is an increase from 716, 104 only five years earlier. The significance of this rapid formation of new households for retailers may be shown by reference to two factors. The first is that the more individual households there are to service the greater will be the demand for goods and the higher sales will be. The second has to do with the diversity of household types.

(7) In 1973 the total sales in the retail sector accounted for 58.5 per. cent. of private income expenditure. See A. Aburn 'Recent Developments in Retailing' New Zealand Commerce (April 1976) pp 11-14.

Many households today are comprised of men and women living alone, people sharing a house, solo mothers and couples without children. These groups are especially dependent on retailers for goods and services and they therefore raise sales. But they also introduce the problem of variety. Shops must now cater for the specialist needs of youth markets, old age markets and the 'average' family amongst others. This means a shop must be able to carry large quantities of a wide range of stock if it is to service the whole market.

For the small shop the increase in sales brought about by changes in the population is not necessarily beneficial. As sales have increased big business has become established. This has occurred in New Zealand where big shops now dominate the sale of food and general merchandise lines while the small shops fill an auxiliary role. The way out of the problem may be for small shops to supply only specialist items for which no mass market exists. This indeed has been a trend (Kirby 1975). However, if the market for an item grows it can easily be incorporated into the product mix of a larger store with repercussions for the small store.

Growth of suburbs: There is one demographic trend which may be thought to support small shops. This is the decentralisation of population through movement to the suburbs. It was, as noted earlier, low population density which favoured small shops in New Zealand until the late 1960's. However,

suburban development has not helped the small shop. Movement to the suburbs was made possible by the motor car, a convenience which can be used to reach central shopping areas. Also, the major food retailers have moved with the population into the suburbs where they have occupied the available commercial land and therefore reduced the possibility of small shops being established. With planning regulations now prohibiting the use of a house as a shop, the future should see fewer small shops being opened.

Economic Trends Influencing Small Shops.

The economic changes experienced by the New Zealand economy have, in the past few decades, been many. These changes have substantial relevance for retailers. The New Zealand consumer now, more than ever before has high purchasing power and needs satisfying ability. It is of crucial concern to retailers to know where this purchasing power will be concentrated.

Figure 1a. is illustrative of the growth and dynamism of the overall economy and shows that the Gross National Product has grown steadily through the 60's with a pronounced burst of activity in the early 70's.

Millions of Dollars

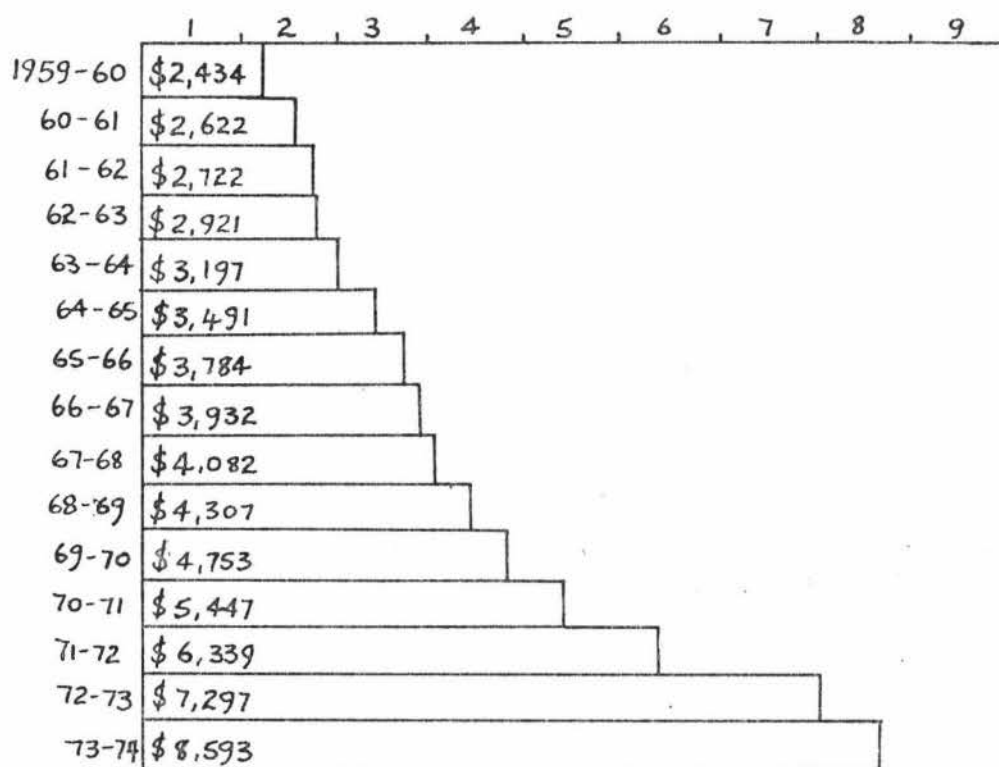


Figure 1a. Trend of Total Business Activity.
Gross National Product.

Source: New Zealand Official Yearbook. Wellington
Department of Statistics, 1975, p. 681.

Directly allied with the increase in economic activity is consumer buying power, which has also grown markedly. Figure 1b. shows the increase in the consumers ability to purchase goods.

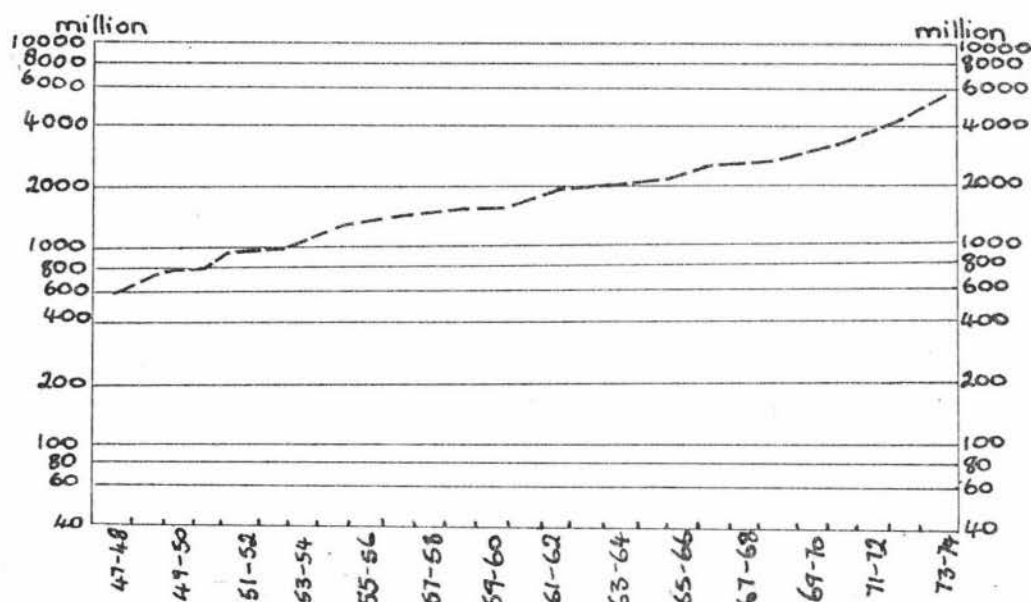


Figure 1b. Personal Expenditure on Consumer Goods and Services.

Source: New Zealand Official Yearbook, Wellington; Department of Statistics, 1975, p. 682.

The figure shows that expenditure has risen from \$600 million in 1947-48 to \$6000 million in 1973-74. In the 1972-73 Census of Distribution figures showed the retailing sector accounted for 58.9 per. cent. of private income expenditure. However, this marked increase in consumer spending may soon have to slow down, at least in some areas. Population increases are unlikely in the near future as birth and migration rates have declined. The individual consumers ability to increase consumption of food, for example, is limited by the size of his stomach. Manufacturers and retailers facing a decline in absolute growth can however, continue to stimulate profits by introducing a constant stream of new and better products.

Another factor of central concern in the area of expenditure is, which groups have money to spend. As a consequence of what Borrie (1973) calls a population 'surplus', most western nations have their largest affluent market located among people in the 20-34 age range. In New Zealand, at the census in 1975 there were 695,080 people or 22.4 per. cent. of the total population in this age group. This group has experienced a rapid rise in income during the past decade as the numbers of those earning over \$5,000 illustrates. At the census in 1966 5.6 per. cent. of all persons in the 20-34 age range had an income in excess of \$5,000. By 1971 this had risen to 15.8 per. cent. of the total group. Another factor which makes this group so important is the proportion of working women it contains. For example, between 1966-1971 the number of working women in the 30-34 age range rose by 82.0 per. cent. If the trends toward higher income continue this young age group will become more influential as the tail end of the population surplus reaches employment and marriage.

The rise in consumer spending and affluence of the young group suggest difficult prospects for those trying to service food needs. To stimulate growth in the market retailers will have to be prepared to display a constant

stream of new products and be able to respond to the demands of consumers quickly. The small shop is not well disposed to cope with these contingencies. Although it is small, and therefore potentially flexible, the small shop is seldom operated by people who have the resources or the expertise to cope with rapid market changes. For example, the ability to discount goods, to clear them in readiness for new stock, is often beyond the financial resources of a small retailer. Added to this is the fact that small traders are not in a position to receive knowledge about market trends and they therefore can not keep ahead of what is needed. This tends to force them to be responding to change instead of anticipating change. This serves to reinforce the image of the small shop as out of date. The modern young affluent consumer seeking the widest and best range of consumer products is not attracted to stores which can not supply these satisfactions.

Technological Trends Influencing Small Shops

The technological developments which have affected the small shop have been numerous. In the area of food retailing there are two developments which may be used to illustrate the impact of technology. These developments are, the automobile and the refrigerator.

The automobile: The automobile made it possible for the customer to move freely between her home and the market. Without the mobility afforded by the car, neighbourhood

shops would still be the focal point of household purchases (Markin, 1968).

Automobile ownership, as shown by registrations (see Figure 1c.) has increased from 480,381 units in 1960 to 1,078,795 in 1974. This figure represents something like a 120 per. cent. increase in a fourteen year period.

There are however, more significant facts about the car than just the numbers owned. First is the matter of who owns them. In terms of the neighbourhood store it is preferable if the wife does not have daily access to a car. As long as she is immobile, especially if children are present, she remains a customer of local stores. A second car releases the wife to use centralised shopping centres which are attractive in terms of variety and cheapness.

A second factor is parking. The car requires space to be stored while purchases are being made. Many small shops, built before the car became so common, do not have facilities for off road parking and therefore can not easily cater for a mobile public.

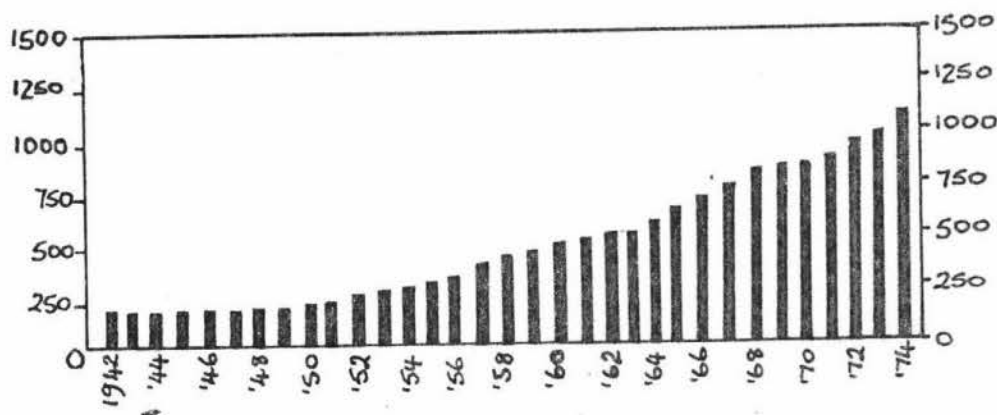


Figure 1c. Motor Vehicles Licensed.

Source: New Zealand Official Yearbook. Wellington: Department of Statistics. 1975, p. 390.

The refrigerator: Until quite recently the home refrigerator, operated by electrical means, was considered a luxury available only to the rich. Manufacturers reported sales of electrical refrigerators in 1956 of 563,052, which meant 54.3 per. cent. of homes had this appliance. However, by 1971 this had increased to 771,979, which meant that 96.4 per. cent. of homes had a refrigerator.

There has, perhaps, been no other appliance which has so changed the food eating and shopping habits of the consumer as the refrigerator. This appliance has permitted the consumer to shop less frequently by enabling her to purchase and store items that once had to be immediately consumed.

The principle of refrigeration, including the deep freeze concept, greatly altered and expanded the food lines which could be carried and successfully merchandised by the larger store through self service techniques. Many new products such as; fresh meat, cold cuts, produce, frozen foods, cheese and dairy products, could be handled without undue concern for spoilage or deterioration.

In more general terms, technology has allowed the marketing of an extremely wide range of goods in a form which ensures the consumer will get the same standard of product wherever it is purchased. These developments have forced shops to stock the range of products available if they are to hold their customers. However, the production of a standardised product has made it almost impossible for

a shop to be unique, once a feature of many small shops.

Consumer Trends Influencing Small Shops.

Whether the supermarket altered customer shopping habits or whether customer shopping habits demanded supermarkets must remain a point for discussion. Nevertheless, one evident relationship does appear significant. The New Zealand consumer has enthusiastically adopted the concept of 'simplified service', the purpose of which is to provide self service and cash and carry merchandising (Picot, 1972).

The occupation of shopping: One of the most important changes in the area of consumer habits has to do with the principle actor, women. Shopping used to be an important and integral part of the role, or occupation, of housewife. However, shopping has become less significant as the process has been simplified by manufacturers and retailers. Where a woman once had to invest a great deal of time into ensuring her purchases were satisfactory, she now has the guarantee from the manufacturer. For this and other reasons, such as the open displaying of goods in shops, the task of shopping can now be accomplished swiftly and without the input of much skill. Oakley (1974) has suggested that it is factors such as the declining importance of shopping which have caused the downgrading of the housewife role.

The importance of shopping as an occupation has also declined because less women are devoted full time to running

a home than in previous years. Women in the work force now number 1 in 5 (1966 figures). A woman who is employed at a job can not afford much time for household tasks. This has produced a demand for more streamlined methods of merchandising.

The above factors combine to downgrade the significance of building a close relationship with a proprietor of a shop. Because of the standardisation of products there is no need for customers to rely on a shopkeeper to represent them in the distributive network. The lack of time available for shopping makes it inevitable that customers will like the speed of self service. Neither of these developments augur well for the small shop.

The supermarket as a larder: Women who work often share the responsibility of shopping with their spouse. There are in fact a variety of people who are now involved in shopping for food who have a priority on time rather than the interactional possibilities of shopping. In this can be included the many groups of young people who share a house. For this category of shopper the supermarket with its open display of goods provides an inventory or checklist for their needs. A walk around the shelves ensures that most possible purchases are covered with a minimum of effort.

The above may be contrasted with the customer's behaviour in a small store. Here the customer must know what he or she wants to buy so they can instruct the shopkeeper. This means the customer must have detailed knowledge of the products available, something few people wish

to bother with (8).

The concept of self service and the use of the supermarket as a larder has had consequences for customer behaviour that small shops have not been able to capitalise on. The consequence is the incidence of impulse buying. In a recent study Kollat and Willet (1967) estimate that the average consumer makes 50.5 per. cent. of her supermarket purchases on an unplanned impulse basis. This finding suggests that customers do use displays as a listing of what they might buy. The small shop practice of using the shopkeeper to get goods, even if they are openly displayed, can prevent impulse purchasing with a consequent loss in sales.

The supermarket as a one stop shop: Manufacturers and retailers must be constantly on the alert for shifts in the type of shops where customers dispense patronage. Currently the New Zealand customer is spending more in the larger store over a wider range of products.

Items which were once bought in a variety of small stores are now successfully retailed under one roof. Taking the grocery trade as an example, Picot (1974) shows that in little over a decade the supermarket has captured 25-30 per. cent. of the trade. Put differently, this means 25 per. cent.

(8) See W.G. McClelland Studies in Retailing Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1964) for a discussion of the differences between making purchases in a small and a large shop.

of the business is being done in 5 per. cent. of the stores. To date, the New Zealand consumer has only had a chance to show a preference for buying groceries under a self service system, but in other countries the supermarket system has been used for many other types of product (Business Week, 1977:52)

Naturally, as supermarkets widen product lines, they concomitantly broaden, to a considerable extent, the nature of their appeal. In short, the probability that the supermarket will carry an item of appeal to a given customer increases as the breadth of line becomes wider and the product mix moves toward a greater assortment of general merchandise lines. This is exactly what has happened over the past decade. The supermarket is now an important outlet for such products as beauty aids, hardware, soft goods, magazines, toys, records and stationary, as well as the basic food lines. Against the advantages of this one stop method of shopping the many small shops carrying similar lines have little to offer (Markin, 1974:59-60).

One trend in recent years which has been some help to small shopkeepers is the establishment of one stop shopping centres. Such centres tend to feature one or two large stores and a high number of associated small shops in the same areas. The larger store acts as an incentive to the shopper to use the centre and this provides trade for the small shops. The impact of this is, however, likely to be detrimental to shops not included in the shopping complex (Aburn, 1976). Since it does seem that in the future many more shopping centres, or 'hyper' centres, will be developed the prospects for small shops outside these centres are not bright.

Shopping hours: At present in New Zealand retailing operates on a three tiered system. Most shops open for a five day week from 9 to 5.30 p.m. with one late night a week. During these hours all goods may be offered for sale. Above this are the shops and businesses which are open seven days a week to sell goods thought to be essential for public welfare. Some food lines, automotive goods and hardware items are classed as exempted goods and may be sold over an extended period. A third level of shops includes those that have been given permission to sell during the weekend all goods in the interest of the tourist trade (9). At present this system is under review due to pressure from larger retailers who wish to open more nights during the week and on Saturdays. For a general extension of shopping hours to come about would be for New Zealand to follow overseas trends. The benefit to the customers is that extended hours would allow the many people who are thought to have difficulty shopping during traditional hours to shop at their leisure. Since it is Government policy to back an extension of shopping hours it is likely that in future such stores as Woolworths, Self Help and McKenzies will open longer hours.

The effect of extended hours on consumer behaviour, if overseas trends are emulated, will be marked. The most probable development will be for families to shop on Saturday morning. This will mean all the smaller stores

(9) See the Shops and Offices Act (1955) available through the Department of Labour, for a further explanation of these points.

will have to stay open to compete and it is this which lies behind the current resistance by many retailers to the introduction of longer hours (10). It is also likely that given Saturday trading the larger stores will be encouraged to expand the range of products they carry which will bring them into competition with many other stores (11).

Summary of Environmental Forces Influencing the Small Shop

The discussion of the business environment of the small shop has made it clear that the small retailer does face a number of pressures and it should be expected there will be a reduction in the numbers of small retail outlets. It may be expected that in fact these pressures are greater than crude estimates of numbers of establishments reveal, for there is one crucial factor for which no crude estimate

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- (10) The local Chambers of Commerce have recently been conducting surveys on the issue of shopping hours. The results of the Manawatu study were made public through local newspapers. The findings show that in the retail and retail grocers sections, 8.8 per. cent. favoured a change in hours (it was suspected that this contained many retailers who were already trading longer hours) while 90.7 per. cent. were opposed to the change. Smaller retailers appear to be aware of what longer hours would mean. They have, after all, the example of the dairy-grocery. Summary of findings in Manawatu Evening Standard Wednesday (Feb. 9th, 1977) p.1.
- (11) I am grateful to the local representative of the Retailers Association (Man.) for this appraisal of the shopping hours situation.

exists - namely the extent of replacement (12). It is likely that each year many small businesses collapse only to be replaced by others opened by new recruits to the trade (13). Thus the actual rate of decline in businesses and the strength of their situation may be marked by the factor of replacements.

Small Shopkeepers, Their Position in the Retailing Hierarchy

Having considered some of the features of the environment of small businesses an examination of the fortunes of the smaller retailer will now be undertaken. Once again the trends can most clearly be demonstrated with reference to the Grocery-Dairy store type. The discussion centres on the 1968-1973 time period as it was during this period that the fortunes of the small shop became clear.

(12) C. Wright Mills (1953:23) has commented on the remarkable persistence of the small business stratum. "While as an aggregate small businesses persist and hold their own, the composition of the aggregate changes rapidly and the economic wellbeing of its members undergoes shocking ups and downs....there is a great flow of entrepreneurs, in and out of the small business stratum, as each year hundreds of thousands fail and others, some new to the game, some previous failures, start again on the brave new venture!"

(13) It is difficult to trace the rate of failure of present businesses through official statistics. However, some reasons for failure are available. Deran (1963) has documented reasons for the failure of small businesses in the United States.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Inexperience, incompetence* | 93.2% of firms. |
| Neglect | 3.4% |
| Fraud | 1.2% |
| Disaster | 1.1% |
| Unknown | 1.1% |

*This is a summation of a number of causes.

The 1972-73 Census of Distribution revealed total sales of \$3,967 million, which is an 89 per. cent. increase over the \$2,099 million recorded in 1968. All of the principle store types registered increases of over 55 per. cent. during the period from 1968 to 1973. However, once again the Food and Drink category group showed a trend towards decline. This store type registered a rate of increase below average and it fell, proportionately, by 5.1 per. cent. Within this group, the Grocery-Dairy sub-group accounted for the greatest fall. Turnover in the Grocery-Dairy sub-group increased by 52.5 per. cent. from \$332.7 million to \$507.4 million between 1967-68 and 1972-73, but this was below the rate of increase for the retail trade as a whole. In relative terms, turnover fell by 3.0 per. cent. of total retail turnover.

Figure 2a. shows retail concentration in New Zealand for 1972-73 and emphasises the preponderance of the small shop. Over 70 per. cent. of retail stores have turnovers of less than \$100,000 but these account for only 24 per. cent. of retail turnover. By contrast, under 4.5 per. cent. of retail stores have turnovers of over \$500,000 but these account for over 40 per. cent of total retail sales. This pattern of retail concentration is most marked within the Grocery-Dairy sub-group.

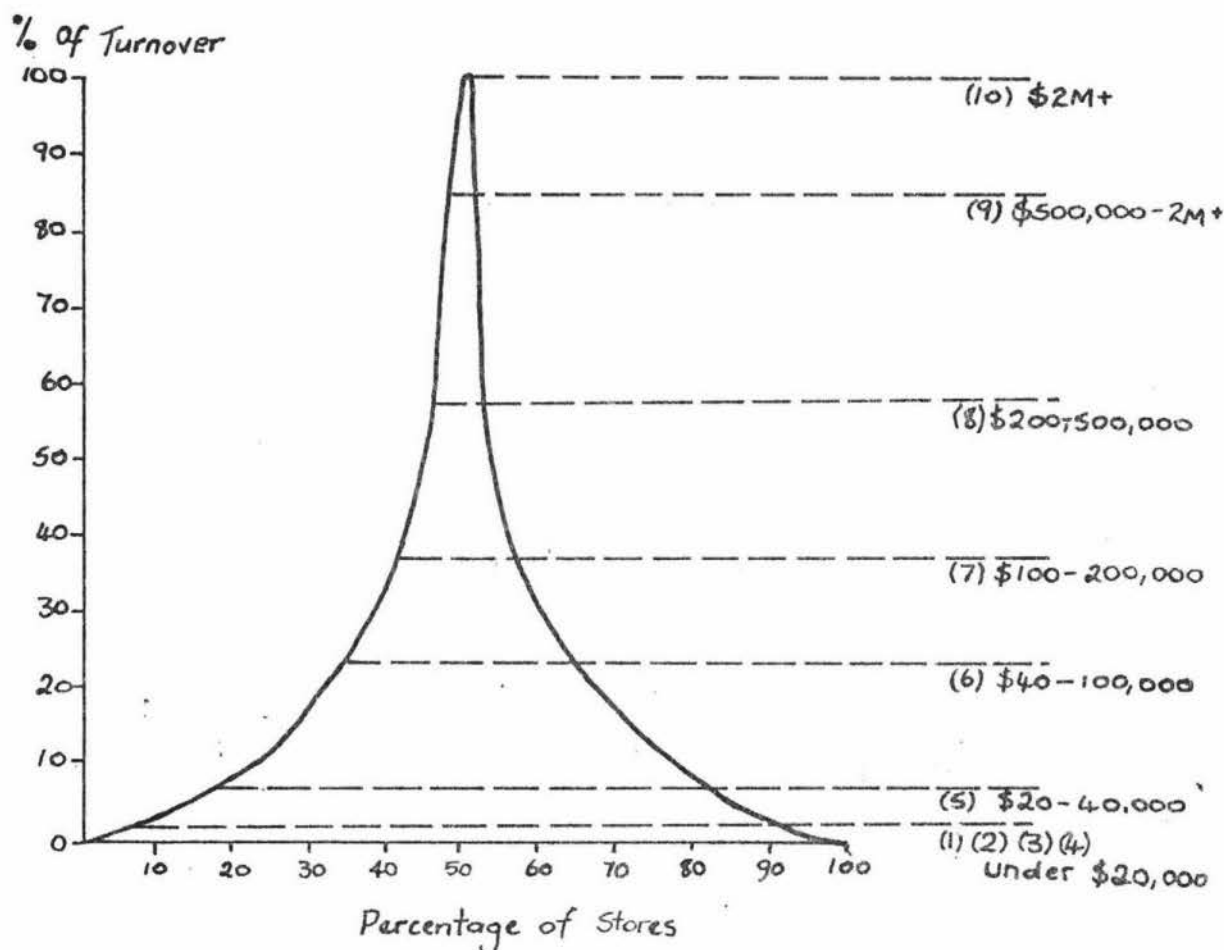


Figure 2a. Retail Concentration in New Zealand. 1972-73.

Source: E. Kalafetalis. The Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Dairy-Grocery in Four Wellington Suburbs. Unpublished Research Paper, Victoria, 1976.

Along with a change in shares of total turnover there has been a shift into larger turnover sized groups. Stores with larger sales increased their total store numbers by 2.5 per. cent. and their total share of retail sales by 14.1 per. cent. between 1967-68 and 1972-73. The smaller turnover groups registered proportionate losses. Their share of total retail turnover fell by 18.3 per. cent. and 9.7 per. cent. respectively.

Shifts in the scale of retail enterprise are also evident when the census data is classified according to the employee size of shops. Figure 2b. shows percentage shares of total store numbers, total retail turnover and total employment by paid employee size groups.



Figure 2b. Total Store Numbers, Total Retail Turnover and Total Paid Employment by Paid Employee Sized Groups, Percentage Shared.

Source: E. Kalafetalis. The Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Dairy-Grocery in Four Wellington Suburbs. Unpublished Research Paper, Victoria, 1976.

As in Figure 2a., Figure 2b. demonstrates there is a structural shift toward large scale retail outlets. Only group six has consistently made proportionate gains. This group has increased its total retail turnover, total store

numbers and total paid employment by 9.4 per. cent., 21.8 per. cent. and 15.5 per. cent. respectively. Groups 1, 2 and 3 especially, have registered proportionate losses. Their shares of the total retail turnover, total store numbers and total paid employment have fallen by 11.6 per. cent., 16.4 per cent. and 9.1 per. cent. respectively.

Thus, general trends available through official statistics suggest that the small shop is giving way to big business, although the small shop is still dominant in numbers. The greatest effects of current trends are manifesting themselves within the Grocery-Dairy store-type. Most directly concerned is the Dairy-Grocery which has shown a sharp decline in numbers and market share. It is possible that the Dairy-Grocery may be illustrative of what is ahead for other types of small shops.

Efforts to Preserve the Small Shop

If the small retailer is indeed experiencing the kinds of problems outlined above, the question arises as to what is being done to combat the situation. Faced with a number of competitive pressures the small shopkeeper has available to him several strategies calculated to help him advance his position. In entering retailing the shop owner becomes party to a set of relationships, with his suppliers, with his customers, with his competitors and with representatives of local government. The strategies he may use all involve changes in one or more of these relationships.

Two of the most important innovations that have taken place in retailing involve the development of methods which allow small shopkeepers to obtain better terms from their suppliers. These innovations in wholesaling are; voluntary group wholesaling and cash and carry wholesaling.

Voluntary group wholesaling is an attempt to introduce the benefits of central buying to the independent sector, thereby enabling the small retailer to compete successfully with his bigger counterpart. Instead of the wholesaler acting as an individual company purchasing independently from the manufacturer/producer, the voluntary group purchases stock on behalf of its members, thus enabling large volumes of produce to be bought on terms similar to multiples (14). For its success, group wholesaling relies on the group retailers purchasing a weekly minimum order from the whole-sale member. It is here that the main failing of the system is located.

Whereas the large multiple operation consists of a relatively small number of large self service stores, the voluntary group has as its members a comparatively large number of retailers. Kirby (1974) provides research findings that show the time taken to assemble a single order of 500 packs is approximately 31 per. cent. less than the time taken to assemble five separate orders of 100 packs. Similarly unloading is 42 per. cent. quicker. Therefore with

(14) A multiple being arbitrarily defined in the Census as 'a branch of an organisation with four or more separate branches in New Zealand under common controlling ownership'. For example, Woolworths and Hallensteins.

labour costs accounting for almost 50 per. cent. of bulk warehouse and transport operations, group wholesalers are being forced to evaluate the profitability of servicing the small order. A marked tendency of group wholesaling has been, therefore, the tendency for wholesalers to raise the level of the minimum weekly order, to impose a sliding scale of charges that favour the larger retailer, and to follow an active policy of acquiring new, purpose built, self service stores. This has meant that many small independents have had increasing difficulty finding a wholesaler willing to supply their requirements.

By contrast, cash-and-carry is a form of wholesaling that excludes the traditional wholesaler operations of order, process and delivery. It is based on the principle that by selecting, collecting and paying cash for goods, the retailer enables the wholesaler to reduce costs (on assembly, delivery, sales representation and credit financing) and therefore charge competitive prices. For its success, cash-and-carry requires that the retailer does not cost into his prices a charge for his own involvement and the use of his vehicle.

Both the above schemes require retailer/wholesaler cooperation, and both can be regarded as improving the efficiency of the distributive system. Currently the small trader is heavily reliant on the inefficient system of sales representation as a way of ordering goods and having them delivered. Cash-and-carry produces a reduction in this type of service and also allows retailers who do not wish

to join voluntary buying groups to still have access to cheap goods. By contrast, group wholesaling coordinates the buying of a number of independent wholesalers and is intended to concentrate on the more progressive and profitable of the independent retail units. In theory, therefore, these two forms of wholesaling are complementary rather than competitive. However, this is not the case, especially among members of buying chains. Here there is the ever present temptation to enlarge stocks or take advantage of a cheap line not offered by the group. To the extent that some group members do buy outside the chain they weaken the group.

Another strategy which could be adopted by the small trader is the notion of self service techniques which allows for a reduction in labour associated costs. Between 1958 to 1968 the number of self service units in the grocery sector increased from 1,055 to 2,129. During this period the stores with self service units almost doubled their share of the total turnover (Christie, 1973). However, the self service idea has a number of drawbacks for the small trader. It strikes at what he is likely to perceive as his major market attraction; personal service. It is perhaps for this reason the small retailer has shown a marked reluctance to adopt the self service system.

The characteristic of solidarity has seldom been associated with the shopkeeper stratum. Bechhofer et. al. (1974) provide a quote from the Scottish Secretary of the Union of Small Shopkeepers who says; 'Shopkeepers are the most individual-minded people'. This characteristic of

independence has undermined attempts to develop collective power through association. The small food retailer can belong to either his local Retailer's Association or the Master Grocer's Association. But, in the words of one Retailer's Association representative, there is little that can be done without full support from shopkeepers, and this is not always forthcoming. At present both the Associations provide supportive services for shopkeepers in the form of updating price lists, handling enquiries about staff, giving notice of customers who are bad risks and other general help. They do little to advance the shopkeeper's position.

A last feature of efforts to preserve the small shop, especially in New Zealand, is the legislation limiting the sale of goods to certain hours (15). The rationale behind the limiting of shopping hours, in terms of helping the small shop, is that it allows the shopkeeper to trade for five days and then close his doors knowing that his lines are not being sold elsewhere. In the highly competitive area of food retailing the Dairy-Grocery is kept open during the weekends and evenings selling many items illegally, because a profit cannot be made in this type of store during the

(15) See Shops and Offices Act (1955).

week. The Dairy-Grocery may in fact be causing problems for himself by proving that food sales can be made in the weekend as this provides evidence for the larger shops who wish to have extended shopping hours. As long as the restricted hours exist small shops are safe from competition with the larger stores. If current pressure on legislation comes to fruition this protection will be gone.

Why Preserve the Small Shop?

Anyone who has lived in a town or city knows something about small shopkeepers. A day does not pass without some interaction between the shopkeeper and his customers. At the very least the daily trip to the corner store reminds the customer of the existence of small shopkeepers. Their lives, as components of a distributive network, are unavoidably bound together. When such a fundamental social relationship comes under threat of change there is cause to ask if change should take place.

In this final section of Chapter I reasons for the preservation of the small shop, which has been shown to be in a precarious position, will be considered. This being done because it would appear that New Zealand will indeed follow overseas trends and the small shop in this country will confront the issue of survival. For many observers the transition from old to new methods of retailing may seem necessary and desirable. The closing of many small shops being interpreted as a reasonable price to pay for 'progress'.

But his assumption should be examined as it is possible that the small shop fills a unique place in society and its disappearance would therefore cause problems. In line with the approach taken in the research the arguments presented here for preserving the small shop are predominantly sociological.

In a capitalist society, small business is the symbol of opportunity (Mayer, 1953). Writing on the symbolic nature of small business, one group of researchers have stated:

Perhaps most important of all, the survival of the petit bourgeois stratum has symbolic value. The biographies of small businessmen may seem to affirm the openness of the social system, to demonstrate that individual mobility is possible, to exemplify success. For they seem to have acquired two things which lie at the heart of a capitalist system; property and autonomy (Bechhofer et.al. 1974:480).

It is the opportunity which a small business gives individuals to gain property and autonomy which makes it so important. By owning a small business individuals can test the reality of the capitalist promise which is embodied in the Horatio Alger stories of success (16). Without a flourishing small business stratum it is difficult to imagine a capitalist society, which is after all founded on the principles of personal control over wealth and self.

Western society, although it is ostensibly capitalist, is increasingly characterised by welfarism and employees (Drucker, 1953). These features run counter to the premise

(16) The titles of Alger's novels are indicative of the struggle for success of their heroes: Facing the World, The Odds Against Them, Strive and Succeed, Risen From the Ranks, Struggling Upward, Bound to Rise, Helping Himself and Do and Dare.

of capitalism. Whether welfarism or capitalism will become a dominant philosophy is for present purposes beside the point. What is relevant is that alternatives should exist for those who may not wish to conform to norms concerning work. The retention of small businesses would seem to provide the means for those who value capitalism to have their own way of life. It is clear that a demand for such values exists. In numerous articles workers have been shown to perceive the small business as the means by which they can attain independence and wealth (Goldthorpe, 1968; MacKenzie, 1973; Chinoy, 1955; Inkson, 1977). The point is also made by the continuation of recruitment of people into small businesses despite the high rate of bankruptcy and the obvious pressures they must deal with while owning the business (Christie, 1973).

From the consumers point of view, the small shop can be seen to offer direct rewards which may, in the future, be recognised as highly desirable. There will always be a section of the community who are unable to travel to centralised stores and/or unable to pay cash for goods (17). Further, for those households without adequate storage space in the home, the appropriate food storage equipment, or the ability to plan needs and food requirements in advance, the

(17) See A. Bruce 'Facilities Required Near Home' Built Environment Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1974) pp 290-291.

local shop acts as a form of domestic food storage; the housewife buys what she needs as and when she needs it without suffering the risk of being out of goods at undesirable times. Moreover, the local store, particularly in rural areas, is often the focus of community life, fulfilling a social as well as an economic role; the shop acting as a point of contact and the shopkeeper as transmitter of information, confidant and social therapist. As a point of interaction the small shop cannot be over emphasised. The suburbs which have been developed in recent years without local stores provide fewer opportunities for people to become familiar with each other and with their own surroundings.

A final argument for preserving the small shop can be made with reference to the kind of social environment which will be thought desirable in the future. Taken from the consumers point of view there is a benefit in keeping small shops as an alternative to large stores. The small shop is now a vital link in the retailing heirarchy which begins with the small neighbourhood store and finishes with the hypermarket. If the excesses of the large store, with its impersonal, people processing approach to the sale of goods, are to be contained it may be imperative to retain the small shop. If retailing can offer a variety of settings for the purchase of goods the consumer will have a choice of shopping styles as well as products (18).

(18) I am grateful for this observation to Mr. Alistair Aburn of the Wellington Regional Planning Authority.

It is perplexing that as writers discuss and people experience the problems of impersonality, anonymity, lack of involvement and isolation which often characterise contemporary life so little is done to prevent the situation getting worse. A method of prevention may be to retain the means by which people can have personal contact. The small shop, acting as a cross roads for community members seems an ideal means to this end. In manufacturing there are currently a number of attempts being made to regain the state of smallness. Huge organisations are reorganising to provide employees with the feeling of working for and within a small personalised team. The positive outcomes are said to be many (19). The lesson learnt in manufacturing, that size can be dysfunctional for people, may soon have to be applied to retailing where growth in the size of retail outlets has become a dominant goal.

It is fair to say that retailing, to a greater extent than most other types of economic activity and in particular than manufacturing, affects and is affected by the society in which it takes place. Few people see inside a factory or a mine; everyone goes into shops (McClelland, 1964:38).

(19) For a useful discussion of these matters in industry see P. Blumberg Industrial Democracy London: Constable (1968).

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Telling how the study was done has become something of a tradition rather than a scientific necessity among qualitative researchers in sociology (1). While this tradition has in no way demeaned those involved, it has perpetuated the belief that qualitative research is the route to 'soft data' and that the methodology of qualitative researchers is correspondingly hazy. This is an unfortunate situation because it is apt to make the novice researcher wary of straying from the mainstream of quantitative research.

In recent years a number of attempts have been made to place the qualitative approach on a more substantial foundation by developing a suitable theoretical framework and by establishing a set of standardised research techniques (2). The present chapter seeks to contribute to this

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- (1) See, for example, E. Leibow Tally's Corner Boston: Little Brown (1968) pp 232-256 and W.F. Whyte Street Corner Society: The Structure of an Italian Slum Chicago: University of Chicago (1955).
- (2) See, for example, B. Glaser and A. Strauss The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research Chicago: Aldine (1967); S.T. Bruyn The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: (Prentice-Hall 1966); J. Lofland Analysing Social Settings California: Wasdworth (1971).

more rigorous approach to qualitative research by reporting extensively on how this study was done. The account of the research process covers many of the issues Lofland (1974: 131-132) has suggested qualitative researchers should address themselves to. Hopefully the chapter will encourage other qualitative researchers to report their activities in the field more fully than is currently the practice(3).

Statement of the Problem

The plight of the small shop in an environment which increasingly favours big business has become a major concern in many countries where the decline in small shop numbers is considered as much of a threat to the consumers' well-being as to the wellbeing of those who depend on the shops for a living (4). The chronic lack of knowledge, which is widespread among social sciences, has to date slowed attempts to ease the impact of the environment on the small shop. For example, one observer has suggested that 'Retailing, despite its importance, is not an intellectually respectable subject

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- (3) This is not to say the reporting of personal experiences in the field is irrelevant. However, it is important that researchers couch their experiences in a more standard and rigorous framework.
 - (4) Although the sample upon which the research is based is a New Zealand one, the small shopkeepers' position is not fundamentally different in other modern industrialised nations. Thus, much of what is said has relevance to Europe and the United States.

in economics" (Christie, 1974:3). Sociologists also know little of the small shopkeepers' situation and have completed only a handful of studies relevant to retailing problems (5).

The present study is justified initially by the lack of sociological knowledge about the small shop. Retailing not only involves many people directly and indirectly in its operation, but it also is within the experience of every member of society who at one time or another will fill the role of customer (6). It would seem reasonable that sociologists should become familiar with such a significant area of activity.

A second justification arises out of the need to come to grips with the problems of small shopkeepers. A sociological contribution to this goal may be to establish a theoretical conceptualisation of the position of the small shop and its owners in society. This would serve as a referrent for more specific efforts to isolate the problems of the small shopkeeper. The sociological theory that exists

(5) For a review of what little there is available see G. Ritzner Man and his Work New York: Meridith Corporation (1971).

(6) Official statistics do not give the number of people employed in small shops. But working from a definition of a small shop as one with a turnover of under \$100,000 per annum it was estimated that the number may be as high as 70,000. Taking dependent families into account, this makes the small shop of significant concern to many people.

has been grounded in the idea of economic marginality (Hall, 1969). The present study starts from the premise that such a view is undesirably narrow and if used as the basis for efforts to aid small shopkeepers it would be inadequate.

The sociological neglect of the small shop has been outlined above and in the previous chapter. Because so little material exists the present study was conceived of as explanatory. As Margaret Stacey (1969:6) observes in Methods of Social Science:

Hypotheses which are worth testing can only be developed in areas about which a good deal is known, i.e. where a great deal of empirical field data has already been collected. Before this stage most research is of an exploratory nature... It is only after much empirical data has been collected and a series of simple relationships, close to reality, have been established, that either precise hypotheses can be enunciated for testing or theory derived inductively from empirical data.

The primary aim of this research is descriptive: to give some account of the experiences of a sample of small shopkeepers in the context of their work. A secondary aim is theoretical: to examine how the experiences in question can best be collated as a theory which may explain the position of small shops and shopkeepers in society.

Rationale for Sample Selection

The main aim in obtaining the sample was to select strategic cases for study. That is those cases which would reveal most theoretically about the problem were sought.

For this reason (and for the secondary reason that a small sample was thought desirable) several approaches were eliminated. The most obvious approach to have taken would have been to have selected a wide range of small shops and to have obtained a continuum of store types. This would have meant the inclusion of greengrocers, jewellers, butchers, booksellers as well as dairy-grocers. This approach is valuable in certain circumstances (7), but in the present study it was thought the opposite approach would be more useful because certain problems can be seen more clearly if the focus is mainly on one clear-cut group, rather than a continuum. The decision was made to focus on the dairy-grocery where, in New Zealand, the problems of the small shop are most obvious. The dairy-grocery is strategic in that it is of the category, small shop, and it highlights the difficulties other store types in New Zealand are only partially acquainted with. Thus while the dairy-grocery may to some degree be atypical of the small shop, it is often more useful to look at the atypical case because it is where certain features of the problem are highlighted.

The case study approach has a number of positive features. Becker (1970) locates the geneology of the case method among medical and psychological sciences. Here the

(7) See M. Newcomer 'The Little Businessman: A Study of business proprietors in Poughkeepsie New York' Business History Review Vol. 35, No. 4, (1961) pp. 477-539.

method rests on the assumption that "one can properly acquire knowledge of the phenomenon from intense study of a single case" (Becker, 1970:75). Adapted from the medical tradition, the case study method has become one of the basic methods of the social sciences (8).

Becker (1970:76) describes the case study as having a double purpose.

On the one hand, it attempts to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study: who are its members? what are their stable and recurring modes of activity and interaction? how are they related to one another and how is the group related to the rest of the world? At the same time, the case study also attempts to develop more general theoretical statements about regularities in social structures and social processes.

This type of research has been labelled 'holistic' by Weiss (1968) and seemed ideal for present research objectives: a descriptive study leading to a tentative theoretical explanation.

The present aim of selecting strategic cases for investigation has much in common with Glaser and Strauss' (1967) strategy of "theoretical sampling". In other words the aim is not to present the population at large, but to choose a sample on the basis of learning something about certain theoretical categories (9).

(8) The method has been used to produce such major works as Herbert Gans' Urban Villagers New York: Free Press (1962); Erving Goffmans Asylums Chicago: Aldine (1961).

(9) "Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties, and to suggest the interrelationships into theory". Glaser and Strauss op. cit. p. 62.

Location of the Dairy-Grocery For the Study

The sample consisted of 24 couples who owned and operated a dairy-grocery in the Palmerston North city area. For the purposes of the investigation the dairy-grocery* was defined in the descriptive terms used by Mercer (1969: 1) (10).

The dairy-grocery is the predominant form of the 'corner store' in the city today. Initially the two functions of the dairy-grocery, that of selling dairy products and that of selling groceries, were carried out in separate premises. Evidence of this can be readily seen in central areas of the city. However, as shopping habits have changed.... these two functions have been combined under one roof. Today the dairy-grocery plays a supplementary role to the supermarket by supplying foodstuffs over extended hours in close proximity to many homes.

While the above definition proved adequate for the task of locating dairies, two other criteria were added to the definition to ensure the sample consisted of small shops. First, the dairy had to be the major source of income for the family involved. Many dairies have reached the stage where they can no longer financially support a family. Mercer notes that these dairies are often run as a hobby, or to augment another income. Since most other store types can be operated as a major source of income it was thought

* Hereinafter labelled dairy.

(10) J. Mercer Palmerston North: A survey of dairy-groceries 1969 Town Planning Section, Report No. 16 (1970). The aim of the report was to provide information which would be helpful in the planning of future locations of dairies.

best to confine the present sample to shops of the same level of profitability. In practice this turned out to include those dairies operated by couples. A second criteria was that the dairy should not employ more than three full-time or six part-time paid workers. In New Zealand, 68.4 per. cent. of all retail businesses are of this size.

The location of dairies for the study went through two phases. An exhaustive list of all dairies in the Palmerston North area was obtained through the research conducted by Mercer (1969) in Palmerston North. At the time of Mercer's study there were 78 dairies in the area. A preliminary check showed that since 1969 11 dairies had closed and two had outgrown the definition of dairy to become five-day-a-week 'mini-markets'. This left a total of 65 dairies for the sample. It was decided at the outset to avoid using official help in locating the shops for study (11). This was done because it was thought the independently minded shopkeepers would respond better to a personal approach from the researcher.

The first phase of locating dairy owners for the study involved the use of a letter on Massey University stationary, signed by the researcher (who at the time held the position of Junior Lecturer in Business Administration at Massey) and the Professor of the Sociology Department. The letter was designed to give the study an air of importance and credi-

(11) The Master Grocer's Association or the Retailer's Association could have been approached.

bility (12). Five letters were sent to an initial group of dairies. Follow-up calls managed to recruit the owners of four of the five dairies into the study. The one that refused did so because he was alone in the shop and his wife had just left him. Such early successes with the letter encouraged its further use. However, a second mailing of six letters provided only one more dairy and a third mailing provided no further dairies. This occurred despite the persistence of the researcher. It was time to withdraw from the field and rethink strategies.

At this point it was clear that people who operated dairies on their own were reluctant to give an interview because of the time they would have to spend out of the shop. It seemed wise, therefore, to concentrate efforts on couples who ran dairies. It was also decided to drop the letter as it seemed merely to be allowing people time to prepare a reason for not joining the study.

The second phase of locating respondents relied on the researcher's ability to talk people into joining the study. This method had one distinct advantage over the letter method. If the people seemed unwilling to participate the researcher was able to tell them to think about it and return again with the hope of getting their support. This approach caused the researcher to contact and discuss the

(12) See Appendix A for a copy of the letter.

research with the owners of 58 dairies while building up the final sample of 24 (13).

In all cases when the researcher was refused an interview the refusal arose from one of two factors. The first was time. Dairy owners see themselves as very busy and that time spent on such activities as an interview may cost them money. They therefore refused an interview to avoid wasting their time.

The second reason was the dairy owners' request for a quid pro quo that the researcher could not provide. Since the study was exploratory it could not have immediate application to the owners' problems. For this reason many people claimed the study was pointless and refused an interview.

The period of gathering a research sample was characterised by numerous difficulties and by equally numerous breaks while the researcher reviewed his strategy. A way around many of the problems may have been to use an official association to recruit the shop owners. It would also seem necessary to be prepared to offer the shopkeepers some tangible return for their effort.

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- (13) The possibility that this approach to sampling may have 'skewed' the findings must be acknowledged. In reviewing this possibility the researcher concluded that the only likely distortion could arise from the lack of individuals operating a dairy in the sample.

Justification for the Small Sample

A sample of 24 dairies (48 respondents) is undoubtedly on the small side, especially since most sociological studies using empirical data obtain it from larger samples than this. What kind of universe does this small sample represent? Are generalisations from the sample population warranted? These questions are predictable reactions to research based on 'only' 24 interviews. It has already been stated that the sample is illustrative of a wider range of shops. Since the general relevance and acceptability of the findings presented in the rest of the report depend on the methodological status of the sampling and data gathering techniques used it is necessary to justify the small sample.

One important justification for a small sample is that it allows the researcher to study his subject in depth. For example, official statistics of the type presented in Chapter I may provide evidence of the decline in small shops but close contact with shopkeepers themselves is necessary if the realities of their position are to be appreciated. The use of a small sample allows a researcher to spend more time with each respondent and therefore gain a greater understanding of them.

It was also thought that unstructured interviews would allow the researcher to pursue data in a way which did not close off areas of discussion. This approach seemed valuable in an exploratory study. If the researcher

had adopted structured methods of data gathering, there would have been less chance of the respondents providing insights on issues the questionnaire was not designed to probe. It is this exploratory approach to data which is best attained by the use of a small sample.

Lofland (1974) suggest that the unstructured in-depth style of interviewing provides the researcher with data management problems. The large quantity of data generated by interviews and through observations tends to limit the possible sample numbers to about '20 to 50' respondents (14).

Aside from the need for compatibility between sample size and research techniques, there are two arguments which support the use of a small sample, one by Weiss (1968) and one by Roth (1966). Weiss is concerned with alternative ways to study complex situations in which as many of the variables as possible are studied simultaneously. The researcher, after appreciating the complexity of such a situation, must search for some simplification in order to understand it. Attempts to simplify the situation may proceed, Weiss argues, in either of two directions: analytic or holistic. A researcher using the analytic approach would see his task as isolating the elements from each other and identifying a small number of relationships. He might, for

(14) See, for example, R. Gold 'In the Basement: The Apartment Building Janitor' in P. Berger (ed) The Human Shape of Work: New York: MacMillan (1964) pp. 1-49; D. Cressey Other People's Money: A Study in the social-psychology of embezzlement New York: John Wiley (1959).

example, focus on particular independent-dependent relationships. In contrast, the researcher using the holistic approach will try to identify the nature of the system of interrelated parts. The question he asks is, "Taken as a whole, how does this thing work?" Weiss (1968:199) makes the following comparison:

What goes on in the mind of a researcher who, whenever he is asked to study a complex situation, thinks of survey research? He probably assumes that the task of research is to discover consistent relationships between elements, that consistency can be demonstrated only within a large sample, that relationships can be established and evaluated only with reliable measures. The result is a survey. A holistic assumption, on the other hand, that the aim of research is to discover the organisation of elements, would lead to different emphases and consequently to different research designs.

Indeed, holistic assessment requires collection of data on a great range of issues. "Only in this way can the investigator be assured that the data have within them a report of the functioning of each of the system's elements. This.... leads to the case study or small sample study as preferred research designs" (Weiss, 1968: 345). One reason it would be hard to do holistic research through survey techniques is that the investigator would have to have a very good understanding of the system before he began to write the survey schedule. If the system is already well understood, the question arises as to whether the research is worthwhile.

Holistic research aims not to test a set of hypotheses but to discover patterning or system in that which is being studied. Perhaps for this reason holistic research is

is frequently labelled exploratory and preliminary to a more hypotheses testing approach. Weiss, however, maintains that in actual practice this rarely turns out to be the case. He maintains that either approach may support the other.

If holistic research is not to be followed by "definitive research", then it become especially important to raise the issue of generalizability. Weiss asks whether findings of holistic research can be generalised beyond the few cases involved. Obviously there is no appropriate statistical argument. Yet in actual practice holistic research is used as the basis for generalizations. Weiss (1968: 350) suggests two possible arguments.

One argument for generalizing from a single case is that the system discovered is a necessary consequence of the environmental pressures under which the case functions....

Another, somewhat different, argument for generalizing is that the essential characteristics of the situation itself require a particular system. Here it is not the surround of the unit under study, but the unit itself, its aims and character, which establishes a certain system.

Much of the present report focuses on what happened to specific people included in the study - with no claim to hypotheses testing. But insofar as it was thought desirable to generalize from the sample, it has been done on the basis of Weiss' first argument; namely, that the organisation of these shopkeepers lives is the consequence of the same environmental pressures which surround the lives of other shopkeepers.

Roth (1966) also presents a very persuasive argument which can be used to support a small sample study.

Writing along a very different line of thought to Weiss, Roth justifies small sample research in terms of hired hand research and its associated dangers. Roth likens hired hand research workers to the hired hand (e.g. machine shop operator) in a production organisation. So far research on "restriction of production" and deviation from assigned duties has been done only on blue collar groups. But there is no reason to believe a hired hand in scientific research will behave any differently to other hired hands. Roth discusses the effect of the hired hand mentality on the product, and then states:

More important, however, I believe the need for hired hands has been greatly exaggerated. Why for example, must we so often have large samples? The large sample is frequently a contrivance for controlling various kinds of "errors" (including the error introduced by hired hands). But if the study were done on a much smaller sample by one person or several colleagues who formulated their own study and conducted it entirely themselves, much of this error would not enter in the first place. Isn't a sample of fifty which yields data in which we can have a high degree of confidence more useful than a sample of five thousand where we must remain doubtful about what it is that we have collected. (Roth, 1966:195).

Methods of Data Collection

Data was gathered primarily by means of unstructured interviews. In other words the accent was on flexibility. An interview guide of general topics was used rather than a rigid questionnaire schedule (15). The interviews were

(15) See Appendix B for the Questionnaire.

standardised only in the sense that there was a given list of topics discussed with each person. The interviews were primarily "non-schedule standardised" to use the terminology of the classification system of Richardson, Dohrenwend and Klein (1965) which differentiates between "schedule standardised", "non-schedule standardised" and "non-standardised interviews".

Instead of using a schedule of questions, the non-schedule standardised interviewer works with a list of information required from each respondent.... For each respondent the interviewer formulates questions to get at the same meaning.... The schedule standardised interviewer ask the same questions of each respondent and hopes this will have the same meaning, whereas the non-schedule interviewer formulates the classes of information he is seeking and hopes he can formulate the questions in such a way that they will have the same meaning for each respondent (Richardson, Dohrenwend and Klein, (1965: 45).

The wording of questions and the sequence of questions varied from person to person. In many cases the respondents spontaneously brought up topics which were not on the list, e.g. the wife's role in the business. Whenever this occurred the interviewer sought to capitalise on this initiative by guiding the interview toward an approximation of conversation. The potency of the unstructured style of interviewing is, as Stebbins (1974) notes, its conversational nature. Stebbins likens the nonschedule interview (he calls it unstructured) to an interpersonal relationship and argues it is the best method for exploring subjective states. By likening the nonscheduled interview to a conversation, Stebbins invests both with the same qualities.

It is posited that unless the interviewer and the respondent are sufficiently attracted to each other to permit further interaction the interview does not take place... There is reason to believe that the modern interviewer is, for many people, an aopen person, and that the unstructured interview has characteristics of a pleasant sociable conversation... Awareness by the two that they are being scrutinized by one another pulls them into an interchange.... It was observed that interaction between interviewer and respondent grows increasingly more intimate.... (Stebbins, 1974: 176).

These procedures are in keeping with the assumptions which underlie nonschedule standardized interviews and which include the following ideas: 1) If meaning of questions is to be standardised then there must be latitude to adapt the wording; 2) There is no fixed sequence of questions which can be satisfactory to all respondents - the most effective sequence is determined by the way the respondent takes up the topics. These assumptions are, of course, contrary to those underlying schedule standardised interviews where it is believed that the stimulus for each respondent should be identical. That to be an identical stimulus the question must be worded identically each time it is presented; and that since previous parts of the interviews are part of the stimulus context, the sequence of questions must be identical. As Richardson, Dohrenwend and Klein note, both schedule and nonschedule forms of interviewing rest on assumptions which are largely untested.

Other portions of the interview collected: 1) non-standardised information; and 2) schedule standardised information. Nonstandardised information was gathered from any respondent as long as it seemed relevant to the overall

research concerns. In a number of interviews information of this type was gathered as respondents provided idiosyncratic experiences which seemed pertinent to the study. Information of this kind was typically gathered from dairy owners not included in the formal sample and from a number of interested parties who commented on the research issues. It was noted earlier that many owners other than those in the sample were spoken to. On such occasions the researcher let the discretion of the interviewee determine the course of the discussion. In this way the researcher was provided with a method for gauging the salience of issues as well as gathering a great deal of spontaneous data.

Gathering data from interested bystanders was a method which did not suggest itself to the researcher until about half way through the study. The method began to be used when it became clear that dairies were of interest to a number of people and when they heard the topic of research they volunteered observations. This data was not taken at face value, but it did provide a number of interesting leads to follow up. It is worth noting that a number of people were interested in the dairy because the family who occupied it were thought to have such an atypical life style. Because so many people stated that they could not understand how the dairy owners could tolerate life in a dairy, questions were included in the interviews asking owners to justify their situation. Other people were interested in the dairy because of the close relationship they had, or wished they had, with their local dairy. These claims led to an investigation of

the value of the dairy to a community. In all cases, where the nonstandardised information was collected, attempts were made to write up the data immediately after conversation ended.

In the early period of the research schedule standardised data was gathered prior to the nonscheduled interview (16). However, this practice was stopped as the questionnaire included items on politics, education, opinions and other personal data, and tended to make people suspicious of the researcher's intentions. On two occasions interviews were lost because respondents did not like the questions. Thereafter the schedule standardised data was gathered after the interviewer could ensure the dairy owners cooperation.

The very flexible approach to interviewing was originally chosen as a strategy to get people to relax and talk more freely. But flexibility had other advantages. First of all, it allowed for the generation of new ideas during the study. These ideas were handled in one of two ways. When new ideas were uncovered early in the research they were included in the later interviews. The only difference was that early information was spontaneous while later research was more systematic. When new ideas were uncovered late in the interview stage, data could be obtained from only a few sources. In the report these ideas are discussed

(16) See Appendix C for the Questionnaire.

as suggestive leads and not stated as findings based on the entire sample.

A second analytical advantage of the flexible interview is that the researcher can observe the links people spontaneously establish between various topics. These links can be interesting finds in themselves. For example, the shopkeepers often mentioned the link between the child and the parents. To have the child as a good customer was to have the parent as well. This observation led the researcher to begin to build up a list of methods by which the shopkeepers tried to improve their situation through control over the customer.

The flexible interview has practical research advantages as well. When respondents are in situations where they can and will be disturbed, the ability to change topics and pick up new threads is valuable.

Two features of the interviewing are relevant for understanding the analysis. First of all, for many topics, information was gathered in direct response to a question and also whenever it came up. In analysis account was taken of both sources of data.

Secondly, throughout the interview an attempt was made to get respondents to support any general statement with concrete details. For example, when it was heard that a customer was 'lousy' the respondent was asked to specify in what way, e.g. was the customer rude, a bad credit risk or morally bad? If they said the term lousy meant the

customer's failure to respect the dairy owner's delicate social and economic position, they were asked to give a specific example of this. The emphasis on concrete detail helped diminish misunderstanding of what was said; made explicit what dimensions were important, and made it possible for the researcher to make independent judgements.

Before leaving the method from which the majority of data was gathered there are two other problems to deal with, those of validity and objectivity. When evaluating the performance of an interviewer it is usually assumed the information is valid and objective because of the objective orientation of the interviewer and the interview. Unfortunately when this criteria is applied to the unstructured interview it does not match the methodology. This leaves the interviewer wondering how he knows if the interviewee is telling the truth.

In answering this problem use is made here of a quote from Stebbins (1974: 173-174).

.....for the respondent, the interview situation is simply one of many settings in which his viewpoints, that are the object of study, are activated and expressed. How they are expressed depends primarily upon his definition of the situation. Since the interviewer (and his questions), no matter how concerned he is with objectivity and validity, have special meaning for the interviewee, the latter defines that setting differently from others in which these subjective states are relevant.

Ichheiser's distinction between interpretations "in principle" and interpretations "in fact" is germane here. Interpretations in principle refer to how we ought to think or act when hypothetically confronted by a certain class of situations. Interpretations in fact are those definitions that guide behaviour in an actual setting. Although frequently

frequently different, both are equally genuine from the respondent's standpoint.

Thus, besides the fact that the actor's definition of the situations involving a common subjective theme vary with who is in them (the interviewer or someone else), they also vary with respect to the actor's presence in, or absence from, the setting under consideration. Further, it is significant that a person's meanings are usually ambiguous and inconsistently expressed from setting to setting, a condition that encourages the situational variability of responses. But, although this occurs in everyday life, the interview is often an occasion for the subject to explore, clarify and give consistency to his feelings in a way he never has had reason to before.

Although the interview situation is more neutral than most for a respondent being questioned on the kind of topics typically covered in unstructured interviews, it is, nonetheless, still only one of the many settings in which his meanings are expressed. Therefore, to the extent that the quest for objectivity and validity focuses on "true" answers to the interviewer's questions, it is misguided since there is no such answer, but only situationally expressed responses. The best counsel then, for those studying personal meanings, is to drop this goal. For their purposes validity is increased, not by pursuing objectivity, but by pursuing subjectivity.

If the interviewer follows the advice of Stebbins, his task is to establish a relationship with the respondent which is as close to a personal relationship as is possible. In this way the interviewer tries to enter into a conversation with the respondent which brings them to examine as freely as possible, the subjective definitions of the respondent. This strategy serves the purpose of allowing the respondent to "explore, clarify and give consistency to his feelings" while the interviewer may use this intimacy to ensure he sees things from the other's point of view. To be sure this places a great deal of emphasis on the interviewer's ability to establish a satisfactory rapport with his respondent; however the task is not impossible.

While the researcher placed most faith in the research technique used to ensure validity, other back up strategies were adopted to maximise the validity of the findings. The first involved observation, the second involved an informant relationship.

Observations were carried out regularly at dairies near the home of the researcher. The dairy, in Goffman's (1963) terms, is a partially open place. That is, anyone can enter and be present for some time without making their purpose explicit. The researcher was able to gather many valuable observations while waiting for an evening paper, a bottle of milk or some other item.

The informant relationship was begun towards the end of the time in the field. However this did prove valuable as the relationship was carried on during the period of writing and enabled the researcher to check his thoughts with a couple who were involved with the social setting under study.

Having outlined the techniques used in this study, attention can now be focussed on how the interview was carried out. A major problem in carrying out the study was arranging times for interviews. Almost all the people interviewed perceived themselves as working to very tight schedules. Therefore finding time for a two hour interview was usually difficult. The interviewer had to place himself at the disposal of the respondents. The time (weekend, night or day) and the place (their residence or the interviewers)

were at their convenience. It was partly for this reason that so much time was spent, although not wasted in getting interviews. The study was spread over four months from August 13th to December 21st 1976. Part of this time may be explained by the need to return again and yet again for interviews that a respondent had forgotten or did not have time for on the day. To the novice qualitative researcher this type of frustration combined with the feeling that nothing will emerge from the many hours of conversation, is threatening. There was however, one value in all the time spent going to and from dairies. It enabled the researcher to spend more time in and around dairies than would otherwise have been possible.

The actual interviews involved the husbands and wives on all but one occasion. On this occasion the wife politely made it known she was not interested. The interviews ranged in length from $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to 1 hour with an average of $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours. To this interview time may be added at least two brief conversations held with the respondents. These occurred when the researcher first made contact and in the case of the latter nineteen dairies contacted, when the structured questionnaires were picked up from the respondents. The initial contact often provided valuable insights into what the people thought was important about the study while the later contact provided an opportunity to raise issues not dealt with adequately in the interview.

For the first four interviews the data was gathered

by taking notes. This practice was abandoned in favour of a taperecorder as it proved impossible to capture all of the nuances of the conversations. Of the thirty-nine people asked about the use of the taperecorder, thirty-eight agreed immediately and the one remaining (interviewed without his wife) did so after being assured of complete confidentiality. This ready acceptance of the taperecorder was a positive sign. After all, none of the respondents could be said to be used to speaking in the presence of a taperecorder. Thus their acceptance suggests few sample groups, talking on general issues, are likely to refuse the interviewer a taperecorder. It was noted however, that after the tape was turned off at the end of the interview people took the opportunity to say things which they thought particularly sensitive. This was usually direct criticism of customers. Here, once again, notes were taken.

One last method used for gathering data must be mentioned. This involved a number of unstructured interviews with people who knew something about the dairy-grocers' situation. The interviewer met with the representative of the local Retailer's Association and discussed the current difficulties of the dairy. Also contacted was Alistair Aburn of the Wellington Regional Planning Authority who has conducted research in the area of retailing and is interested in the situation of small shops. Finally, two informal interviews were set up with two couples who have recently sold their dairies. These people provided valuable leads on the feelings of the dairy owner about his position

as they had thought a great deal about their experiences in the dairy since leaving. It is indeed true to say that the time a family spends in a dairy remains significant to them.

Writing up the Data

When the researcher left the field after each interview or observation there was a need to transfer the raw data into some form suitable for analysis. Data was written up as soon as possible after the researcher left the field, in a form which allowed some initial analysis and initial sorting out to take place. The aim was to store data in a manner conducive to retrieval for extensive analysis at a later date. To write up the data a method suggested by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) was used. This method, which is outlined below, had the twin merits of structuring the data and establishing lines of analysis (17).

Strategy for recording data.

- ON: Observational notes - statements which form a mundane record of all the events which occur in the field. No analysis just a direct record.
- TN: Theoretical notes - attempts to derive meaning from what has been observed. Here the researcher says what he thinks is going on in the form of interpretation, theory, inference and hypotheses.
- MN: Methodological note - statement which reflects research acts either completed or to be undertaken.
- OC: Observers comments - statements about the researcher are made in this category allowing later analysis of research behaviour.

(17) See Appendix D for an example of the field notes.

With a record of this type as a base, the researcher was able to begin a more extensive form of analysis.

Analysis of Data

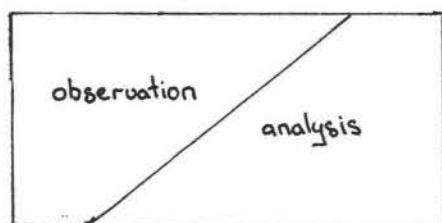
Analysis of data is the area of research that is most often overlooked by qualitative researchers when writing their reports. This is perhaps because qualitative research can be a chaotic process, unlike the more controlled approach of quantitative research. For this reason the qualitative researcher may not tell how his analysis was undertaken to avoid criticism. The analysis of data derived from qualitative methods may be different from the techniques used in analysing quantitative data, but it is no less rigorous. The qualitative report should be a balance of descriptive material and interpretative analysis. To achieve this parsimonious outcome, the researcher is committed to a task of carefully sifting his data into categories of events which allow him to understand the social setting he is studying. This is not a simple task.

The qualitative researcher enters the research process with only a general problem in mind. In doing this he is at odds with conventional research wisdom as Schatzman and Strauss (1973: 3) point out.

Conventional wisdom suggests that researcher prepare a relatively articulated problem in advance of his inquiry. This implies that he would not, or could not, begin his inquiry without a problem. Yet, the field method process of discovery may lead him to a problem after it has led him through much of the

substance of his field. Problem statements are not a prerequisite of field research; they may emerge at any point in the research process, even towards the very end.

It is because the qualitative researcher does not have a complete picture of his research problem that analysis must begin early in the study and be a continual process. Lofland (1974) suggest the researcher begin analysis as soon as he is in the field and gradually replace observation with analysis as the study draws to a close. This process would appear figuratively as below.



The analysis undertaken by this researcher was guided by methods suggested by Lofland (1974).

As noted the basic form of analysis took place soon after the data was collected. However a number of other files had to be established to enable a higher level of analysis. The first of these files involved a listing of what were called analytical ideas. An analytical idea consisted of a piece of information coupled with a theoretical note which was thought to illustrate a subject of interest to the researcher. These ideas were often generated by linking material drawn from the literature with that coming from the field. For example, the idea of 'coolness' in everyday life (Lyman and Scott, 1971), was discovered through reading and later linked to the growing body of

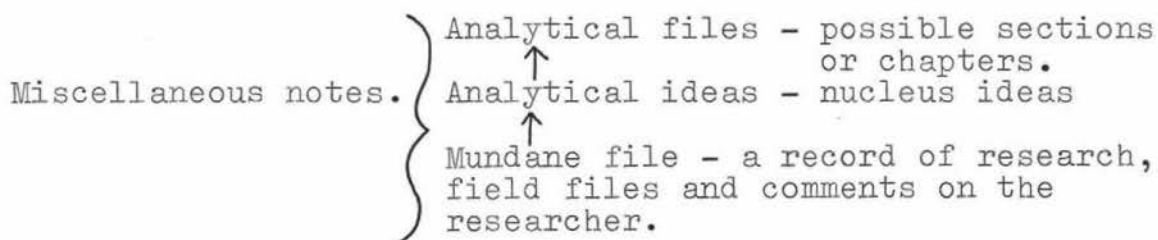
notes on the core role requirements of the dairy owner to remain calm under pressure from customers. These analytical ideas evolved into analytical memos as their importance became apparent through further investigation.

The analytical memos were made up of longer discussions of topics which had gathered enough 'moss' to become a focus of the research. The memos were written out with as much empirical and literature support as could be found, and then put aside. These notes were envisaged as becoming part of a chapter or even a full chapter in themselves. An example of this process can be given by reference once again to the 'coolness' idea. Coolness in dealing with customers became linked with other attempts by the dairy owners to present a suitable front to the customer in an effort to retain their custom and increase sales. A great deal of data was drawn from the field to illustrate the dairy owners efforts to control his situation. Likewise the literature supplied a number of concepts useful for interpreting what was going on. Goffman's (1959) ideas on the presentation of self were useful; Henslin (1968) provided ideas on trust; Mennerick (1974) supplied ideas on client typologies, and these concepts provided a background for the data. The field analytical memo which built up around the idea of controlling the customer formed the basis of Chapter VI.

These two forms of analysis provided the researcher with an "emergent coding scheme" which eventually placed some order on the raw data.

These files were an analytical activity which took place for the four months during which the research was under way. Also during this time a wide range of references were read and stored away. The field researcher does not know the final outcome of his research when he enters the field and is therefore committed to an ongoing reading programme which matches his current research focus. The uses of this practice are enormous. For example, this researcher became interested in developing an idea of institutional marginality to explain the social setting under study. Very little has been written on this form of marginality as sociologists have favoured the social-psychological concepts of Park (1925) and Stonequist (1947). However, during a library search (in Wellington) the researcher uncovered one of the only attempts to put institutional marginality into a theory. This was one of the turning points of the study. Constant reading enabled the researcher to put into words the many ideas which arose during discussions with respondents. It was found to be a good practice to always file literature which had even the most tenuous connection with the research topic as this material often found a later relevance.

At the end of the research period the data had been organised into a hierarchy as shown below.



At this point in the study the researcher withdrew from the field (December 21st, 1976) for, what Lofland calls, the period of quiet contemplation. One contact couple was retained in the field to enable the researcher to check his ideas with the real situation.

Lofland suggests that the period of contemplation is the most difficult time for a qualitative researcher. This was confirmed in the present research. There was a two month gap between termination of field research and the first attempt to commit something to paper.

The period of contemplation was spent trying to generate categories of information from the mass of data which was available. It was during this time that decisions had to be made about what should be the focus of the research and therefore what would not be included in the report. It is this sifting process which makes contemplation so difficult.

The end result of the contemplation period was a grand design for the report. The grand design consisted of a number of tentative chapter topics under which the rest of the study could be organised. The major task at this point was to retype the data gathered into small pieces of paper, one idea to one piece of paper, to allow the sequencing of chapters to take place. This process is also very time consuming.

Once the grand design took on an air of permanence, the final draft became a priority. It was intended that the report should be written in the style of the 'grand

sweeper' suggested by Lofland. This did not prove entirely successful. The grand sweeper is one who prepares well and then 'writes at a furious pace' (Lofland, 1974:129). In the present case the first draft was finished quickly but then came a prolonged period of reworking the text. It was found at this point that the grand design needed to be rearranged.

The writing of the final report is, for the qualitative researcher, the time when analysis and description must be balanced out. Time must be spent ensuring that the quotes included are the best available and that they provide the basis for meaningful analysis. This too was a time consuming process.

The Sample: A Profile

Though the aim of the study was to find out about the experiences of small shopkeepers in general, this was done by looking at the experiences of a group of dairy-grocers. Therefore it will be worthwhile to now establish a brief profile of the social characteristics of those persons involved in the study (18).

(18) Some of the issues presented here are also covered by Mercer (1969). The interested reader is urged to make comparisons between this data and that collected by Mercer.

As classified by age, the proprietors are as follows.

Table 1: Age of proprietors

| Age | <u>20- 24</u> | <u>25- 29</u> | <u>30- 34</u> | <u>35- 39</u> | <u>40- 44</u> | <u>45- 49</u> | <u>50- 54</u> | <u>55- 59</u> | <u>60- 64</u> | <u>65- 70</u> |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Husband | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| Wife | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 |

The table illustrates that a wide range of people involve themselves in dairies. The younger worker has the dairy as an early work experience, the middle aged person moves into the dairy after having already tried many other work situations and the older couple use the dairy as a last job.

It is interesting to note the time the proprietors had spent in the occupation at the time of interview, and their previous occupations. Table 2 shows a distribution toward the lower categories, with seventeen out of the twenty four couples having been in the dairy for less than four years. On this observation alone it would seem that the dairy cannot be considered a permanent occupation.

Table 2: Time in present occupation

| Years | <u>0-2</u> | <u>2-4</u> | <u>4-6</u> | <u>6-8</u> | <u>8-10</u> | <u>10-15</u> | <u>15-20</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Frequency | 10 | 7 | 4 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 24 |

The table showing the previous occupations of the owners is striking for its wide range. A number of researchers have reported the desire of blue collar workers to open a small shop (MacKenzie, 1973; Chinoy, 1955; Inkson, 1976) to the degree where it is now generally thought that such an aspiration is largely blue collar. This assumption is

not entirely supported by the table.

Table 3: Previous occupations

| Occup. Type | <u>Profes- sional</u> | <u>Armed Forces</u> | <u>Retail</u> | <u>Managers</u> | <u>Clerical</u> | |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Frequency | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | |
| Occup. Type | <u>Trav- eller</u> | <u>Agricul- ture</u> | <u>Manual</u> | <u>Trades- man</u> | <u>House- wife</u> | <u>Retired</u> |
| Frequency | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 2 |
| Occup. Type | <u>Proprietors</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | | | | |
| Frequency | 6 | 4 | | | | |

The high proportion of housewives in the sample can be explained by the presence of children. These women found it difficult to find employment which suited their family responsibilities.

Of the twenty four dairies in the sample only one had previously been owned by a relative of the owners in the sample. The dairy that had been owned by a relative was purchased without the relative discovering the identity of the buyer until the last moment (19). The explanation given for this clandestine arrangement was; "it would not be right to let family matters become mixed up in business we might end up owing each other something". Thus, the dairy does not appear to be part of an extended family network. Nor do dairy owners have strong ties with other

(19) The entire transaction was handled by a lawyer and an accountant.

owners. During the course of the study only two associations were uncovered. Most dairy owners expressed a strong desire to not be in contact with other owners. This discovery is consonant with the Bechhofer et. al. (1974) finding that the small shopkeeper's desire for independence precludes the establishment of ties with others of the same occupation. The consequence of this is that dairy owners lack any solidarity with which to confront the many problems they claim to assail them.

The owners of the dairies were, on the whole, recruited from areas in or near Palmerston North. This shows in the fact that 15 of the men and 16 of the women were born in the Palmerston North area. Three of the men and three of the women were born overseas. The balance of the sample came from other parts of New Zealand. All the owners in the study were of European descent. There is no evidence that the dairy, like the greengrocery, is dominated by one ethnic group.

It is interesting to note that all the men and all the women in the sample claimed to be in good health when answering the structured questionnaire. These claims were not reinforced during discussion where it was discovered that four of the men and three of the women were in poor health. One man was still recovering from a serious operation and was awaiting another. Other than demonstrating the need to be aware of the possibility that false answers will be given to structured questions, this finding supports

the impression gained by the researcher of his sample being composed of people who deplored weakness. Time and again respondents talked of the value of personal independence, hard work, doing things by ones self and never expecting support from others. The image of the self made man was often alluded to in discussions.

As might be expected in an occupation of this kind, the educational attainment of the respondents was not high. Small businesses have been shown by Stanworth and Curran (1973) to attract people whose lack of educational qualifications hinders their success in other types of employment.

Table 4: Educational qualifications

| Qualifications | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> | Vocational Training | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Academic | | | | | |
| <u>Proficiency</u> | 10 | 7 | | 7 | 6 |
| <u>Form IV</u> | 9 | 10 | | | |
| <u>School Cert.</u> | 4 | 7 | | | |
| <u>University E.</u> | 0 | 0 | | | |
| <u>University Units</u> | 1 | 0 | | | |
| <u>University Degree</u> | 0 | 0 | | | |

The lack of qualifications did not appear to be a source of concern for the shopkeepers. All felt reasonably sure that they could get a job elsewhere at any time if they wished. Some sought to prove their point by referring to job offers. Others saw themselves as always getting work because most people were "afraid of work" while they were hard and conscientious workers.

The entry into a small shop is thought to be associated with social mobility on the part of the new owners. As will be shown in later chapters the small dairy owner does not feel a rise in status. Deeks (1973) points out the small shopkeeper does not work for profit but for a return on labour, in the same manner as an employee. This condition increases the subjective feeling of owning an independent business and causes the owner to think of himself as an employee. Thus, while the census may place the shopkeeper in the same category as managers and officials, the dairy owner, at least, would not agree. Nor, in fact, would a more discriminating breakdown of occupations. The Elley and Irving (1976) revised socio-economic index for New Zealand gives the shopkeeper a rating of 4 on a six point scale (with 1 as the highest). At this rating the proprietor of a small shop is in the company of beekeepers, diesel mechanics, fishermen, gunsmiths, mail sorters and railway employees. In terms of the criteria used to rank occupations for the Elley and Irvine index, the shopkeeper seems to have advanced not at all. This situation was reflected in the answers given when owners were asked to place themselves in a social class.

Table 5: Social class

| <u>Class</u> | <u>Males</u> | <u>Females</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>Upper Class</u> | 0 | 0 |
| <u>Middle Class</u> | 4 | 6 |
| <u>Lower Middle Class</u> | 2 | 1 |

Table 5: Social class (continued)

| <u>Class</u> | <u>Males</u> | <u>Females</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>Lower Class</u> | 1 | 1 |
| <u>Working Class</u> | 7 | 7 |
| <u>Don't Know</u> | 4 | 4 |

NB. Six males and five females refused to answer this question.

Most respondents found it difficult to place themselves in a class. The reasons for this ranged from antipathy toward the idea of class distinction to a belief that there were no classes. The respondents, however, had no trouble identifying the variables which go to make up class. Thus, it became clear that the difficulty with the question lay in how to apply it to themselves. Discussion seemed to point to a confusion on the shopkeepers' part as to their place in society. Their personal ideology denied the importance of class, while their situation placed them in the 'bosses' group and the workers' group at the same time. This left them manifestly unsure.

In terms of the discussion of social mobility the occupation of parents becomes important. Once again difficulty was encountered in gathering data. However, the range of occupation supports the idea that shopkeepers have not moved significantly above their parents.

Table 6: Occupation of father (Husbands and wives).

Butcher, caretaker, labourer, flax cutter, fisherman, photographer, farmer, farm worker, taxi proprietor, miner, clerk, tradesman, policeman, driver, shop assistant, freezing worker.

Apart from the occupation of farmer, which was most often associated with the wife, these occupations rank similarly to that of shopkeeper on the Elley and Irvine index. The small shopkeeper is not a family success story. Data was also gathered on the occupations of the brothers and sisters which showed that few had risen beyond the point achieved by their fathers.

It was intended that data should be gathered on the aspirations the shopkeepers had for their children. This proved very difficult. The only preference that emerged was a preference for a well paid secure job. When pressed to explain their failure to state their occupational preferences for their children, the shopkeepers provided more evidence of their belief in the self made man. They stated categorically that the child's occupation was the child's business. Most believed that the child should make his or her own way in the world as they had done. Over half the sample were recorded as making it clear that the dairy was not intended as a device to provide funds for the betterment of their children. The dairy was for the betterment of the parents. As one dairy owner said "If I wanted to help the kids I wouldn't be here". This should not be interpreted

as meaning the shopkeepers do not want to see their children be successful. It seems that they just want to see the children make their own way.

Bechhofer et. al. (1971) demonstrate that across their sample the political affiliations of the shopkeeper was predominantly conservative. They also showed that the majority of voters remain solidly behind one party. This was not the pattern in the present sample. Results showed a slight favouring of the Labour Party and a tendency for a history of changing the vote, especially among men.

Table 7: Vote last election

| <u>Party</u> | <u>Males</u> | <u>Females</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>National</u> | 7 | 8 |
| <u>Labour</u> | 9 | 9 |
| <u>Social Credit</u> | 1 | 1 |
| <u>Values</u> | 1 | 1 |
| <u>No answer</u> | 5 | 4 |

The fact that many of the shopkeepers have not been in the occupation long (and may not stay long) may cause them to vote on previous loyalties. This explanation may underlie the distribution of votes shown in Table 7.

Table 8: Voted for another party

| <u>Vote</u> | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>Yes</u> | 12 | 5 |
| <u>No</u> | 7 | 15 |
| <u>No answer</u> | 5 | 4 |

In discussion of politics men often spoke of the need to be aware of the best offer and to vote for it. Women on the other hand were inclined to speak of the need to be faithful. Asked about intentions for voting in the next election the shopkeepers answered as below.

Table 9: Vote in election tomorrow

| <u>Party</u> | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>National</u> | 6 | 9 |
| <u>Labour</u> | 10 | 8 |
| <u>Social Credit</u> | 1 | 1 |
| <u>Values</u> | 0 | 1 |
| <u>No answer</u> | 6 | 6 |

While these answers can hardly be claimed to establish a pattern of voting among the shopkeeping stratum, it may be suggested that assumptions about the conservative nature of shopkeeper should be explored.

Another area covered by the structured questionnaire involved work experiences and opinions about the shop. Apart from two males, all the respondents were employed full time in their shop. One male had recently taken on an afternoon delivery job, while the other had begun a small business delivering foodstuffs to the Hawkes Bay.

In nearly all the cases the couples stressed the equality of work distribution. The wife's work in the house tended to be counted as part of an overall work load. In line with a trend noted by Christie (1973) that small shop-

keepers were registering their shops to limit liability; 21 of the shops were Registered Private Companies. The shops were all open very long hours. The daily average was between 10 to 12 hours, seven days a week. With the time put in around the shop after it closed all the respondents were working from 70 to 96 hours per week. The obvious conclusion to draw from this work schedule is that self exploitation is part of the job.

Surprisingly this self exploitation did not cause the shopkeepers to register dissatisfaction in the formal questionnaire. They most frequently stated that they were "Quite satisfied" about their life in the shop. They also said they were "Quite satisfied" with the income they made. As will be seen later these answers do not seem to fit the reality.

Most dairy owners also considered their shop to be secure. They did not see themselves as in direct competition with supermarkets and saw the dairy as having its own trade. These perceptions of the dairy as having a secure trade are, for the most part, realistic. In Palmerston North it is the health regulations which have forced the closure of many shops. Owners cannot afford to upgrade their shops to meet regulations.

The last area of discussion which arises from the formal questionnaire is that of opinions about unions and big business. The respondents were asked if they thought these groups had too much power. It is usually stated that

members of the small business stratum perceive themselves as squeezed between the competing interests of labour and big business (20). Answers to the question showed that respondents thought both groups did have too much power. This is not a surprising result and was explained by respondents in practical terms.

The shopkeeper seems to have little influence in a world of power blocks. The union stands up for the rights of the worker while big business is protected by the government. The dairy owners saw themselves as unprotected from any attack and were therefore threatened by the power available to other groups.

These then are the contexts of the twenty four dairies in the sample. The information gathered is, perhaps, limited by the group involved, but it is hoped that a number of interesting leads have been presented. In the chapters which follow an in depth investigation of the small shopkeeper is undertaken.

(20) "He (the small businessman) finds himself dominated by the technological advantages of the industrial giants (Mills, 1946) with "inherently ambiguous" class interest, finding allies neither in the class above or the class below (Kornhauser, 1959)". J.P. Photiadis and W.F. Schweiber 'Corrolaries of Alienation: The marginal small businessman' Rural Sociology Vol. 16, No. 1, pp 20-30.

CHAPTER III

ENTRANCE INTO THE OCCUPATION

That which hath been the bane of almost all trades is the too great a number of Shopkeepers in this kingdom.....Because the Shopkeeping trade is an easy life and thence many are induced to run into it and hath been no law to prevent it, which maketh many (like a Mighty Torrent) fall into it, which hath been verified for several years by the many Husbandmen, Labourers and Artificers, who have left off their working trades and turned to Shopkeeping. (N.H. The Compleat Tradesman 1684).

A desire for business ownership has long been associated with the capitalist dream (1). The opportunity to go into business for ones self has always been considered an integral part of the capitalist way of life. The traditional concept of opportunity has carried, and still carries, a heavy emphasis on "freedom", on "being on one's own", being one's own boss", and "working for one's self". Of course, business ownership has never been the only kind of opportunity in this society. The concept has included; the opportunity for farmers on the farm, of labour within the promotional heirarchy of the factory, of salaried employees on the staff of the large corporation, of the professional, salaried or independent. Business ownership is only one

(1) For a classic study in this area see E. Chinoy The Automobile Worker and the American Dream Boston: Beacon Press (1965).

type of opportunity, but one which has seemed to lie closer to the full meaning of opportunity than any other form of work (Mayer, 1953).

Since the turn of this century small businesses have been dominated by larger enterprises to the extent that big business now characterises the economy (Child, 1969). With this change in the nature of economic enterprise has come a change in status for individuals. They are now employees, and as such are likely to see "opportunity" in terms of a well paid, secure job in a factory, corporation or government department. As this definition of opportunity is at odds with that which arises from capitalism, it may be that the "employee society" (Drucker, 1953) will be detrimental to the production of individuals willing to accept the risk of owning a small business (2).

The question which arises from these conflicting definitions of opportunity is whether small business is still a traditional symbol of opportunity. In this chapter the reasons for, and the process by which, people enter a small business (in this case the dairy) are examined. Three issues will be discussed. The first involves the notion of the small business as a symbol of opportunity. The second

(2) It is, in part, this concern which has been responsible for the growing interest in small businesses. See M. Stanworth and J. Curran Management Motivation and the Smaller Business London: Gower Press (1973).

is the circumstances in which people take up the occupation of dairy keeping. Finally, discussion will centre on the knowledge people have of their new occupation before they enter it. By looking at these issues some contribution may be made to an understanding of the process by which dairies, and small shops in general, gain recruits.

A Symbol of Opportunity

Throughout the twenty four interviews the respondents put forward their aspirations in straightforward terms. These were succinctly stated by one wife who said:

All we've ever wanted is a house, a car, no debts, and a bit in the bank.

Such aspirations are no doubt pursued by a wide range of people. However, they take on a special meaning for the shopkeeper because they are closely tied to the attainment of independence. Bechhofer et. al. (1974) noted the characteristic of independence among shopkeepers and chose to conceptualise this as "...what Max Weber termed 'economic traditionalism'". For Weber, economic traditionalism meant a desire to always be free of debt; to never be a burden to anyone; to have limited aims which entail the attainment of a self-reliant life style. The presence of this approach to life among the present sample is amply demonstrated by the following quote. The wife's ambivalence toward her husband's aims is also evident in what is said.

Look, I don't want to be hanging around anyone's neck when I'm sixty. I want to be independent.... I hate these people who come in here and moan about the way things are going....They won't do a stick of work to help themselves....No, none of that for me (husband).

He won't retire (wife).

When I've got the dough I will (husband).

You won't (wife).

The dairy owner may be seen as working for economic security and toward a feeling of independence. How then does the small shop fit in with these aspirations? Stated briefly, the fit arises from the opportunity a shop offers individuals to reach goals they find difficult to achieve through employment.

The small shop has been such an effective symbol of opportunity largely because of its accessibility. Caplow (1954) points out that "there are few or no formal controls over (entry into small business)", although there is one informal barrier, capital. If an individual can raise the necessary capital there is nothing to prevent him starting, or at least taking over, a business. It is the ease with which a small business can be bought which makes it so attractive to those who cannot for some reason achieve their goals within an organisation. Certainly it is attractive to women who want a job but cannot have one because of family responsibilities.

I've always wanted to be in a dairy like this. When we were married and I had the kids I wanted a job and I thought about getting a dairy. Well it was something I could do with the kids. So he (the husband) bought me one. It didn't work out for one reason or another.....

(NB. These people are now working together in a dairy).

But while women have problems which make a dairy a desirable proposition, it is the job frustrations of their husbands which most directly influence the couple's decision to buy a business.

For the males in the sample especially, work was the central activity of their lives. This characteristic makes them something of an oddity in, what has become, a leisure oriented society (Roberts, 1970). It is therefore, worthwhile to note the significance work has for the dairy owner.

For individuals who lack formal educational qualifications, as is the case with the dairy owners, the achievement of economic security is difficult. High paying jobs most often equate with high qualifications. To overcome this problem many people take second and even third jobs (3). There are then many people who seem to lead lives which are dominated by work. But there is a difference between working hard just to make money and the use of money to attain the goals of economic traditionalism. It is the dairy owners' attempt to reach independence which separates them from other hard working groups. In a way which is usually associated with managers and professionals, work is

(3) See R. Carter 'The Myth of Increasing Nonwork Versus Work Activities'. Social Problems 18 (1967) pp 52-67.

the "supreme social reality" of the dairy owner (4). Work has, for the dairy owner, a meaning beyond the acquisition of money. This is illustrated by the statement below.

All we did when we weren't (in the dairy) was go and see people....Drive around in the car.....That all costs money and it gets you nowhere....At least in the dairy I do something useful all the time.

The statement summarizes a number of responses which showed the respondents to hold work as the most positively meaningful activity open to them.

Consistent with the orientation inherent above, the sample is dominated by people whose working history shows a strong affiliation to work. This pattern was broken by only one male who confessed to being lazy. However he noted that his wife had always been a hard worker, which kept him active. The following can be taken as indicative of the work pattern of the majority.

I've always worked hard. Before we came here (the dairy), I used to work (in a processing factory). That lasted for about seven years....For the last five years of that I was sort of manager..... I used to start about 2.30 in the morning sometimes and I could still be going the next night. That was hard on me and it was hard on the family.

While this example is extreme, it is matched by others in the sample such as an ex-bus driver who used to be away from home for periods of three weeks at a time; an ex-bushman who

(4) The idea of career as the "supreme social reality" for the middle class originated with R. Dahrendorf Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (1959).

had regularly put in a twelve hour day; a tradesman whose job took him all over the North Island and caused him to work for very long hours. Many of the wives had also worked for many years while others had been occupied with the raising of children. For many people such a work dominated life would be undesirable, but for those in the sample it was considered "natural". Many even regretted leaving their previous jobs and said they would like to go back if the opportunity arose. As will be shown in later chapters, within the context of the dairy it is not difficult to understand why people might wish to return to even quite arduous jobs.

One of the distinctive features of families in which the male works so consistently is their isolation from other people. The segregated nuclear family is characteristic of careerists who cannot afford the time nor the emotional attachment required to make friends (5). This characteristic is also associated with the present sample where many people had difficulty providing examples of "real" friendships involving them prior to entering the dairy. Interaction with relatives was also kept at a minimum in most cases.

It may be noted at this point that the features of a work dominated life style and of a segregated nuclear family are suited to the dairy occupation. Those who take up dairy

(5) See, for example, J. Pahl and R. Pahl Managers and Their Wives London: Penguin (1971).

keeping must be prepared to work long hours and be isolated from social interaction which does not arise through the shop. A family already used to these things would not find the dairy a strange environment.

One of the problems which inevitably arises for an employee is that of constraint. As long as an individual is working for someone else he must accept limits on what he can earn and how he can behave. To the type of individual present in this sample such constraints are especially frustrating. They talked of being held back by their previous employers.

As a boilermaker I was a good one. But I couldn't earn much. I mean they would pay me as much as the next fellow and he wouldn't be any good at all..... So I thought I would leave and try for myself.

It is easy to conceive of these people as "rate busters". They refuse to do other than to work to their capacity, something which is often prevented when one has to fit in with the constraints of a large organisation.

I used to have to look after two shelves at the (supermarket) by myself. I could get mine done in half the time the other girls could....When I left they had to get two people to replace me. Yet they didn't pay me more than anyone else while I was there.

For others in the sample it was less the feeling of being held back than a feeling of oppression.

You get fed up. I like to do things my way, and that is usually the best way, and be left alone to do it. But no matter what someone is always there to tell you different.

This dislike for constraint coupled with the desire to achieve highly under one's own direction is usually associated with the entrepreneur (Deeks, 1976). Value is placed on self reliance, self accountability and the idea of slacking is scorned. It is these ideas which Dibble (1962) argues, underlie the private enterprise system.

It seems clear that for the dairy owner the small shop is a symbol of opportunity. Opportunity to adopt a life style consistent with the values and behaviours they had before buying a business of their own.

The Circumstances Surrounding Entrance To The Dairy

For most of the respondents the decision to buy a dairy was precipitated by one of three contingencies arising from their work or private life; a failure of health, work pressures, or family problems. Only a minority of the owners bought their dairy as a direct response to frustration with their employment. This section focuses on the circumstances which surround the decision to buy a dairy.

When an individual becomes ill and his employers are unwilling or unable to support him through it, one of the few options open to him is a small business. Being a proprietor makes an individual relatively free from the threat of redundancy. As one owner put it, the dairy was a logical occupation for him after his health degenerated.

As a person if anyone had said I was going to be in a dairy I would have said they were mad, in the fact that I have been building all my life. For twenty eight years. To have to break away from that was rather hard. But for health reasons I had to.

Of course no one has to go into a dairy, but the shop, as a type of small business, does recommend itself. It does this firstly by its visibility. For someone wishing to go into business one of the most obvious examples is the dairy. It is a type of business everyone has had some experience with.

A second positive feature of the dairy is the lack of qualifications needed to run it. One ex-insurance officer described this advantage as follows.

Well the obvious thing (why the dairy is attractive as a business) is that you don't have to have any training. You look at almost any other business and some sort of skill is needed.... All you have to have is a good head and perseverance.

Related to the advantage of low qualifications is that of having accommodation attached to the business (6). This allows the owners to keep their capital outlay to a minimum and brings the family very close to the business, a desirable asset for people who have to keep their business open twelve hours a day.

(6) Approximately 70 per. cent. of all dairies have accommodation attached in the Palmerston North area.

Another feature of the dairy which makes it attractive, especially to those with health problems, is its simple operation. A dairy owner may have to work for long hours but the work requires little acumen. The branding, processing and standardising of products leaves little for the dairy owner to do but sell them. An accountant can be used to take care of complex financial matters. This feature of simplicity means the husband can rely on his family to run the shop should his health deteriorate further.

At the time I was actually looking for a farm to buy. But with this (a heart attack) I wasn't too sure....I came into the dairy because I thought to myself that they (the family) could run things if I had another turn, whereas they couldn't on a farm.

For a man whose health is uncertain the dairy can offer some measure of stability.

Problems relating to work were also related to the decision to buy a dairy. In the sample, one young man of twenty four had recently left the navy and found he had no skills with which to make a career ashore. Another man of forty four had bought a dairy after the pressure of competing with younger university trained men in his job had become too much for him. A desire for an active retirement caused another man of sixty five to look for his dairy. All these men had in common the inability to work in the way they wanted within an organisation. The dairy offered them a chance to do as well as they could under their own direction. Given their doubts about their ability to succeed as an employee the chance to do well on their own was something

they valued highly.

It has been noted that entry to the dairy is largely the husband's decision. However, in a number of cases the decision was influenced by family problems.

Many women, especially those with children, find that to get a suitable job can be difficult. Many of the wives in the sample had worked immediately prior to entering the dairy and all had worked at one time. The willingness of the women to work combined with the long hours put in by the husbands tended to cause the family members to become estranged. From the wife's point of view the dairy had a lot to offer because it let her work while keeping the family together.

It will be recalled that earlier in this chapter a husband was quoted as saying that his work was "hard on the family". One of the features of the wife's difficulty is her inability to control the children.

It's not right that the man should be away all the time. A family needs a father. Especially one of boys. The mother is always a soft touch and they just walk right over her when they want something ,.....I couldn't control Ben, our eldest, and I think that is why he went a bit wild. But the boys respect their father.

The problems mentioned by the wife above brought her marriage to the edge of divorce. The couple involved decided to find a job in which they could both work so they could see more of each other and keep the family together. A small business seemed the answer and they eventually bought a dairy. Three

of the twenty four couples mentioned keeping the family together as a specific advantage of owning a dairy.

The circumstances which often surround the entry of the respondents into their dairy point to them being marginal employees. Not in the social-psychological sense of marginal, but as in the everyday use of the word as meaning on the edge of things. Health, work and family problems made it difficult for many of the dairy owners to achieve their goals as employees. Because of children the women could not, in some cases, get a suitable job. All of the respondents were poorly qualified regarding the job market. The dairy offered a solution to the problems of not being able to find a suitable job, and a solution to marginality (7).

Knowledge of The Occupation

Occupations gain a reputation as to their being good, bad or indifferent. The basis of this typology is the

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- (7) Stanworth and Curran op. cit. provide an excellent study using a social-psychological definition of marginality to explain the entry of individuals into small business. The individual, it is argued, enters business as a solution to social marginality. By social marginality the authors mean, "a situation in which there is a discontinuity between the individual's personal attributes - for example, physical characteristics, intellectual make-up, social behaviour patterns - and the role or roles which the individual holds in society". Although the present study is not concerned with this aspect of marginality, a number of the findings lend support to the thesis of Stanworth and Curran.

rewards those in the occupation receive for doing the job. The occupation of physician appears to the outsider as prestigious because, for example, physicians always seem to be rich and to perform socially important work. Unnoticed are the long hours and the awkward patients that a doctor has to endure. It would seem to be a truism that unless an occupation has some obvious drawbacks those outside the occupation are unlikely to hear anything but the good side of the story. Hughes (1948) identifies a common feature of occupations as the attempt of those in them to make what they do tolerable, if not glorious, to themselves and others (8). This failure of the lay public to learn about an occupation has relevance to this section which is concerned with the knowledge the dairy owners had of their new job before they took it on. It appears that in most cases their knowledge was slight.

If owning a dairy allows a family to accumulate a large number of possessions this will act as an incentive for others to take up the trade. A number of the respondents remembered the success of other dairy owners being an encouragement to them to buy a dairy.

(8) E. Hughes The Sociological Eye Chicago: Aldine-Atherton (1971) presents a case for studying low status occupations to overcome the problem for individuals who try to make their job look better.

It always seemed that people who had a dairy had a good car and money in their pockets. That was the sort of thing we were after.

In this way people who own a dairy can act as a recruitment advertisement for the occupation. Without such a display of material success it is likely the prospective small business owner will look elsewhere.

It might be thought that with frequent interaction between respondents and their local dairy during the years before buying their own dairy they would have learnt something of the problems of the occupation. In part their failure to do so may be attributed to the difficulty service workers have in communicating occupational problems to customers. As Goffman (1959) notes, service workers are committed to making things look good so as to provide a satisfactory service and this prevents them from making clear the frustrations they put up with. Another reason for the failure to learn about the problems of the dairy occupation may be that it is only in recent years that dairies have encountered so many changes in the business environment. Thus the occupation has not had time to become known to have bad features.

Many of the owners recalled that before buying their shop they, like their customers, had treated a dairy as a convenience. Their own behaviour did not, however, alert them to the fact that the dairy is not well supported by the public. One woman, who with her husband now owns a second

dairy, explains how she got over this problem of being treated like a convenience.

When we had the other shop, years ago, it used to make me furious if people didn't buy everything (in the dairy).... It's much worse now but it doesn't worry me as much because I know that when I am out of the dairy I think the same way.... It's not a personal slight or anything.

Most dairy owners remember that their decision to buy a dairy was well supported by the people they knew. It would appear that a dairy is generally thought of as an easy occupation. Certainly this is the image many of the owners had of the job before they started.

I was told before I came in here that everything would be simple.... People said, "You'll just lock the door, go out the back, sit down and take it easy.

Such an image of dairy ownership is attractive indeed.

During the process of buying a dairy the respondents came into contact with a number of professionals. Usually these included a real estate agent, a lawyer and an accountant. The respondents learned little about their new job from these contacts. Perhaps because the people in these occupations have a vested interest in getting people into a property they do not wish to jeopardise their position. But there is also the possibility that real estate agents, lawyers and accountants know very little about how small

businesses really work (9). At least this is the understanding of one owner.

None of them (the lawyers, real estate agents and accountants) know what it is like. Oh, the accountant may know a bit because he is doing someone's books at the time....But I've got an accountant and he says to me, pay your bills once a month. Well I ask you, it shows how much he knows, doesn't it? (10)

The image of the dairy is further enhanced when the new owners set about registering their business. When a business is registered someone must adopt the titles of the company director and company secretary. One owner recalls with hilarity (after owning a dairy for one year) the gaining of her new title.

We went up to register the place and found out that he had to be a company director and I had to be the secretary. Well (laughter) how stupid. It looked good at the time but look there's only the two of us and it's only a dairy (more laughter).

Dairy owners are themselves eager to sell their businesses. In the present sample only one of the twenty four dairies was not on the market "all the time". It is reasonable to expect that when an owner is wanting to sell his dairy he will present the good side of things to the prospective buyer.

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- (9) Another possibility which presents itself is that professionals (the term is used loosely to include real estate agents) view the dairy as less worthy of their attention than other businesses. This would make a worthwhile research topic.
- (10) Dairy owners must pay cash for the majority of their stock. Some accounts must be paid before more stock can be received. Only one, the newspaper, can be paid for on a monthly basis.

They showed us the stuff they had bought since they had been in here. Television, car, fridge, washing machine.....We were really hooked.

Judging, once again, from the present sample, however, not everyone is encouraged to buy a dairy even if they want to. In later chapters the dairy is shown to be an exacting occupation and the owners were reluctant to let someone buy the dairy who they thought might not be able to handle it properly.

I had a solo mother in here. I told her it's no place for a woman with kids if she's going to want to run it on her own. I told her straight to stay clear of dairies.

An occupation which is no place for a woman with children, does not recommend itself as very desirable.

Some of the respondents had got into the dairy trade under their own initiative. These people had been connected with the trade in some way. For example, three were ex-travellers who had dealt with dairies. In their line of work they had the opportunity to find out which dairies were on the market and which were worth buying. However, being in the trade was no guarantee that owning a dairy would be a success. The couple in the sample, most distressed by their experiences in the dairy, had bought the business after the husband, who was a traveller, had checked it out. He thought the shop was a good buy as he says below.

I knew it wasn't making money but that seemed the way to buy a dairy. Get it while it is run down and build it up, then sell.

This desire to build up a run down dairy was a common aspiration of those in the sample. Perhaps they would have been less enthusiastic had they known that eighteen of the twenty four owners in the present sample had bought their dairy with the intention of building it up. Many think they have succeeded, but they fail to take into account the effect of inflation on their total turnover.

Contrary to the general belief that small businesses are passed on to family or friends, the dairy is not part of such a network. In fact dairy owners thought this was not a good idea.

You wouldn't sell it to someone you know. It really isn't the best way to live and if they want to go into it then it should be their decision.

The dairy is not something to recommend to friends. It is also not something which is bought knowingly from friends.

We heard about this dairy through the land agent and asked for it to be checked out by the accountant, lawyer and so on. We knew the area and didn't come down until they approved it. (The couple lived in Napier) That was when we found out that my cousin owned it... No we didn't tell him we were trying to buy the place because we thought that best....It would not be right to let family matters become mixed up in business....We might end up owing each other something....This place is supposed to be a business.

Business, it would seem, does not mix with relatives.

In this last section of the chapter it has been shown that the buyers were largely ignorant of the consequences of their decisions. This was because they were unable to

find any authentic information on the bad features of the job. Enough has been said about the respondents' feelings about their job to show that their prior impression did not match reality.(11)

Conclusions

Having discussed the process of entry into the dairy it is now time to draw together the ideas presented.

The circumstances which surround the respondents' entry into the dairy occupation would seem to be explained by the concept of occupational drift (Pavlako, 1971). The owners seemed to enter the occupation as a fortuitous answer to pressing problems, or because it seemed like a good way to make a living. But when other factors are taken into account the choice is less fortuitous.

Not everybody who has problems with their health, or job, or family goes into a small shop. Some other impetus is needed. This impetus is provided by the attraction small business has for the type of person that was in the sample. The respondents tended to value independence and the chance to create this for themselves. The small shop acted as a symbol of opportunity for them.

(11) A concept which usefully summarizes the inconsistency between the image an individual holds of an occupation and the reality of the occupation is 'reality shock'. For documentation of this concept see H.S. Becker 'The Chicago Public School Teacher' American Sociological Review 57 (1952) pp. 470-477.

With the above thoughts in mind, the dairy may be seen as one step in the career of the individuals involved. Not an objective career as Wilensky would define it, (12) but a subjective career as Hughes (1971:554) would define it. Hughes sees career as, "the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and things that happen to him". The personal interpretation or re-interpretation of events produces a longitudinal perspective on life. The individual's private plans or project may not necessarily coincide with an objective career or typical sequence of positions which can be seen to move upward in an orderly fashion. But there is a career and while the shop may appear a haphazard event it can be understood as part of a subjective career.

A final point to make is that the respondents are marginal people. They live on the edge of the occupational world. This has been made clear by the work values they have, their abilities vis-a-vis getting a job and finally their desire to buy a small shop. As Drucker (1953) has noted, in the world of the employee, those who are owners of a small business may be classed as marginal people. Perhaps it is a case of like attracting like.

(12) "A career, viewed structurally, is a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence". See H.L. Wilensky 'Work Careers and Social Integration' International Social Science Journal 12 (1960) pp. 534-554.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHOPKEEPER-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

PART 1

The retail tradesman must furnish himself with a competent stock of patience; I mean that patience which is needful to bear all sorts of impertinence. A tradesman behind his counter must have no flesh and blood about him; no passions; no resentment. He must never be angry, no not so much as seem to be so, if a customer tumbles him 500. l. worth of goods and scarce bids him money for anything (Daniel Defoe. The Complete Tradesman. 1727).

Following entrance to an occupation a worker must spend time adapting to the new role. This process is known as occupational socialisation. In considering the process involved in becoming a dairy-grocery proprietor, Schein's comments seem appropriate. Occupational socialisation is the "process of 'learning the ropes'.....the process of being taught what is important in an organisation..." (Schein, 1974:2). For workers in service occupations, "learning the ropes" is likely to be a function of interaction with customers, those for whom the service is performed. Members of service occupations have some image of the 'ideal' customer (1), and they use this fiction to

(1) For an explanation of the 'ideal client' concept see H.S. Becker 'Social Class Variations in the Teacher-Pupil Relationship' in H.S. Becker Sociological Work Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co. (1970).

fashion their conceptions of how their work ought to be performed, and their actual work routines. To the degree that customers approximate the ideal there are fewer problems during socialisation.

In a highly differentiated society customers differ greatly and ordinarily, the worker, in some service areas, can expect only a fraction to approximate their ideal (2). "The fact of client variation from the occupational ideal emphasises the intimate relation of the institution in which work is carried on to its environing society. If that society does not prepare people to play in their client roles in the manner desired by the occupation's members there will be conflicts and problems for the workers in the performance of their work" (Becker, 1970:137). One of the major factors affecting the production of suitable customers for the dairy-grocer is that of retail image. Current definitions of the role of the members in the retail hierarchy operate to make the shopkeeper's job very difficult.

Kunkel and Berry (1968) state that a retail store image is the "total conceptualisation of expected reinforcement that a person associates with shopping in a particular store". The authors go on to say that the modern consumer is more likely to perceive shops in terms of their convenience. The shopper's definition of convenience will, of course, vary according to needs at any one time. Thus, when

(2) For a theoretical explication of this process see L.A. Mennerick 'Client Typologies' Sociology of Work and Occupations Vol. 1 No. 4 (Nov. 1974) pp. 396-417.

the shopper wishes to buy a loaf of bread the closest shop is the appropriate place to make the purchase. When buying weekly food supplies, however, the shopper is likely to see the supermarket as appropriate because of cheapness and variety. While this variation in convenience orientations does exist, it is now accepted that in the area of food retailing the supermarket provides the customer with the highest reinforcement for making purchases (3). The small store occupies an auxiliary position.

The supermarket has dominated New Zealand retailing since the 1960's. Not only has it changed where people shop, it has also altered shopping methods. Basic to this change has been the process of depersonalisation. With the advent of self service techniques the customer has had to become self reliant when making purchases. When shopping at the supermarket the customer proceeds to choose items herself, and has contact with the staff only at the checkout counter where the focus is on payment for goods (4). This fleeting contact between customer and worker is now thought of as 'normal', although doubtless there are some people who prefer a different system.

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- (3) The concept of convenience orientation is more complex than stated here. The interested reader is referred to W.J. Anderson Jr. 'Convenience Orientation and Consumption Behaviour' Journal of Retailing Vol. 3 No. 3 (Fall 1972) pp. 49-72.
- (4) See W.G. McLelland Studies in Retailing Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1964) for a useful discussion of the differences between shopping in a small store and a supermarket.

Returning now to the idea of the production of suitable customers for the dairy, the situation can be seen to be one of potential conflict. The dairy has, until recently, been a locus of personal contact where customers came to know and rely on 'their' shopkeeper. That dairy proprietors wish this arrangement to continue is made immediately obvious by the practice of printing their names above the shop door and advertising personal service. The idea of customer dependence on the shopkeeper is now, however, out of the question because new merchandising techniques provide customers with adequate knowledge about, and guarantees for, a product. The practice of personal service has less attraction to customers who define shopping as a depersonalised process. These factors, amongst others, lower the chances of dairy owners getting ideal customers, and the most likely outcome of interaction is conflict. The amount of conflict present during interaction must affect the shopkeeper's view of their situation and have a direct effect on feelings about the job. Perceptions concerning intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards that can be derived from the job must be involved.

Shopkeeping

A basic problem in any occupation is that of performing given tasks successfully, and where this involves working with people, the qualities of these people are major variables affecting the ease with which this can be done. The dairy owners interpreted their role in terms of

standard core elements of shopkeeping. They sought the satisfaction of a socially important job well done; the satisfaction of representing households in the distributive system; of advising families on domestic matters; of pleasing the customer; of enjoying sociability; and the satisfaction of reciprocity per se. This interpretation of the dairy owner's role allowed them to derive self esteem from the performance of their job. The researcher observed interaction between the 'ideal' customer and shopkeepers at times throughout the study. One such incident follows.

I was waiting in the shop for the owner who was serving. An older man (60's), dressed in a suit came in and stood toward the back of the shop. He greeted the shopkeeper who broke off from serving to say 'hello'. Upon finishing with his customer the shopkeeper once again greeted the man and asked how he had been keeping. They chatted briefly, then the man asked how much he owed. The sum was \$52:65. The man took out his wallet and counted the money on to the counter. After more conversation the man left, leaving the shopkeeper looking very satisfied.

"That", said the owner, "is when you really feel good".

"How do you mean?" Interviewer.

"Oh I don't know.- I guess it's just that you do your best for them and it's good when they come in and show they're satisfied".

The ideal customer is outlined in more detail by another owner.

The best customers around here are the accounts, big accounts.The women come in here and buy big, and it all goes on the book. Sometimes it can get as high as \$100. Then in comes the old boy, takes out the cheque book and pays the lot....They don't even look at the docket, they just pay.

From these statements a number of characteristic features of the ideal customer can be isolated. The first is that they can be trusted. The shopkeeper has given them an account, something which is denied to many people. The account has been allowed to get quite high which indicates that the shopkeeper expects the customer to shop with him in the future. A second point is that the woman of the house buys regularly in the dairy which signifies her household's reliance on the service provided by the shop. The husband is involved also, as the one who pays the accounts, and this is a man to man affair. A final major point is that the customer trusts the shopkeeper. When given the docket (account) the customer does not even bother to check it which implies faith in the shopkeeper's integrity. Based on characteristics such as these it is possible to see the shopkeeper-customer relationship as being ideally, a reciprocation of needs and attitudes. The relationship provides economic and psychological security for the shopkeeper and in return he will give the customer excellent service. Unfortunately for the dairy keeper such ideal relationships are in a distinct minority.

The element which appeared to link the majority of customers was their refusal to give the dairy full support. The dairy is always located in a neighbourhood. The dairy owners are neighbours to their customers (5). They stay

(5) The I.G.A. chain of stores advertise this feature in an attempt to gather support for their stores.

open long hours and provide a service to the community. However the customers may view these facts, the dairy owners believe themselves to be good neighbours, deserving of community support. The customers show what they think by going to the supermarket for their most substantial purchases. Unable to directly criticise the customer's behaviour, shopkeepers have developed a point of view, which at times appeared as a philosophy, arguing against supermarkets.

I wouldn't go to a supermarket. You go there and get pushed through just like sheep....the girl at the checkout counter doesn't know who you are or what you do....and she doesn't care.

Since the dairy owner's service is based on personal contact it is not surprising they should find self service techniques distasteful (6). But in many instances the shopkeeper's antipathy toward supermarkets goes further to include features of life in general.

Now you take cities today. The kids run wild don't they? Well I'll tell you why. When I was a boy the police used to live where we did, right down the road. Now where are they?In town that's where. That's why the kids get away with it, because they don't know the police, and the police don't know them. It's the same in everything. There has to be personal contact.

The dairy owner who provided the above quote, had fashioned an entire belief system around the importance of personal

(6) A number of dairies have adopted some form of self service. However, the owners continue to be asked by customers to get goods and they tend to encourage this by their presence in the store.

contact which buttressed his belief in the dairy. In this way the dairy can appear to its owners as part of a better way of life that they are helping to preserve.

This point of view, which favours personal contact, is the foundation of the dairy owner's attempt to convince customers that supermarkets are bad places to shop. The dairy owners felt they should warn customers that they are being duped and brainwashed by modern methods of merchandising. The advertising, the self service, the great variety of stock and the general bustle of the big store are thought to cause customers to buy more than they need and it is therefore up to the shopkeepers to warn them of the duplicity (7). While talking over this problem one shopkeeper said:

People will drive all the way down to (a supermarket) to buy their groceries when they could buy them right here for the same price. They forget about the petrol and the time it takes. Then when they get there I know they spend too much....They think everything is cheaper. It's not. I've got a brother who runs a supermarket and he tells me that if something comes in at a really low price then something has to go up to make up the difference.....And they always buy more than they need because it's on special. I tell you it makes me boil when they (customers) come in here and think I'm dear.

Because the owners feel the supermarkets take customer's money under false pretences they embark on attempts to educate the customer to be aware of food prices

(7) Of course, to a degree they are right. See D.T. Kollat and R.P. Willet 'Customer Impulse Purchasing Behaviour' Journal of Marketing Research (Feb. 1967) pp. 21-31.

and supermarket practices. The Master Grocer's Association and the Retailer's Association send every member a list of current retail prices and the dairy owners use this to establish the validity of their argument against supermarkets. If a customer criticises the prices of goods in the dairy the dairy owner takes the opportunity to give his side of the story (8).

Oh I tell them alright. I show them right here in the book in black and white. Then I tell them about how the prices get jacked up to make up for specials. And I tell them if they shopped here they would find it just as cheap...But it doesn't make any real difference.

The customer's failure to be converted by the dairy owner's attempt to "tell it like it is", provides a depressing fact of life. No matter how hard the shopkeeper tries to educate the customer, they continue to shop elsewhere and to demonstrate that their custom at the dairy is more a matter of circumstances than loyalty.

We used to have a lady right next door to the shop. A great customer. I thought she really appreciated what we did for her. But then her husband bought her a little car. Now we've lost her.

Although the dairy owners remain critical of supermarkets and what they stand for, they eventually learn to accept the inevitable. However, the inevitability of the

(8) The reader who wishes to test this proposition should try suggesting to their local dairy owners that their prices are too high when compared with supermarkets!

situation does not make it easier to take.

You know what really gets me down is the way people will go to the supermarket and buy all their things and come here, with everything on the back seat of the car, for a loaf of bread, that I don't make any profit on. How do they think it makes us feel? Don't they think we have feelings?

The customers not only fail to support the dairy economically, they also fail to establish a positive relationship which gives psychological security to the shopkeepers. For example, they do not trust the shopkeepers.

I know those girls on the checkouts make mistakes. They must do with the amount they push through every day. But they (the customers) never think to check the list they get. But here, they will go home and ring me up to go over the prices!

The customer's failure to trust the shopkeeper is matched by the shopkeeper's distrust of the customer. This is a situation which benefits no one, as it leads away from the ideal toward a calculative, unsatisfying relationship.

On Being a Convenience

Being a convenience is, for the shopkeepers, the most problematic outcome of the customer's failure to support the dairy. It represents an unwelcome move away from the standard shopkeeper role which the dairy owners see as desirable. In discussing a similar situation faced by cocktail waitresses, Hearn and Stroll use the concept of role degradation. They define this concept as "an individual's inability to see his role vis-a-vis others as effective due

to a lack of understanding and respect, or interference on the part of others...." (Hearn and Stroll, 1975:109). This concept informs the discussion for the remainder of the chapter.

"Being used" is an occupational hazard for many service workers. However, in such occupations as bell-hop, taxi driver or waitress, a tip may be expected as compensation (9). All the dairy owner can hope for is the continued support of the customer. Since the majority of customers give support only through small purchases, and often appear to resent even this, the shopkeepers feel that their input is not matched by the customers'. It is clear the customers would not agree with such a point of view and many are prepared to state that the dairy owners are getting rich at their expense. It is perhaps this attitude which makes the customer appear ungrateful for the dairy owner's service, and causes the owner to feel used.

We're not vital or anything. We're just a convenience.
And again.

No matter what we do it's never enough. People
are just out to use us.

The public often seem inexhaustible in their demands for attention. These demands are not just for goods but for a whole range of personal needs.

(9) The writer can vouch from experience that tipping is a common practice even in New Zealand and that it does tend to relate to the amount of effort required from the service worker.

What do I do? Boy (laughter) just about everything. I'm the local doctor, minister, psychiatrist, information bureau, lost and found depot, dustman, you name it and I get asked to do it.

The dairy owner occupies what Goffman (1963) has called an exposed position. While the customers may not be prepared to buy all their supplies at the dairy, they are willing to see it as a place where they can demand the many services denied to them by retailers who have distanced themselves from the customer. The dairy owners often complained that people came to them for all manner of menial tasks because other shops would not provide the service. Dairy people find themselves being asked to pick up items from town, deliver goods to people who do not have time to pick them up, and run errands for people who do not wish to run the errands themselves. For the shopkeeper this situation would not be resented if it were not so clear, at the same time, that they were being used. Most dairy owners have had an experience similar to the one below.

A woman came in from a local bowling club and asked if we would make sandwiches and provide milk for the club twice a week. We thought if we did we would get all their other trade as well... I used to get up twice a week for six months at 5.30 to get the bread in and make those sandwiches. Then we found out that she was buying a whole lot of things at the supermarket down town and that we were just the mugsWe also found out that the dairy up the road had been used in the same way and had booted them out.

The situation is a difficult one for all concerned. The customer has few sources of this kind of service and therefore turns to the dairy. The dairy people are eager

to please and take on the tasks to get more trade. It is probable that most people who use the dairy owners in the manner described think the dairy owners make a profit. They do not realise that on lines such as bread, milk, butter and newspapers there is virtually no profit. The dairy carries these lines to attract other, more profitable, trade.

The exposed position of the dairy owner is also apparent from the number and range of complaints they receive. When someone buys a product through a supermarket, milk vendor, or a department store and it proves to be faulty, the process of making a complaint can be difficult. Having to go back into town to locate an elusive store manager or leave a note for the milkman can make complaining not worth the effort. The dairy owner, a ready and vulnerable target, can, however, be called upon to give customer satisfaction. The dairy owners are always behind the counter and therefore, the customer is able to talk to 'top management'. The owner cannot afford to ignore the complaint for fear of losing the customer, so the customer has a high chance of getting something done about the complaint (10). Because of this situation the dairy owners find themselves being asked to

(10) A necessary caveat to this point is that there is a distinct difference between stores who service mainly a stable returning custom and those who deal with mainly a passing trade. The dairy which has a stable trade will be much more committed to ensuring that the customers get satisfaction.

deal with complaints which have nothing to do with their business.

To some degree the shopkeeper can control complaints by siding with the complainant (an essential first step) and then advising them of the whereabouts of the manufacturer of the faulty item. This is not easily done when customers bring personal problems to the dairy people.

We had only been here a month when the girl across the road came over one night, right into the house, crying her eyes out. I had to sit in the kitchen for two hours talking to her (wife). We try not to encourage that sort of thing. We've got enough problems of our own and besides we like to keep the house and the business separate (husband).

When the dairy owner is asked to counsel customers, they are at risk of becoming too involved with people from whom they derive a living. The dairy owner wishes to be thought of as a friend, but real friendship would present too many problems. To be friends with customers could lead to requests for cheap goods, favours and extra considerations, things which would be disastrous for an economically distressed dairy owner (11). Bernard Malamud (1959) in The Assistant described the difficulty the neighbourhood shopkeeper can have when they become too close to the customer.

(11) The problem of separating business from home and private life is common to many service occupations. For a discussion of this problem see E. Cumming and C. Harrison 'Clergyman as Counsellor' American Journal of Sociology Vol. LXIX No. 2 (Sept 1963) pp. 234-243.

"My mother says," she said quickly, "can you trust her till tomorrow for a pound of butter, a loaf of rye bread and a small bottle of vinegar?"

He knew the mother. "No more trust".

The girl burst into tears.

Morris gave her a quarter pound of butter, the bread and the vinegar. (Malamud, 1959:7).

Giving such credit can be a costly practice. If the credit is not formalised into an account there is always the risk that both the owner and the customer will forget the transaction ever took place. During the research a number of owners mentioned they ran an informal credit system to cope with customers who did not have accounts. They acknowledged it was a system that cost them money but they felt constrained to continue the practice to keep on friendly terms with customers.

The strategy of using a child to get groceries, mentioned by Malamud, is common when a family is in debt to the dairy. This causes a dilemma for the dairy people who do not wish to upset the child by demanding payment. It is for this reason that credit can reach undesirable amounts before anything is done to recoup the debt.

Of course children shop at the dairy for more reasons than to ensure credit. In the normal course of a family dealing with a dairy the children often do the shopping. From the dairy owner's point of view this is a situation which does little to enhance their self-esteem. The child will usually arrive at the shop equipped with a note and will wait while the shopkeeper gets the items requested. The

shopkeeper can derive little status from interaction with statusless children. This is an occupational problem dairy owners share with teachers (Geer, 1966). It is an arrangement which serves to highlight the lack of concern customers have for their relationship with the shopkeeper.

This lack of status also arises from the products with which the dairy is stocked. Few owners felt they dealt with a high prestige set of products. One shopkeeper illustrated this as follows.

Now, how can this job have status? A guy comes in here for a packet of cigarettes. I grab the cigarettes and toss them over to him, take the money and out he goes. How can I get status from that?

Thus role degradation, the failure of customers to show understanding and respect for the shopkeeping role, begins with the treatment of the shopkeeper as a convenience.

On Being Abused

While it is true most service workers expect to be used as part of their job, none seem willing to be abused. Such behaviour on the part of customers is an affront to the dignity of the worker and as a result the customer may be classed as someone "who can be done without". In the lexicon of the dairy owner, these people are "lousy".

A fortunate characteristic of the people who abuse the dairy owner is that they do not buy much from the dairy. With this knowledge in mind the dairy owner feels more able

to retaliate for abuses. This is an important point because it was discovered that whenever owners gave an example of getting rid of a "lousy" customer, investigation of the circumstances showed the customer to be no economic loss to the dairy. In maintaining pride the dairy owner never seems to act in a way which prejudices his income.

The dairy owner must always be careful about criticising bad customers. If the customer can gather support in the neighbourhood the business could be hurt. However, it was also discovered that when an owner gave an example of criticising a customer he was able to tell of the customer's misconduct elsewhere (12). Secure in the knowledge that his complaint is not exclusive the shopkeeper can act to redeem his pride without loss of income. (13)

Which customer behaviours may force a shopkeeper to try and get rid of the customer? Of course to some degree when and how a shopkeeper acts will depend on the standards he sets for behaviour, but there are four actions which most

(12) It should be noted that dealing with errant customers is male's work.

(13) Unlike the janitor (see Gold 'In the Basement: The apartment janitor' in P. Berger The Human Shape of Work New York: MacMillan (1964) pp. 7-50) the shopkeeper does not have any direct power over the customer. For example, the janitor's tenants cannot easily get another janitor, but a customer can easily shop elsewhere. Therefore the shopkeeper must be sure of his ground before entering an argument with a customer.

directly upset the shopkeepers. 1) Direct rudeness. 2) Dishonesty. 3) Doubting the owner's integrity. 4) Making excessive use of the owner. It should be noted that this category of customer is not large. This is fortunate or the owner might soon put himself out of business. However, this group has a profound effect on the way the shopkeepers view their job.

I guess only about 5 per. cent. of all the people who come in here give us trouble. But they really colour the way we think about things.

Direct rudeness can arise from any customer, but mostly it is located among three groups: children, the "would be's if they could be's", and the passing trade. The rudeness of children is not difficult to deal with. Nevertheless, the shopkeeper must be careful with children or the anger of the parents may be attracted.

The kid was downright rude so I put her in her place.....Well about half an hour later I got a ring from the mother saying to leave the kid alone or she would take her business elsewhere. You've really got to watch yourself.

Children do not seem to deliberately set out to antagonise the shopkeeper and the shopkeeper is aware of this. The shopkeepers see themselves as trying to educate the children to have good manners. To accomplish this they may withhold service until the children behave themselves, or simply demand better conduct. Seldom does the shopkeeper wish to get rid of a child customer. Since the children are less able than their parents, to shop elsewhere, they usually decide to behave.

Adults who are rude cannot be dealt with in the same forthright manner which accompanies a child's rudeness. This is a problem for the dairy owner as it means a customer's rudeness must be excessive before efforts are made to correct the behaviour. The "would be's if they could be's" are a distinct group of customers whose rudeness causes the shopkeeper problems. The customers who comprise this group openly show disdain for the shopkeeper's position. The "would be's if they could be's" try to enhance their own status at the expense of the shopkeepers. One of the most criticised acts of this group is their willingness to question the right of the shopkeeper to make money.

They hate you to get anything they've got. We've got a new car outside (second hand Holden) and they come in making smart cracks about it as if we shouldn't have it.

Since one of the goals of the shopkeepers is to get ahead financially such behaviour is hard to take.

They'll go down to the supermarkets and spend all their money then come by here to spend peanuts. Explain to me why they like to see the big guy get rich while we stay poor? What's wrong with me getting some of the money?

The shopkeeper sees this group as "penny pinchers" who will never "make it". They attempt always to put the shopkeeper down and to build themselves up. To avoid criticism the shopkeepers hide their interest in money.

I never let on I'm interested in money. I always show concern for them....Take it slowly and it (the money) will come in. You go after the money so they know and they resent it (14).

In this way the "would be's if they could be's" cause the shopkeeper to maintain a pretence which tends to contradict his occupational goals. Since their money cannot be spent immediately the shopkeepers tend to set their sights on the future. Like the embezzler they must hide what they have to avoid suspicion.

The passing public form a substantial part of the dairy owner's trade. With the decline in shoppers who are dependent on the dairy, these passing customers assume greater importance. However, the shopkeepers are unable to build strong ties with this group and their interaction is characteristically fleeting. Davis (1965) argues that fleeting relationships between service workers and customers gives rise to an exploitative relationship. The present study supports such an idea as it was noted that in interviews, shopkeepers referred to passing trade in terms of the sales they generated, while more regular customers were thought of in terms of their needs. One of the major reasons for the more mercenary view of passing trade is the constant possibility of rudeness. It appears, from the shopkeeper's point of view, that passing trade customers are aware of the fleeting nature of this contact and are

(14) E. Goffman The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life London: Penguin (1959) notes that this need to hide an interest in power is a problem for union organisers. They enjoy power but cannot show this as it is incompatible with the rank and file view of the role. The union organiser has to present a self which does not reflect inappropriate feelings.

willing to be rude because of it. Shopkeepers talk of people banging on the counter for service, cutting in on other customers, openly criticising goods and being directly rude (15). The worst offenders in this group are tourists, a fact which is consistent with the thesis presented above.

The second category of shopkeeper abuse is caused by the failure to pay for goods. The customer's failure to pay for goods is taken, by shopkeepers, as a threat to their delicate economic situation. Despite the shopkeeper's attempt to sell goods for cash, customers continue to ask for credit, and expect cheques to be cashed. It is the familiarity of shopkeeper and customer that gives rise to this situation. This prevents anything being done about it until the problems are of a large proportion. The customer simply does not take the shopkeeper's demands for payment seriously. When this happens the shopkeeper is in a delicate position.

You don't know what to do. If you go and put pressure on the word might get around that you're tight. That's not so good.

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- (15) A partial explanation of the behaviour of these customers may be made in terms of two concepts; time and power. The customer who patronises a store for some item while on the way to some destination will be aware of the time costs of stopping at the dairy. The customer will be impatient if kept waiting. Since the customer is not a regular he may feel he has nothing to lose by trying to hurry up the purchase. For a further elaboration of this point see B. Schwartz 'Waiting, Exchange and Power: The distribution of time in social systems'. American Journal of Sociology Vol. 89 No. 4 (1969) pp. 841-870.

The owners are aware that they cannot appear too anxious to get money or the customers may resent this. Thus, many people are able to abuse the shopkeeper's reluctant generosity without ever being asked for the money. The one action which does allow the shopkeeper to demand his money is for the customer to shop elsewhere. By doing so, the customer makes it clear the shopkeeper will lose nothing if he loses his custom.

We saw this guy going to the shop down the road and then again coming back later with an arm load of things. He must have been trying to avoid us because he kept to the other side of the road. So I said that was it. I went round to his place and told him to pay up or I'd go to the police. You don't need people like that.

The reason the shopkeeper must wait so long before claiming their due is largely a matter of reputation. The shop's continued success depends on people in the community referring one another to the shop. For this to happen the shop must retain the appropriate image.

A third category of abuse arises from the customer's doubt of the shopkeeper's integrity. This is a problem familiar to all service workers. The doctor must be aware of the patient's propensity to misconstrue his behaviour. The janitor must always refuse a drink from a tenant if he is to avoid being labelled a drunk (Gold, 1964). The dairy owners were acutely aware of this type of problem and stated it as a reason for keeping home and work separate. Never-

theless the regular contact between customer and client makes interpersonal conflict always imminent. One dairy owner recalled a series of incidents when a woman who had argued with her stood across the road from the shop and screamed abuse. Another recalled being called a thief after a woman, who had come to the shop to pick up a lost purse, found her money had gone. The shopkeepers tend to think of people who question their integrity as "sick in the head". They see these people as needing to take their problems out on someone and unfortunately, they choose the the shopkeeper. But once again only so much will be tolerated.

This woman came in one day and barged to the front of the line as she usually did. She demanded her loaf of bread so I told her to wait. Do you know she stood there and told everyone who cared to listen that the ham she'd got the day before had been dirty. Just like that.....My husband took her aside and told her to stay away.

The final area of abuse is that of excessive convenience. Excessive convenience is defined by the shopkeeper as the situation where they are asked to do a lot for a customer who gives little or nothing in return. It is the situation described in the previous section taken to the extreme. It is mentioned here to allow a discussion of why the dairy people tolerate such abuses. It would be wrong to assume the shopkeeper takes abuse because of greed or stupidity. While they are in business to make money they all wanted to fill the standard shopkeeping role mentioned earlier in this chapter. That they never fully

come to grips with the reality of the situation is partly due to this aspiration and the lack of collegial relationships. The dairy owner has no one to help them "learn the ropes" and must therefore learn by their mistakes. From the interviews it was apparent that they learn the reality too slowly and often become bitter in the process.

Conclusions

The dairy owner's introduction to dairy life is shaped by the customer's treatment of the dairy. The customers see the dairy as a convenience and seem to care little about the consequences of their behaviour. This, in no way, complements the shopkeeper's definition of the job. In learning the ways of the social network of which they become a part, the shopkeepers never come to accept specific outcomes. They come to place a heavy emphasis on extrinsic rewards and less on intrinsic rewards.

Shepard defines an instrumental work orientation as one in which "work is valued primarily as a means to non-work ends rather than valued for its intrinsic rewards" (1972:167). An opposite of this orientation is self-evaluative involvement which refers to the degree to which a person tests his self esteem in terms of the status criteria of the particular social unit of which he is a member. It is concerned with the degree to which one evaluates oneself with regard to the work role. In this chapter it has been shown that the shopkeeper's work, perforce,

becomes more instrumental as it relates to the customer. The dairy owner has few opportunities to test self-esteem in the dairy. If they are to work for anything it must be instrumental rewards. How the shopkeepers seek to ensure their goals are reached despite their customers, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE SHOPKEEPER-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

PART II

You see, once you have sunk your capital in a shop you do not easily get it out again. If the customer will not come to you cheerfully and freely, the law sets a limit upon the compulsion you may exercise. You cannot pursue people about the streets of a watering-place compelling them by threats of importunity to buy.....
(Wells, 1959:146).

Students of social change, especially those who have concentrated on modernisation with its key process of industrialisation, have primarily concerned themselves with the transformations in the major social institutions in society; for example, the family, the economy, and the polity. But the impact of change can also be observed in other more mundane and focused areas of social life, for example, occupations.

In addition to occupations and professions which have been made redundant by new technology and social upheavals, there have been those occupations which have persisted, but with severely limited functions. A decline in an occupation's functions, also includes a decline in

its status. Shopkeeping is one such occupation (1) and the dairy-grocer is a case in point (2).

The dairy-grocers' dilemma is that changes in retailing and consumer shopping habits have deprived the small store of its once major position in the distributive system. This decline in fortunes has created a situation of crisis for those who occupy the dairy-grocery position. The crisis has been most evident in the difficulty the shopkeeper has in deriving social status and income from the occupation. The dairy-grocer performs a service for the convenience of the public and while, for the customer, the dairy-grocery may at specific times assume importance, for those who operate the dairy, being a convenience offers minimal satisfaction. In fact the situation causes the dairy owners to be economically marginal to the extent that minor economic reversals could put them out of business.

One way the shopkeepers attempt to encourage more business is to use the "price instrument", to cut prices. But for the small shopkeeper price cutting is difficult because it would place them in direct competition with larger stores, a confrontation they could not win. The

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- (1) Davis op. cit. During history the shopkeeper has had a varied level of status. However, since the time of Queen Victoria, when shopkeepers generally were high in status and power, there has been a steady decline in their social position.
- (2) See F.L. Strodbeck and M.B. Sussman 'Of Time the City and the 'One Year Guarantee' ', American Journal of Sociology LXI (1956) pp. 602-609.

only strategy open to the dairy owner is to use the "sales instrument" or the "labour instrument", to rely on interpersonal skills and personal input. Techniques for handling customers in a way that will encourage sales are not easily come by in an owner-operated store. Salesmen in larger organisations may go through formal training courses or pick up valuable understandings from fellow workers (3). But for the independent shopkeeper learning must come through the job; they must learn by their mistakes and hope that the mistakes do not put them out of business.

In this chapter the discussion will cover the methods the shopkeepers had for improving their sales.

Knowing the Customer

At time of entry into the occupation, dairy owners anticipated customers' willing support for the dairy (4).

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- (3) F. Davis 'The Cab-Driver and His Fare: Facets of a fleeting relationship', American Journal of Sociology No. 2 (1956) pp. 158-165, Davis discusses the informal training of a cab-driver. He says, "Once when I complained to a veteran cab-driver about having been 'stiffed' (not tipped) by a young couple, newly arrived in Chicago, to whom I had extended extra services....I was told: 'Wise up kid! When you pick up one of these yockels at the Dearborn Station carrying a lot of cheap straw luggage on him you can bet ninety-nine times out of a hundred that he isn't going to tip you'" (p.164).
- (4) The purchase of 'goodwill' is one reason for this anticipation. However goodwill is really a false hope because in sales of a dairy, the goodwill is merely a reflection of total sales for a two week period.

When this was not forthcoming they began to look for solutions to their economic problems. Lacking skills in the area of business management, the shopkeepers placed an emphasis on their ability to handle customers in a way which could encourage sales and lower the chances of them being exploited (5). The first obvious step in acquiring skill in handling customers, was to learn as much as possible about them. As one respondent said after nine months in a dairy:

I can see now that somehow I've got to learn to read people when they walk through the door. Some people can be worked on, others I guess I'll just have to take as they come. But I'm sure that is the key and if I can just get it worked out, I could do all right.

But the shopkeepers do not wish to know their customers so well that a friendship might arise.

Do you have friends from among your customers?
(interviewer).

No, not really. Not what you would call real friends. But that's the way it's got to be. You're in here to make money and it's got to come from people so they can't be your friends as well.

The strategy used by shopkeepers during the process of getting to know the customer is to act 'as if' they and the customer were friends. Looked at dispassionately,

(5) Stanworth and Curran op. cit. p. 18. "...only 1 per. cent. of chief executives in the manufacturing sector....had any management qualifications". Given the lesser emphasis placed on management in retailing, it would seem reasonable to expect that substantially fewer shop managers would have qualifications.

however, none of the shopkeepers thought these relationships constituted "real" friendships. The need for these psuedo-friendships is exemplified if credit and the dairy-grocer is examined.

It is, perhaps, surprising to discover that dairy-owners do not favour giving credit. Granting credit arrangements to customers would seem to be an excellent way to regularise the customers' use of the shop by allowing debt to give them a sense of obligation. However, the current trading practice of merchants to not allow the dairy credit, makes the dairy owner, in turn, selective when extending this facility to their customers. This selectivity is reinforced by experiences with people who proved to be a bad credit risk. The delicate economic position of the dairy can make an unpaid bill for \$20 a large problem. Consequently the more the dairy owner knows about his customers the less likely he is to err in the decision to grant them credit.

One of the first discoveries of the dairy owner is that credit is most usually requested by people who cannot afford to go to the supermarket and pay cash.(6). Their reliance on the dairy owner is often a sign of economic

(6) In times of economic strife many people are likely to turn to the dairy for credit. Many owners talked of these people as "foul weather friends" and they saw it as just another instance of being used. Once they realised the customer was just using them the owners said they never let the customers do it again.

difficulties and for obvious reasons the owners must take a firm line on requests for credit by insisting on being paid cash for goods. But this does not mean people do not get credit. It seems inevitable that frequent interaction between the shopkeeper and the customer leads to the customer asking for and getting, informal credit. Small debts are recorded on bits of paper and stored under the till for when the customer remembers to pay. Unfortunately, many small sums of money add up to one large debt.

You can't help it, they (the customers) come in here on the way back from church or something and take what they want saying they will be in tomorrow. There's nothing else to do but accept it because if you don't let them have it they think there's something wrong.

This type of credit can be expensive. Due to its informal nature both the shopkeeper and the customer are likely to forget the exchange ever took place, leaving the dairy owner the loser. To replace the informal system the owners begin developing criteria upon which they can base a decision to allow credit. These criteria usually entail knowing in detail the background, living standards, and behavioural standards of customers. Figure 1 following summarizes the most salient criteria in the dairy owner's decision.

It can be seen that the type of information used as a basis for giving credit can be gathered by the dairy owners through personal observation of customers. However, the dairy owners also rely on help from customers when

Figure 1: Variables which contribute to the owners' provisions of credit for a customer.

| <u>Behaviour Prior to Getting Credit</u> | | | | | | <u>Characteristics of the Customer</u> | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <u>Trust</u> | <u>Buying Pattern</u> | <u>Spending Pattern</u> | <u>Honesty</u> | <u>Trust</u> | <u>Duration of Custom</u> | <u>Social Position</u> | <u>Sex</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Race</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>Stability</u> | <u>Age</u> |
| <u>High</u> | Regular | Buys many items | Is Honest | Shows trust in owner | Over long period | Liked in Community | Male | Upper | White | High | Established in the area | Over 30 |
| <u>Low</u> | Irregular | Buys only daily essentials | Has been dishonest | Shows distrust in owner | Over short period | Not liked | Female | Lower | Non-white | Low | Likely to leave the area | Under 30 |

NB: Creditor who is already on the books is accepted.

establishing opinions about those who get credit. One major ally in this process is the child customer. For this reason children are regarded as an asset to the dairy.

You've got to be nice to the kids. They're the number one asset.

As number one asset, the children receive a certain amount of bribery, usually in the form of sweets. Such a practice of enlisting the help of a group related to the worker is common in many service areas: brothel keepers will tip a taxi driver who brings them customers, the janitor will oblige the business manager a favour, the dairy owner will give sweets to children.

Children who like the dairy owner are willing to stand around in the shop chatting about their home and their parents. Innocently given details allow the dairy owner to build up a fabric of knowledge about the adult customer. This knowledge allows the dairy owners to evaluate their own observations. Of course, the children are not the only source of data. In direct discussion, however, adults are less likely to disclose facts about themselves, although they will often talk about other customers in the dairy owner's presence. The dairy is a meeting place for many people in the community and often the dairy owner cannot avoid overhearing conversations which take place in the shop. Customers will quite often talk over intimate details of other customers while the owner is present which

which suggests the owner is, at times, treated like a "non-person" (7). Goffman (1951) has suggested that treatment of servants (for example, cab drivers, elevator operators, and house servants) as non-persons is a feature of many service occupations. Perhaps this is because the customer defines the worker's silence as being bought by the payment for service or goods.

Children are useful to the dairy owners not only as a source of information but also as a method for recruiting adult customers. The child is acknowledged as the way into the adult's pocket.

You've got to get the kids, that way you get the parents as well. If the children come to your shop and like it, when the parent say, is wanting to buy something the child will say, "Go to that shop because you will get a good deal".

The shopkeepers are aware that most customers evince little shop loyalty. Since in many areas of the city customers have a choice of dairies, the dairy owners were eager to find ways of ensuring their dairy was the chosen one. Children provide an effective way of doing this. During the research shopkeepers were often observed spending, what seemed to be, a disproportionate amount of time with child customers. When it became clear that children were an asset,

(7) Goffman (1959) op. cit. describes a non-person as being present during a scene, but is defined as absent by the interactants. Goffman gives the example of the servant who waits on table and is talked about by the people present as if he were not in the room.

time spent with them emerged as an investment in continuity of business.

It is also worth noting that children provide the dairy with a good deal of business. Many children spend as much as a dollar a day on confectionary. Given a high volume of children through the dairy, as is the case if a school is near by, sales in the confectionary area can be very lucrative.

The value of knowing customers is also apparent when the shopkeepers wish to ingratiate themselves with a customer. It was discovered that there were a number of ways to impress a customer and thus try to raise the number of sales made. Some people like to have the dairy owner run after them when they are shopping.

Some people like it when you run after them. You know, they want to stand there and have you do the work. Well if they're the type to pay for it, I really go to work and run around flat out.

Others want quick service and the shopkeepers respond by showing their dexterity.

Around lunch time they just come in for bread or something like that and they don't want to be kept waiting. It's no use trying to talk to people then. We just throw what they want at them and take the money. They appreciate that.

Other people are open to being directed when they are making purchases.

People are blind. They come in, and I've got all the lines a supermarket has got, but they would never know unless I told them. So if they

ask me for something like a bottle of sauce I might say "Oh it's just over there if you'd like to go and look". They nearly always come back with something else in their hand (as well).

Some people can be joked with, while others must be treated circumspectly.

I always chat up people, have a joke or have them on about sport or politics or something (husband).

Yes, but you always have to pick the person. Not everyone likes it and if you say something they don't like they are just as likely to not come back (wife).

Oh, that's right. I agree with that, I couldn't do it with everyone (husband).

In a variety of ways then, the shopkeepers can seek to impress the customer with their ability and guide them into making more purchases. For this to happen the shopkeeper must have detailed knowledge of the customer. It is worth noting that the respondents thought women were most open to this subtle manipulation.

There are times when a customer puts forward a discrepant front causing the shopkeeper to do things which are later regretted (8). One such customer is the person who appears to be wealthy; someone who could be expected to buy a lot from the dairy but in fact never does. The promise of a good sale causes the shopkeeper to be deferential, only to find that the customer does not reciprocate.

(8) Goffman (1959) op. cit. defines a discrepant role as a contradiction between the front that is put forward and the true characteristics of the performer.

The disgust expressed by owners who had experienced the above situation was similar to that expressed by service workers who have been "stiffed" (not tipped) by a customer (9).

The ones who really get my goat drive around in big Jags and come in to buy a paper. Jesus, I would be ashamed to just buy a paper...After a while you learn to expect these people and you just give them what they want and take the money without saying a word. They get the message.

The message the dairy owners wish to get across is that the customer must buy something. It is clear that the dairy, unlike the majority of shops, operates within the norm that once in the shop a customer must buy something unless the owner does not have the article required.

Impression Management

The technique of acting in an appropriate manner when filling a particular role is basic to all occupations. A doctor is "doctor like", a waiter is "waiter like", and a dairy owner must be "dairy owner like" (10). The rationale for performing a role in a particular way is based on the

(9) Gold op. cit. Service workers often see the reality behind the public front put up by individuals. Gold illustrates this through his study of the janitor who knows many intimate details about tenants because of his handling of garbage. In the same way a dairy owner may learn about individuals through the purchases they make.

(10) For a philosophical discussion of this point see Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, London: Methuen (1975).

need for roles to be predictable to allow for free interaction with others. The dairy owners were aware of this type of constraint on their behaviour, and endeavoured to put forward three core elements as a predictable front. These were; 1) a congenial disposition, 2) a diplomatic stance, 3) honesty.

Being congenial was judged to be basic to dealing successfully with people during the superficial interaction of the shop. Shopkeepers felt that the failure of many dairies can be attributed to the owner's disposition and they therefore were eager to ensure they did not cause customers to think of them as malcontents. This point of view was made clear to the researcher when he arrived for an interview with one dairy couple, but was not immediately recognised.

I went into the shop and found the husband up a ladder sorting out some stock. I said hello and asked how business was. He gave me a smile, and said it was great, never better. Then he recognised me and invited me out the back for the interview. As soon as we got through into the house he said, "Actually business is pretty rotten at the moment, but you never tell them (the customers) that. To them you are always on top". (From field notes).

Of course this behaviour, necessary though it might be, can be a double edged sword. By always trying to put forward a congenial front the dairy owner finds it difficult to show the problems endured as a result of trying to please the customer.

Smiling is the primary feature of the dairy owner's attempt to demonstrate contentment and convince the customer that she is welcome. A congenial disposition is essential to the dairy owner's claim to offer friendly personal service. Most dairy owners felt that the customer went shopping as a diversion or to gain some personal gratification other than just the purchase of goods. They felt they should contribute to this gratification (11). Smiling for their public is something the shopkeepers can not always do spontaneously and many of them spoke of the need to have a 'stick on smile'. But even a stick on smile is not easy to have when personal problems threaten the shopkeeper's disposition.

Sometimes we'll be back here (in the house) really tearing into each other, but when that bell goes everything has to stop and we have to go out smiling. I tell you that can be damned hard.

The reference to the bell, in the above extract, concerns the door bell all dairies have installed to warn the owners that a customer wants attention.

Although the shopkeepers cannot show their problems to the customer, the customers often discuss their problems with the shopkeepers. The shopkeepers felt that the correct way to deal with this situation was to listen attentively and keep quiet.

(11) The dairy owners' assessment of why people shop came remarkably close to that made by T.E. Tauber 'Why do People Shop?' Journal of Marketing, Vol. 6 (Oct. 1972) pp. 46-59.

Half the job is listening. I just have to stand here and make like I'm really interested in hearing all they have to say.

And again,

My wife is worth her weight in gold when it comes to listening to people's problems. The thing is she never repeats anything she hears and people know that.

The dairy owners who successfully adopt the above tactics can easily find their shop becoming a "secular confessional". This gives the shopkeepers access to what Hughes (1971) has called "guilty knowledge", a development which can cause problems for the owners. Not least of these problems is the possibility that people may look upon the dairy owner as a friend or enemy because they feel the owner knows too much about them. Cummings and Harrington (1963) discuss this problem in reference to clergymen and conclude that workers who are given sensitive information should avoid dealing with their friends and family. This stance is indeed adopted by many professional service workers. However, it is not so easily adhered to by workers who can not control the access customers have to them. These workers are forced to walk a fine line between becoming too familiar with customers or losing the customer who feels uncomfortable about what the shopkeeper knows. The dairy owners thought the best approach was to maintain a silence about everything they heard.

Of course the dairy owner must say something to the customer. As noted earlier, with some customers the

shopkeeper can talk of consequential issues, but with the majority the talk takes the form of sociable chat. Simmel (1964) refers to sociable chat as, an indispensable medium through which relationships are established. But the topics of the conversation are of little consequence, indeed if the relationship is to remain as the important factor, no one topic can be allowed to become the focal point. This type of interaction can be used to the advantage of the shopkeeper as is explained below.

Really we're just a bunch of con men. I use that term because I heard it on the radio, but that is what we are. A guy comes in for something and if I can get him talking he will buy something else because he's uncomfortable just standing around not buying.

The chat itself may be inconsequential but the hoped for outcome, at least as far as the shopkeeper is concerned, certainly is not. To pursue such an openly manipulative line of activity the shopkeeper must exercise a great deal of care; the customer must never realise the reality of the situation. This caring attitude of the shopkeeper is not wasted on the passing public, but is reserved for the regular customer, from whom the shopkeepers make most of their money. That it is a front which the shopkeeper puts forward was shown by one owner who said:

Do I care about them (the customers)? No I suppose not in any real way. It's just something you do so they feel good and think you care about them. It's the sort of thing they can't get at the super-market so they will come here for it.

This concern with impressions also involves the shopkeeper in always trying to appear honest to the customer. The importance of this appearance relates to the emphasis customers place on prices; on getting a good deal. It is difficult for shopkeepers to convince customers of their honesty because shopkeepers, generally, have a history of roguishness (Davis 1966). However, the need to hold customers makes it imperative that the shopkeeper establish a reputation of honesty.

My brother owns a little gift shop up Auckland way and he told me when I got this place to always be straight...Really honest with the customers. Otherwise the word gets around and people won't come. Nobody likes knowing they are begin cheated.

Apart from the emphasis on honesty shown in the above quote, it is once again seen that the shopkeepers are aware of the referral network which can work for or against them. A dairy owner does not have the financial resources to advertise and must rely on word-of-mouth.

The dairy owners said they tried to be very demonstrative when it came to honesty. They referred people to the official price list of goods to emphasise the fairness of dairy prices. They clearly marked the prices on their stock and told people who were getting old stock at old prices to show they had not put prices up. A customer's purchases were always added up on a machine and the list given to the customer to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding. Lost money was always returned to the customer and overpayments were likewise returned. With

these methods the shopkeeper hopes to convince the customer that honesty is the policy of the shop.

The management of impressions goes on for the shopkeepers outside the immediate atmosphere of the shop. Most shopkeepers felt they were under the watchful eye of the community no matter what they did.

Now when I go up town I always seem to be banging into someone from around here. It makes me very conscious of how I dress and behave.

The constant possibility of being seen by customers makes the owners worry about what sort of image they portray wherever they are.

I compare the things they expect of us with those expected of a minister. We have to be upright citizens who are always on good behaviour.

This constraint on behaviour can make it difficult for the owners to relax outside the home.

When I'm out at the pub there is usually someone there from the shop and I feel as if I have to behave myself. I never used to be like that (laughter) so I find it very hard.

But the owners find that an attendance to proprieties has its rewards. Customers come to perceive the dairy people as the 'right' sort of shopkeepers and this helps build up custom.

Interestingly, after a period of time the owners feel they can, and should, relax standards. They explained this in terms of the customer liking to see the shopkeepers had a 'human' side as well.

Since we've got to know them (customers) we tell them if we are going out for a few drinks and they always give us a ribbing the next day when they come in. It gives them a laugh to be able to talk about what we have done.

A final note on the management of impressions can be made here in reference to the concept of role distance. Acting a role, especially one which requires the person to be 'naturally' contented, diplomatic, and honest, while the situation seems right, the opposite behaviour can be an onerous experience. Some owners talked of the need to escape the job on occasions to avoid going 'mad'. The need to get away is described below.

Some guys just can't take the crap that people give them. Excuse the language but that is just what it is. Anyway they can't take it so they give it back. Well that is the beginning of the end I can tell you.

To avoid such problems of open conflict the shopkeepers must adopt some distancing strategies. At the most basic level the owners become practised at "switching off", acting the way the customer expects them to without any commitment to the action.

How do you act when people complain about things that have little to do with you.

Well, for a while I used to try and be sympathetic, but I couldn't keep it up. Some of the things people complain about are just so trivial that you wouldn't believe it. The bread is the wrong colour, the milkman put their bottles on the ground Now I just stand here and nod my head. I'm afraid it's the only way I can take it.

The shopkeepers, dealing with the mundane items of everyday life, get to see the stupidity and triviality of people

and this tends to reinforce their self image as someone who has to put up with a lot; but at times the customers become intolerable. Their demands are too great, their dishonesty is too blatant, their selfishness too persistent to be tolerated, let alone accepted. When this happens the shopkeeper has only one safe recourse, to make use of the "backstage" area provided by the home or room attached to the shop.

When I get someone who really drives me crazy I come out here and sort of act what I would like to say to them. I know that might sound childish but it's either that or an argument. So it's best to get it off your chest.

This retreat to childish behaviour by the owner is similar to that employed by the "puller" described by Levitin (1972). The puller is a man who stands outside a store and tries to encourage passers by to go in and look around. Such a job opens the person to abuse and Levitin uses the concept of role distance to explain such regressive behaviour as rocking back and forward, an action engaged in by the puller when abused by a customer. Role distance also seems to explain the behaviour of the dairy grocer. Perhaps this is a feature of all service occupations where workers seek to channel their frustrations into some harmless outlet.

Bending the Rules

The study of deviant occupations has attracted a great deal of attention from sociologists. But of equal

interest is the subject of those occupations which are legal but bend the legal and moral framework which surrounds them. Ritzner (1972) gives the example of the butcher who cuts less meat than is paid for, puts his finger on the scales, and adds colour to the meat. Other acts also fall outside the legal framework, as in the case of retail pharmacists who violate prescriptions (Quinney, 1972). There is doubt on such occasions, at least in the worker's mind, that such actions are indeed immoral or illegal. To the worker fault often lies with the system, which makes it impossible for him to do his job adequately and make a satisfactory living. It is with these thoughts in mind that this last section discusses the dairy owners bending of the rules.

The trading laws in New Zealand are designed to limit full trading in all goods to a five day week during the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The aim of this limitation of hours is the protection of workers from exploitation and the maintenance of a weekend free from commercial pursuits. The Shops and Offices Act (1955) includes a list of goods which are thought to be of necessity accessible to the public over an extended period of time. This list is short enough to make it unprofitable for most stores to stay open beyond normal trading hours. Since many of the goods included in the list are characteristically stocked by dairies it can pay the owner to stay open for longer hours. But the list is not so extensive as to

cover all the stock of a dairy. Goods which are not exempt are required by law to be hidden from the customer's view. The dairy owners not only flout this restriction, they sell anything they can during the weekends and evenings when the competition is closed. Such actions open them to prosecution by the Labour Department. The dairy owner can be fined up to \$250 for offences, which is, in many cases, equal to two weeks profit. However, the dairy owners claim they must gamble or risk going out of business because they cannot make a profit on the five day week trade.

Look I couldn't survive without the weekend trade.
All week we are just making our bread and butter.
It's in the weekend that we start to make money.

Of course the dairy owners are supported in their actions by the public. The human condition is one of forgetfulness, and inevitably the dairy owner is asked for a full range of goods in the course of a weekend (12). The owners sell all they can and think it ridiculous that they should do otherwise.

If the Labour Department inspector's wife runs out of toilet paper or sugar in the weekend, where does she go? Right to the dairy. It's stupid that we can't sell everything because there is always someone who wants something we are not supposed to sell.

The dairy owners believed that the trading laws were designed to restrict the small businessman. They felt that

(12) This fact has been used by larger retail stores to help their application for longer trading hours.

big business was behind restrictions because large retail businesses cannot open for longer hours. In fact they are only partly right. The trading laws are established by a triumvirate of employers, trade unions and the Labour Department. But knowing the cause of their troubles does not make life easier for the owners. During the course of the research the Labour Department were in the process of prosecuting many dairy owners for illegal trading.

The other major area of rule bending in which the shopkeepers were involved was that of pricing. Bending the rules on pricing is, of course, a direct contradiction of the policy of honesty claimed by the owners. The possibility for manipulating prices while appearing honest, arises from the ignorance of most shoppers. Constantly changing prices make it impossible for shoppers to accurately keep track of what they should be paying for an item. The shopkeeper, who often refers the customer to the price book, is usually at pains to ensure the customer never actually has enough information to keep up with prices.

The dilemma of pricing for the dairy owner is caused by the deadly mechanism of inflation. If an article is bought in for, say, 10 cents and sold for 13 cents a profit of 3 cents is made by the owner. But if before the dairy owner can buy in new stock the price of the article has risen to thirteen cents, any profit made on the original sale disappears. To guard against this continual loss of profit the owners are forced to bend the rules. They claim the fault lies with the system not the owner.

I can't help it. I could go on forever making nothing if I didn't put prices up. Even the guy in the dairy has to make a living.

The manipulation of prices must be handled with care, if the dairy owner is to avoid arousing the suspicion of customers. Advanced news of imminent price rises helps them in this. One owner tells of how advanced news helped him make a handsome profit out of sugar.

I heard about it(sugar) going up and for once I got the drop on everybody. I bought every bit of sugar I could lay my hands on. The house was just about collapsing with the weight of the sugar. We sold it all eventually.

At what price? (interviewer)

The new price, that was my biggest killing.

It must be remembered that the dairy owners bend rules just to survive. They feel they are forced into a situation where they must sell old bread under false pretences, roll ice creams with a hole in the centre to make them look bigger, use old milk in milk shakes and tell people it is fresh, and hold back hard to get stock to get a better price for it when the price goes up or when they sell it as 'a favour' to a customer. To the customer many of these practices would be reprehensible. To the dairy owner they are facts of life.

Conclusions

The situation of the dairy owners seems to be this: They find it difficult, or impossible to operate their businesses successfully by relying on the goodwill of the customers. Although the dairy may be an integral part of

the everyday life of customers, the money they spend in the shop is not sufficient to provide the owner with a satisfactory standard of living. To combat this the shopkeepers must embark on a programme of controlling the customer to gain higher profits. At times this can involve manipulation and illegal activities. Concomitant with this is the inability of owners to derive self-esteem from the job. Some owners talked of the satisfaction they got from surviving in a job which would be too much for most people. But this is not the pride which arises from a job well done and well appreciated by customers. It is more the pride which arises from a marginal situation which is perpetuated by the wits of the individual who always beats the odds.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the dairy owner's job is the need to invest themselves into the job and the customers. The strain of maintaining a front before customers who seldom reciprocate the shopkeeper's efforts merely serves to reinforce the lack of real support which the shopkeeper receives from the community. The outcome of such a contradictory situation is the development of a calculative and often exploitative attitude on the part of the shopkeeper.

CHAPTER VI

FAMILY WORK

The marginal victim typically uses his family to help out in (the) store. Economic life coincides with family life.....in the hole-in-the-wall business.....(C. Wright Mills, 1951:32)

The working conditions of the small shopkeeper have seldom been viewed with optimism. In literary (Malamud, 1959), journalistic (Bugler, 1970) and sociological (Klingender, 1951) accounts of the shopkeeper's work the features of deprivation, long hours of work, total family involvement, and deference to customers' wishes are common. Indeed it would appear that the survival of a small shop as an economic unit is often dependent upon self-exploitation by the family that owns and operates it.

The concern in this chapter is with the viability of the family work unit in today's society. If the small shop, and perhaps small business in general, is to survive, the low cost, high output formula made possible by the family must be retained. If the rewards for a family working together are few, both in terms of what is achieved and the satisfaction gained from working together, then it would seem likely that family work will cease to be a

feature of economic life. In the discussion that follows a number of issues which highlight the realities of family work in the dairy are covered: What are the characteristics of the work? What is the contribution of each family member? What are the stresses on the husband and wife? What are the personal costs of being dedicated to a small business?

The Family Work Unit

Family work is a universal phenomenon and it has played an important part in a number of areas of economic activity. It was important in manufacturing in the 'putting out' system where the whole family might cooperate in a small manufacturing process. This system was used in Japan during World War II and was part of an effective war machine. The family business has many examples in urban areas in the form of grocery shops, restaurants, petrol stations and the many owner-operator concerns (1); but it is the farm that is its

(1) It should be recognised that many small businesses, other than the dairy, could not operate without the contribution of the wife and sometimes the children. Take for example, the trucking contractor who has his wife act as a receptionist; or the travelling salesman who uses his wife as a secretary. In both of these examples the wife works to further her husband's work without any pay and without public acknowledgement. If the realities of small business operation are to be fully understood, the wife's role will need to be studied.

most prevalent form. Family work survived as an important production unit in many areas until quite recently. It has given way under pressure from bigger business enterprises, high technology, and changes in the role of the family in society (Gross, 1958). Currently there are some attempts by subcultural groups to reinstate the traditional family work unit, however such a reversal of trends seems impossible for the larger society.

Given the inefficiency of the family as a productive unit, the question arises as to how it has managed to persist in some areas even today. Caplow has outlined the conditions which favour the family enterprise.

If communication and transport are so limited that all production must be consumed on the spot, most of its (the family unit) disadvantages disappear. If the conduct of the enterprise depends upon the maintenance of secrecy, or upon a high degree of mutual confidence, there are few guarantees as effective as the bond of kinship. In few trades still holding secrets - bell casting, gondola-making, certain kinds of perfumery - the family organisation of production has remained almost unchanged since the Middle Ages....

It will be noted that until quite recently these special conditions were the conditions of production everywhere. Markets were overwhelmingly local, most useful skills were carefully guarded, and there were few convenient devices for enforcing contracts between strangers.

One further condition which favours the family enterprise should be emphasised. Where the location of a productive establishment is permanently fixed and its expansion is permanently limited, there is no way for competing forms of organisations to enter. Family enterprise persists in significant numbers where this condition is approximately filled; general farms

and neighbourhood retail stores. With the evolution of new devices - machinery appropriate for large scale cultivation, and bulk purchasing distribution systems of the chain store - these two strongholds are slowly giving way (Caplow, 1954: 251-252).

It can be seen that the neighbourhood dairy continues to exist because, as yet, the larger store has been unable to attract all the business away from the neighbourhood area.

The family unit which owns and operates a dairy bears only a basic resemblance to the traditional extended family headed by a patriarch which is implied by the term family work. The dairy involves, typically, a couple and their children. In a number of cases there are no children present. Changes in the family structure toward the nuclear model have indicated the decreasing significance of the extended family model. The contemporary family has little need of the support provided by a broad kinship network (Winch, 1971). It is also true that the economic realities of a dairy make it unlikely that more than a nuclear family unit would seek to operate it.

Taking the dairy as an example, family work has little of the symbolic meaning invested in it by members of the traditional family group. Family work is, to the dairy family, a matter of economic expediency. Although most dairy owners nurture ideals of family togetherness, these are not easily maintained in the realities of everyday life in a dairy. Family and

occupation do not become one as in the more traditional model. Rather, it is a case of family life being sacrificed to economic life. The sacrifice is hoped to be a short time measure by the members of the family.

You were talking before about keeping the dairy in the family. I don't think that's the way with us. Really and truly we're just a couple with some kids who happen to work in a dairy. We're here for the money, and we'll get out when we've got it. I don't see it as having any more meaning than that.

This pragmatic involvement of the family in the dairy seems to mirror the now tenuous position of the family business as described by Caplow. In contemporary society few families are structurally suited to family work and even fewer opportunities exist for family work. The dairy owners provide a modern example of the family as an economic unit. The low cost of family labour is exploited for purposes of financial gain.

The Work Characteristics

Deeks (1973) maintains that small businessmen work for wages and not for profit. The personal return of the little shopkeeper is on labour, not on investment. This perception of the small shopkeeper's work is supported by data gathered in the present research. The dairy owner's thought of themselves as 'just working for a wage', 'just shop assistants', or 'we're not working for ourselves, we're working for the middle man'.

Such a self-definition by shopkeepers suggests they have more in common with employees than entrepreneurs. This comparison between shopkeepers and employees was strengthened by the discovery that shopkeepers characterised their work in terms usually associated with industrial employees. In summary form these characterisations involved; monotony, fragmentation, excessive pace and loss of control.

A common charge levelled against factory work is that it is inherently monotonous and repetitive. Surprisingly, because the dairy owners are, at least, ostensibly, independent workers who could be expected to have variety in their job, the dairy owners characterised their work in the same way.

It's like housework, I clean the shelves, stack them with tins, someone comes in and buys something so I have to start all over again....It's a never ending cycle of doing the same things.

It is interesting that the dairy owners should characterise their work as housework, because in a recent book by Oakley (1974), housework is described as a "compulsive circle". This same image of always going over the same ground in a never ending cycle fits the work of the dairy owner. However, like housework, the dairy owners work is never so mindless as to allow them to go through the routine without thinking. There is always the intrusion of the customer to break the routine and split up the rhythm of tasks.

The feeling of monotony is highlighted by the lack of any contrast in the weekly routine. Unlike the employee the shopkeeper can not look forward to a 'quitting time' or a weekend with the promise of different activities. The time the shopkeeper has left after a fifteen hour day (often longer), seven days a week, is spent in sleeping.

The thing is we don't have weekends or nights out during the week. We don't even have holidays to look forward to. It's just work and sleep. You know it's funny but in a job like this the one thing you don't notice is the time.

The feeling of fragmentation in a job arises from the work being subdivided into a series of unconnected tasks not requiring the worker's full attention. The shopkeeper is seldom able to continue a task for any length of time. The actual or imminent presence of the customer is the cause of fragmentation.

I can never get the housework done as I want to....One thing I really hate is being interrupted in the middle of a load of washing and finding myself needed in the shop.

There is a great deal of fragmentation in the wife's work because of her dual input into the shop and the home. Faced with the pressure of home and shop chores many of the wives had decided to attend to the house only when they could find time. This decision created unsatisfactory living conditions for some of the owners, but the wives felt this was preferable to going 'mad'.

For the husband there was the frustration of never being able to operate the shop as he would like, due to interruptions.

I've wanted to have some kind of stock control since we started here. But it takes time to build up the records and I haven't got the time because I'm always getting disturbed.

A direct result of this constant breaking up of the work routine is an attempt, by the shopkeepers, to regularise the process of work by giving in to the customer. The shopkeepers tend to put aside the more time consuming tasks and wait for the customers rather than be interrupted. This sitting back is the cause of the 'oases' of leisure that appear in the shopkeepers' day. It is also the cause of declining standards.

When we first came in here everything was kept spotless. I really don't know how we did it now, but the shelves were clean, the floors were scrubbed...Not that things are that bad now. But as we got on it just seemed unavoidable that things began to slip.

The shopkeepers talked of their inability to keep up as related to their need to be at the customer's convenience. The situation caused dissatisfaction because it resulted in jobs being 'done badly'. It was argued that the shop would be more efficient if time could be spent on management tasks. This last complaint seems, at first glance, to clash with what was said earlier about the oases of leisure. The problem for the shopkeepers is that free time is created by the fragmentary nature of the job. They are unable

to utilise this time effectively. Most of the owners referred to a problem of unfilled hours. The worst time seemed to be in the early afternoon.

The hardest thing is to try to fill the afternoons. I can't sleep, I can't go out so I have to sit here and think about what I would like to be doing.

Excessive pace arises in the dairy owner's work because of fragmentation and the inability to complete tasks. The pace of work caused dissatisfaction among dairy owners and made it difficult for the researcher to secure interviews. The dairy owners claimed they lacked the time for an interview yet it became clear during interviews that the lack of time was a myth. The problem was rather that there was always something that could be done, not one of always being in the midst of doing something. This situation causes the dairy owners to always have a future orientation, making them feel as if they are under constant pressure and therefore exacerbating the problem of never getting tasks completed.

A final characteristic of the dairy owner's work was that of loss of control over their work. Control over work is usually considered to be highly desirable; moreover it is usually thought of as being especially important to the independent worker. Among dairy owners, however, independence was more often mentioned as an aspiration than as a reality. Reasons for this loss of independence lie with the lack of control the dairy

owners had over the job.

The dairy owner works at and for the customer's convenience. The hours the shop is open are designed to suit the customer. Weekend work is dictated by the customer's needs. The dairy owner is seldom in a position to suit themselves because of their economically delicate position. If they are to make enough money they must accept that what the customer wants they shall provide. As one owner put it, "Customers are the dairies' clock".

The tyranny of the suppliers is felt first through the creation of demands for products through advertising. Through advertising the customer becomes aware of products and the shopkeeper becomes merely a dispenser. The shopkeepers felt that manufacturers dictated how much of a product they should stock and how much they should charge. Where goods were bought through a group buyer the individual shopkeeper was left with little say about the amount or type of stock bought. The situation of the dairy owners can best be summarised by their handling of bread.

The dairy owner makes a minimal profit on bread. Yet they must carry it to ensure customers come to the shop. The health department demand a high standard of hygiene if bread is to be handled so the dairy owners have to construct, at their own expense, the appropriate facilities for handling bread. The bread suppliers

dictate the terms of when bread will be delivered. Often this results in the dairy owner having to provide a key to the shop for the delivery man. This the dairy owners resent. In the handling of bread the dairy owners have no effective control at all. Their role is confined to dispensing the product. Asked about this idea of independence one owner replied, 'It's not what I would call independence exactly'.

Work Pattern

For the dairy owners and their families, work is the 'supreme social reality'. Soon after entry into the dairy the family members have to agree to a life style wholly centred on work if the shop is to show a profit. Such an agreement cannot be undertaken lightly, for the continuation of the dairy relies on the family members not being sidetracked by other interests. All the owners were aware of the strains imposed on the family by the dairy and therefore placed emphasis on the agreement and what it meant in terms of their life style.

This focus, in sociological terms, gives the dairy owner's work the appearance of a 'central life interest' (2). However this central life interest is a matter of necessity not of choice.

(2) The central life interest concept was first used by R. Dubin 'Industrial Worker's Worlds: A study of 'Central Life Interests' of industrial workers'. Social Problems Vol. 3 No. 4 (1956) pp. 131-156.

What's my main interest in life? It's not what my main interest is, it's what I have to do. The shop takes all my time to the extent that I don't have a chance to do much else. But I wouldn't want to call it my main interest.

Taking the characteristics of the dairy owner's work into account, makes it easy to see why dairy owners might not see work as a voluntary central life interest. A number of similarities can be found between dairy owners, fishermen, and miners on this matter of the significance of work. Work seems to embrace the whole life style of fishermen, miners, and their families. However, a work dominated life style is not the choice of these occupational groups and to compensate themselves they adopt a leisure pattern which includes a number of directly compensatory activities (Cotgrove and Parker 1963). Dairy owners show the same pattern of enforced dedication to work and the desire to compensate themselves for their work experiences. Compensation through leisure is, however, something that must be delayed as there is little time and energy left for the dairy owner to use after a long day in the shop. Such free time as there is, is spent recuperating and getting ready for the next day. But all the dairy owners were looking forward to a "long and well deserved break".

The pattern of work results in extreme isolation for dairy owners. It is a result which is not even alleviated by strong ties within the occupational group.

Those dairy owners who were located within a shopping centre knew those around them but, due to competition, did not count other shopkeepers as friends.

The butcher sells eggs; the Ching (the green-grocer) sells tinned fruit and soft drink; the grocer sells ice cream, buns and papers; the chemist sells anything that walks into his shop; so I do the bloody same.

Under these competitive conditions colleague relationships are unlikely to arise among the shopkeeper stratum. But they are also unlikely among dairy owners as a group. Dairy owners seldom see each other except at the warehouse or at the vegetable market. Lack of contact was thought of as a desirable situation.

I don't know the fellow down the road and I've no interest to do so. He's got his business and I've got mine. If I had the time to go and see how he was doing I wouldn't be running my own business properly.

Such attitudes as those expressed above are not the basis for a strong community of interest, a factor which undermines the possibility of solidarity among dairy owners when confronting issues which affect all of them.

Friendships are also difficult for the dairy owner to maintain. When asked about friends most respondents had difficulty listing any. It was not that they did not know people, it was just that they would not permit themselves to call casual acquaintances friends. This state of affairs arises mainly from the difficulty of including friends in the daily round of activities.

Many had lost the friends they had before they entered the dairy.

We really have no friends in the sense you mean. All the friends we had have been lost because it's impossible to see them. If they invite us out it's not that easy to go. If we want to invite them here, well it gets so late and we get tired. When people are here I have one eye on the clock the whole time.

Friendships are also difficult to have because of the business. It appeared that business and friends do not mix and the shopkeepers therefore felt it necessary to restrict contact between customers and themselves.

I couldn't have friends from among my customers. What say I started going to a club with them and we became good friends. They'd probably expect me to let them live cheap out of the shop. That we just couldn't afford.

In this way dairy owners remain in an enforced isolation, confining themselves to interaction within the family group and that which arises through the work situation.

The work pattern also prevents leisure activities. The most common leisure activity mentioned was racing. Like most of the other leisure interests mentioned, racing is an activity which can be pursued individually and from within the home. Among the men, interests included; racing pigeons, reading, television, ham radio, woodwork, golf and twilight cricket. Among the women such interests as shopping, visiting, knitting, television and children were mentioned. For both groups the most often mentioned leisure pursuit was sleeping.

This last activity indicates the necessity the owners felt for fitting leisure time to work needs.

Holidays were hardly ever taken by the dairy owners. During interviews the owners mentioned with pride that they had not taken a holiday in a number of years. They felt their ability to endure work was something which could not be matched by many people (3). Some owners did take holidays, but separately, the wife with the children, then the husband on his own. Under these conditions time off from the shop becomes precious and most owners spent time they had with their family. This points to an irony. Despite the family working together the members can feel isolated from each other because they have no time to do things together. This fact perhaps lends support to the age old dictum of a family playing together as a way of strengthening bonds between the members.

Research by Parker (1972) helps to put this work pattern in perspective. Parker (1972) would suggest that the work routine of dairy owners can be characterised as an extensive pattern, with elements of an opposition pattern also present. The extension pattern

(3) The idea of gaining pride from work which would be shunned by others has, as yet, remained largely unresearched. One of the few studies available is H. Meare 'Honor in Dirty Work' Sociology of Work and Occupations Vol. 2 No. 2 (Aug. 1974) pp. 259-282.

can be described in the following way.

Work Situation

Work place and living space are highly coextensive.
Work consists of a variety (limited number) of
ways of helping people.
Work expands to fill the total time in residence
almost completely.

Work and Leisure

Willingness to work during official time off.
Social contacts almost entirely in the world
of work.
High (low) emotional involvement in work.

(Adapted from Parker, 1972:90).

The dairy owners extend their work into leisure in a way that fuses the two together. However the owners were not entirely satisfied with such an arrangement. They complained of the failure of inputs to be matched by rewards. This was, to them, a bad situation which contributed to their desire to leave the job. In terms of the opposition elements of the work routine, it can be said that the work experiences of the dairy owners gradually leads them to dislike their work and to want to escape from it.

The work pattern of the dairy owner has high survival for the shop, but low survival value for the individual. By being totally dedicated the shopkeeper can, to some degree, ensure the success of the shop. But there are few rewards forthcoming to match this dedication and there are few families who would be prepared to accept the life style for a protracted period.

Husbands and Wives

The work of husbands in the dairy can be characterised as 'instrumental' and primary, while the wife's work is 'socio-emotional' and ancillary. The shop is the husband's career and this is reflected in the way couples think about the shop and their part in its operation. The wife has a primary interest in the home and possibly children, activities which do not allow her to put as much time into the shop as the husband.

The husband's work consists mainly of tasks which keep the shop running as a business. He will handle the heavy work such as carrying bread, soft drinks and milk. He will do the 'dirty' work of scrubbing the floors and cleaning the fridges. It is the male who does most of the buying in of stock, and goes to the warehouse and vegetable market to see what is available. It is the male's job to handle staff if there are any. In matters of policy around the shop it is the male who has the final say.

The male is the manager of the shop. He may include his wife in the running of the shop but she is generally excluded from the processes guiding the shop. This fact became clear during interviews when it was found that few wives had the knowledge to discuss the running of the shop. An example of the wives' exclusion was observed on one occasion when a group of five dairy

owners met to discuss a voluntary buying group. Only the wife of the host was present and her role was a passive one. The male's dominance in the affairs of the shop is taken to be 'natural'. However, as is discussed later, this is a situation which often emerges as an answer to the difficulties of a husband and wife working together.

The lack of in depth communication between husband and wife over shop matters indicates that husbands are not using their wives as 'bouncing boards' or 'wailing walls' as is the custom among their big business counterparts (Whyte, 1962). Possibly because the wife sees most of what takes place around the shop discussion is superfluous. However, it does seem that the traditional mindedness of the dairy couples had a great deal to do with the exclusion of the wife.

The women provided a supportive role in the shop. They augment the male's more task oriented approach to work with a maintenance approach to work (4). The shop takes priority over housework, and in most cases children, an arrangement which causes the wife much frustration.

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- (4) Task oriented - the job and how it is done.
 Maintenance oriented - the social dimension which has to do with the feelings people have toward each other.
 It will be argued here that the husband and wife adopt, what Fisher (1974) has called complementary roles, and that this helps them to survive in the shop while establishing a climate that customers like.

As the auxiliary labour force in the shop the wife is expected to, as one woman described it, 'do everything a man does except lift heavy weights'. In this can be seen the typical division of labour that arises in a family work situation. Chapple and Coon (1942:144) note that there is a tendency for the division of labour to not separate the sexes but to bind them together through interdependence. The major difference is the male's concern with longer term tasks while the woman is concerned with the daily cycle of activities. From this division of labour comes a concern for equality in the dairy couple's relationship. In appearance they do have equality but it was clear that this appearance covers a stratification of roles.

The women provided an essential socio-emotional element to the shop's relationships with customers. This was something few men claimed to be good at. Some went as far as to say they avoided people who were 'talkers' and relied on the wife to handle them. For this role of talking to and being friendly to customers the wife was highly valued by the husband.

The success of the business probably belongs to June. She's the one who has built up the trade by being nice to everyone, chatting to them and remembering their names.

In this complementarity of roles occupied by the husband and wife there is some insight into the value of having a husband and wife team run a dairy. The

dairy is a place which has a reputation for being similar to a family home. The couple in the dairy literally run a business in their home and for the customer this can mean an extension of their own home into the dairy. In Goffman's (1959) words, this means an extension of the backstage area. In real terms this means customers can go to the dairy in the same old clothes they wear around the house and expect to be accepted as they are. The dairy owners are aware of this 'homey' aspect of their business and seek to enhance it in the relationships with customers.

It's a good thing to have a couple, a man and a wife, in a shop like this because it makes people feel comfortable. Women can go to women, and the men to men. Or they can have a joke with either of us. We find that the men will pull my leg and the women will pull Dave's. It makes for a good atmosphere, you know. Anyway that's the way we try to make it.

The woman's socio-emotional role is also important for the inter-relationships between husband and wife. The couples saw arguments as something to be avoided if they were to be able to present the 'correct' front to their customers. However, given constant tiredness and other everyday problems this was not easy. The wife was relied on to smooth over the tensions.

It can get pretty hot around here at times. I would say if Betty didn't have such an even nature there'd be some real beauts (arguments) between us.

By adopting the role of maintaining the family group as a working unit, the wife helps to ensure harmonious family as well as customer relations.

Work Adjustments

All workers must go through a phase of adjusting to a new work role. The prospect of working with one's spouse, however, presents special problems.

Two of the twenty-four couples had worked together before they entered the dairy. For the rest a feature of the early months in the shop was learning how to work, as well as live, together. This proved to be a stressful process for the couples who, until entering the dairy, had lived in accordance with conventional family norms which caused the family to be centred on the male's occupation. To many sociologists a situation which requires a couple to pursue careers, such as in a dual career family, is fraught with difficulty. Writing on this topic of two careers in one family, Parsons (1957:152) says the solidarity of the conjugal family is 'facilitated by the prevalence of the pattern that normally only one of its members has an occupational role which is of determinate significance to the status of the family as a whole'. For the family in the dairy there is a need to establish who is going to have the role of determinate significance when both are doing much the same job. Of course the answer is inherent in the values the couples bring into the dairy with them. But in the process of establishing these within a new setting there are many problems.

For some couples the pressures of dairy life can prove too great. It will be remembered that some people went into the dairy as a partial solution to marital problems. The strain of working together can be enough to finish the marriage. Yet it can also offer a growing experience. Most of the couples in the sample saw their time together in the dairy as strengthening their marriage.

An initial pressure confronting the couples was the need to adjust to working in the presence of each other. The employee can disappear from the spouse's view each morning and return at night to render his own account of the day's happenings. The dairy owners cannot escape the attention of each other and unless they can establish a non-evaluative working climate problems can arise. For the husband, who is accustomed to unquestioned dominance in the family, this can be especially trying. Thus, while the couples emphasised equality, it was clear that during the early months in the shop a struggle for 'correct' equality took place.

When we first got here the pressure really built up between us. It was like being under a microscope, you know. She would watch me, I would watch her....we wouldn't even be aware we were doing it. It was something that had to be worked out and luckily for us it has worked out pretty well.

The problem is one of allocating authority while retaining the appearance of the work being 'fifty-fifty'. The final outcome in all cases was a re-establishing of the old patterns of behaviour. The man takes the shop

as his career and is consequently in the shop more and makes the important decisions. With the house to occupy her the wife gradually abdicates full responsibility of the shop to the husband. But this does not mean she gives way easily. One husband commented:

Somehow she just has to learn that only one person can be the boss. A business can't be run properly if everyone is the boss, can it? It's no use us going each other over everything.

Getting rid of competitiveness leads to stability in the relationship, but it does not necessarily engender a satisfactory colleague relationship. As mentioned earlier the couples do not share their work experiences through conversation. In fact they seemed not to talk about the job in order to avoid conflict. They spoke of tolerating each other in an effort to get through their time in the shop.

At all costs we have to avoid arguments. They are just not worth it....The idea is to tolerate each other. We have to stick to the agreement to work out the time (in the dairy) without a major upset. If we can keep each other to the agreement there will be no arguments.

There can, however, be a silver lining. One couple claimed that the shop had offered them a chance to work in an ideal co-worker relationship. One husband claimed:

Who else would I want to work with? I chose her as a wife and I've chosen her as a workmate. I couldn't get that in any other job. (The wife was absent from the room at the time of this statement).

But such a view has a polar opposite:

Being locked in here together all day, doing the same things is bloody hard, let's face it... It's as hard as being locked up with your mates in a factory. No it's worse!

Between the extreme points of view lay the opinions of the other men.

The women tended to think of their relationship in terms of a boss and a worker. They perceived themselves to be the 'flunkey', the 'slave', and they tended to see the husband as the manager.

I've handed in my notice many times but he won't accept it. Guess I'm just stuck with the job. Anyway, where else could he find labour this cheap.

And:

He's not a bad boss. He gives me time off to clean the house and cook the meals...The holidays are lousy.

The women tended to joke about their position but the consistency of their answers made it clear they were not happy with their secondary status. It is not difficult to understand why. In today's work force many women are earning an income in employment which cannot possibly be matched by the one gained in a dairy.

(5). The independence a woman gains by having her own

(5) This problem is also mentioned by J. Bugler 'Dying to Serve You' Observer, 1 June (1970) p.70. Bugler quotes a woman as saying; "My husband once said that if I'd had a job for the past three years at £20 a week, I could have earned, yes about £3000. That depressed me a bit".

job seems much more in keeping with the tenor of the times. She is hardly ever acknowledged by others in the social network of which the shop is a part. Talking of manufacturers, one woman gave the following example:

At least they could make it (letters sent by manufacturers) 'Dear Sir and Madam'. Don't they realise that we exist too? There must be quite a number of women who run their own businesses around Palmerston North. I wonder how they feel being called a man.

The woman quoted above had written to the manufacturers concerned complaining of their sexist letters. A point can be taken from this which is relevant to the whole section. Women in society have traditionally been expected to support the husband's work role. Indeed the success of the husband is often dependent on this support. But can it be expected that women will continue to accept being unpaid, unacknowledged, 'slaves' when they can easily find work roles offering substantial economic and psychological rewards in today's work force? It seems unlikely.

Children's Work

Contemporary society expects little productive work from children. Children are supposed to be occupied with learning and play. However, children whose parents own a dairy may be called upon to help out. Of the twenty-four couples, eight had children

working in the dairy with them. But all made it clear that the shop was not the child's responsibility.

The shop is not for the kids. They've got other things to do and we don't expect them to be in the shop all the time. But we do expect them to give us a hand when we need it.

The parents appeared to be trying to minimise the effect of the shop on the children. For example, they paid the children award rates, which is something the parents did not even do for themselves. It is, however, impossible to eliminate the effect of the shop on children. Around meal times especially, it is inevitable that the children will be called upon to help. For this reason the dairy family seldom has a quiet meal or time to sit around and talk. In a myriad of minor ways then the children are affected by the shop. During the interviews an effort was made to gather the opinions of children about the shop (6). On no occasion was the response positive.

In most cases the parents hoped their children would contribute voluntarily to the running of the shop. When this did not occur the parents tended to feel let down by their children.

(6) Not enough children were available for interviews to make the answers conclusive.

I won't let them near the shop. They don't want to work there anyway. If I forced them to work the way they would act would only turn customers away...I don't think kids today think about much more than themselves.

When children do not want to work in the shop there is little the dairy owners can do for reasons Goffman has pointed out. The family in the dairy is akin to a 'team' which Goffman (1959:87) defines as 'a set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected image is to be maintained'. Children who do not wish to cooperate in the projection of the desired image can do more harm to the dairy than good.

The combination of the children's dislike for the dairy and the parent's desire to protect the children, serves to minimise the time they will spend in the dairy. It is significant though, that it was only those parents whose children were not in the dairy who said "a dairy is no place for children". Those with children claimed that in some ways the children benefited. They talked of the children learning how to deal with money and people as a preparation for real life. They saw a virtue in the fact that the children always had the parents at home. But they failed to see that real life education can lower the child's achievement at school; and that their always being at home is no guarantee that they will be free to see to the child's needs.

In trying to make sense of the parent's approach

to having their children in the dairy the theory of cognitive dissonance propounded by Festinger (1957) is useful. The theory states that when individuals have incompatible cognitions, this generally leads to behaviour that is designed to eliminate conflict.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the aim of looking at the viability of family work in today's society. The conclusion which is best supported by the discussion is that family work is not viable.

Like the dairy itself, family work seems to belong to a bygone era. Caplow has indicated that the strengths of family work are best suited to a type of market situation which is fast disappearing. The work which confronts a family in a dairy has little to recommend it. In fact it can be directly compared with the drudgery of factory work. But perhaps most damning is the probably lack of families prepared in the future to commit themselves to a dairy. It is a man's career, but his family must also take part in the work. With the choices open to women it would seem unlikely they will continue to see the sacrifice of their life to the husband's as desirable or even necessary. Children are also likely to become more resistant to the idea of helping out in the shop. Without the presence of family dedication the dairy cannot operate.

CHAPTER VII

MONEY AND MEANING (1)

"Personally I like a small store myself. I might someday have one".
"A store is like a prison. Look for something better".
"At least you're your own boss".
"To be the boss of nothing is nothing".
(Malamud, 1959:34).

Many organisations spend a great deal of money and time investigating the causes of employee turnover, for example, through programmes of exit interviews. The usual motivation for such studies is to find out why people leave their jobs, the idea being that if an organisation can identify the reasons for terminations it can seek to hold turnover down.

In recent years researchers in the area of turnover have begun to look at the question in another way by asking, "Why do people stay in a job?" The rationale for asking this question is simple. If an organisation wishes to know how to keep its employees then it should discover the things which attract some employees to stay

(1) This chapter owes its thrust to an article by Bechhofer et. al., 'Small Shopkeepers: Matters of meaning and money. Sociological Review. Vol. 22, No. 3 (Aug. 1974) pp. 465-482.

and try to recruit people with similar needs (2).

There is a belief among managers that a stable employee is a satisfied employee. But this is not necessarily the case. An employee may stay simply because he is too lazy to leave. He may also stay because he cannot leave in that he would lose too much in terms of benefits offered by the company (3). The point to be taken from these ideas is that the stability of an employee should not necessarily be explained in terms of a commitment to values arising from the job.

The topic of labour turnover has direct relevance to the situation of the dairy owner. Labour turnover statistics, as shown by the sale of businesses, are not available through official channels, but the dairy has developed a reputation for being a business in which people do not stay long. This observation was supported in the present study when it became clear that few dairies had a history of single owner occupancy.

(2) See V.S. Flowers and C.L. Hughes, 'Why employees stay'. Harvard Business Review. (July-August, 1973) pp. 49-60, for a development of this approach.

(3) In banking organisations, for example, it has become standard practice to encourage people to stay with the firm by giving them so many financial advantages that to leave becomes unthinkable. This is known as the "golden handcuff" method of staff retention.

The Retailer's Association do not keep a record of the various people who own dairies, but the local representative regards the average dairy as having many owners over a short period of time. He noted that; "As many as five owners in two years can go through a dairy". In accordance with recent trends in research on turnover the present chapter is more concerned with why people stay than why they leave their job. In reference to the dairy, this question has merit as it would appear that the working conditions endured by the owners can and do deter many potential owners.

Money

In previous chapters it has been established that dairy owners are instrumentally oriented toward work. This denotes an interest in pecuniary rewards. In the present section the first task will be to assess the financial position of the dairy-grocer and also to look at broader patterns of economic behaviour. The observations made will be linked to a second section which conceptualises the reasons for dairy-grocers staying in the shop.

During the twenty four interviews a clear picture of the dairy as a means to economic advancement was established. Respondents defined their job in terms of their need to endure it; rather than for any intrinsic

value, for example, autonomy. This point was made most evident when owners were asked to justify their working in the shop instead of working for an employer.

The money. You think to yourself, they're (the customers) off to the beach now and they will still be going there in five years time. But you, if you hang on, you could be anywhere doing something different.

The impression given is that rather than being valued for what the shop offers in the present, it is valued with the future in mind. This orientation was a feature of many responses.

What do you talk about between the two of you (Interviewer)

.....Getting out mainly. We talk about what we will do when we're established and able to take it easy.

And again:

You think to yourself, you might have had enough and so you talk it over together and take a look at the bank book to see how it's going and decide to stay another six months. That's how we keep going. By seeing ourselves getting slowly ahead.

Answers to questions on the financial position of the dairy proprietors were not always easy to get. Nevertheless enough material was gathered to construct a reasonably clear picture.

The Census of Distribution does not provide a breakdown of the annual total sales for dairy-groceries. Therefore, it is impossible to compare the present sample to a national standard. However, since the task

is to assess the financial rewards, as perceived by individual owners, this is not a problem. The average for total sales among the sample was \$85,000 per annum (4). In the 1972-73 Census of Distribution, no less than 74 per. cent. of grocery stores, the category of store type which includes the dairy-grocery, had a total sales turnover of less than \$100,000 per annum. Such a level of sales is by no means high and is usually correlated with low staffing levels. In the sample the majority of owners did without full-time assistance and only two thirds were able to afford part-time assistance. Regardless of the number of employees involved, those who had staff found the weekly wage bill a constant problem.

My accountant told me to let her (the assistant) go because she is a senior and I have to pay her \$70 a week. But I don't want to do that because she is so reliable and we can get a chance to relax when she's in the shop.

Shop assistants wages are seldom excessively high. It is, then, interesting to note the reported difficulty dairy owners have in meeting their wages bill. It is a difficulty which encompasses the owners themselves. When asked what they paid themselves, some replied "nothing". However, most managed to pay themselves small sums. The average amount that owners took

(4) This is an approximate figure because most owners gave their figures as weekly estimates.

for weekly expenses was about \$15 (\$30 per couple). This would amount to about \$15000 per annum. Hardly an exorbitant return for their efforts. One dejected owner said that he had costed out his labour and found that he had been working for 25 cents an hour and challenged the researcher to think of another occupation which was so poorly paid.

It is of course difficult to gauge the profitability of a small business by looking at direct financial gains. Many of the businesses in the sample were operated by, what Mills (1951) has called, "hole in the wall" methods. One literal example of this was provided by an owner who complained that a friend of his son had stolen money out of a box which he kept hidden in a hole in the wall of the house. Few shopkeepers practiced even the most rudimentary of business techniques which could have ensured their awareness of the financial state of the business. For example, it was common practice to simply count the money taken during the day instead of balancing incoming money with outgoing stock. The fact that most owners pocket money instead of putting it through their till, also complicates attempts to establish their financial position precisely. There is, however, good reason to believe that most of the money taken does go through the till, for reasons that one owner explained.

I would take out a lot more to avoid tax but
if I do the yearly figures wouldn't look so

good....When I come to sell the accountant would probably say the place wasn't doing as much as it should which would make it more difficult to get rid of.

For the above reason the dairy owner is restricted in how much can be taken "under the counter". In the not too distant future the shop will be on the market and the prospective buyer is going to want to see a high turnover.

The dairy owners pay their children to work in the shop. Having children available to work in the shop is one reason why some of the shops do not hire staff. Paying wages to the children is part of the parent's attempt to ensure the shop does not have an adverse effect on the children. In most cases the wages were based on the award set down by the union. Here then is another sum of money going out of the shop (5).

In every business there is money which is re-invested into the business for development. In the dairy this money is most often used to buy saleable chattels such as coolers, stands and refrigerators. Improvements to the store itself or the house behind the store are minimal as the property is usually leased, making improvements a waste of effort for the proprietors. It was found that in most cases investment in the business was minimal and that the respondents intended to run it as they found it. Few had actually completed

(5) In the sample there were eight shops paying wages to children. Of these five also employed part time staff.

any changes to the shop (and these were all minor) and none had concrete changes in mind. The re-investment programme of the owners, is then, unlikely to claim a great deal of money.

Other expenses incurred by the dairy keepers may come in the form of running costs for which they need a reserve fund. The prospect of freezers breaking down, insurances falling due, rentals on the premises being raised, and the constant escalation of prices means that the shop must have a reasonable working capital. Like wages, this need for liquidity is a perpetual worry to shopkeepers who often enter the shop with little capital. Five of the twenty-four couples had been forced at times to subsidise the shop through savings they had hoped to leave untouched. Deran (1963) suggests this is a common occurrence in small businesses. But it is one which no business can sustain for long.

When wages are paid and costs are met the money which is left is profit. Profit among the proprietors included in the sample ranged from nothing to a healthy \$10,000 per year. However, placed against the work inputs necessary to earn even \$10,000, the dairy does not seem to be an equitable wage-work bargain. But there are other advantages.

The small shop is an enforced form of saving. Because the dairy sells nearly all the food needs of its occupants there is little need to shop elsewhere. Thus

the family can eat cheaply and well.

One of the main advantages for me is the food. We can have whatever we want whenever we want it and it all costs very little....When visitors come we're always sure of having enough.

But it may be a dubious advantage to have so much food on hand because a tendency to take freely from the shelves without regard to stock levels can make it difficult to control stock and be sure of items being paid for. However, getting food supplies from the shop is an economic advantage for the shopkeeper.

By working long hours and never being able to go out the owners are prevented from spending money on petrol, entertainment or other leisure activities requiring money. While this feature of shop life does not increase income, it does increase saving and allows the owners to feel they are getting ahead.

Another advantage of owning a business is the ability to purchase nearly all goods at wholesale prices. Most owners took advantage of this reduction in prices to buy a number of items for their houses. The researcher was, however, interested to find that in a number of cases the respondents were not aware they could get items at wholesale prices.

From the discussion so far it can be concluded that dairy owners do not make a very high income. A possible answer to this problem is for one of the partners to go out to work. In the case of two dairies

the husband had taken a second job. One husband had taken on a part time delivery run, while the other had started a small business which entailed the delivery of cakes to areas out of the Manawatu. It should be emphasised that both men still worked in the shop as well. It was in fact essential to the survival of the dairy that they should do so. Although no solo operators of dairies were included in the sample a number were encountered during the research (6). Some of these solo operators were working in the hope that eventually the dairy would be able to support the spouse as well. The fact that the spouse did not work was often a sign that the dairy needed regular injections of capital. But it also needs a second person to provide labour or the toll on the solo operator becomes too high.

He used to help out in here but now when he comes home he says he's too tired. It's just getting too much for me on my own so if he doesn't help me soon I'll have to sell.

Without help the solo operator can be confined to the dairy for up to sixteen hours a day. The outcome of this is likely to be a heavy strain on the marriage. On one occasion the researcher spent time listening to a man who had just left his job to run the dairy. His

(6) There are twenty dairies with solo operators in Palmerston North. Most are run by women.

wife had just left him because she could not take the strain of running their dairy by herself.

Despite what is clearly a narrow margin of profitability a dairy usually goes out of business for reasons other than everyday running costs. According to the local Retailer's Association records there have been twenty closures in the twelve months ending December 1976 in the Manawatu-Wairarapa region. The majority of closures were caused by the dairy's inability to meet the costs of improvements demanded by the Health Department. Many dairies owe their origins to a family turning part of a house into a shop. In recent years these shops have not been able to meet rising standards of hygiene and the owners have not been able to pay for renovations (7). A new floor, for example, could cost a dairy owner \$2000 to install. Such demands are beyond the resources of a dairy and they have to close, with the owners bearing the losses.

The above liquidity problems point to the under-capitalisation of the dairy owner. A real estate agent with whom the researcher discussed the research explained that these problems may become more acute for dairy owners.

(7) The health regulations are in some cases extremely high. For example, a shop assistant must wear a smock when serving customers but if she wishes to go outside the shop, perhaps to help a customer carry parcels, she must take the smock off.

Today a guy with a bit of money doesn't want to go into a seven day a week business. Who wants to work that hard? So he buys a five day a week lock up business. The only people who are willing to go into a dairy are the ones who have only just enough money. Even then they usually end up borrowing pretty heavily.

Precipitated by this trend toward economically marginal people entering the dairy, the future may see an increasing number of closures as a result of minor economic problems. The costs of running any business are escalating continually.

So far the focus has been on an assessment of the income of the dairy owners. To complete the picture it is necessary to have some insight into their patterns of consumption. It has already been pointed out that dairy owners have low personal overheads. The family is fed by stock from the shop; there is little time for leisure and the family has fewer needs than the "average" family. So what is there for them to spend their money on?

It was found that some dairy owners find too many things to spend their money on. The dairy is, for many of those in the sample, the first experience they have had of business. This unfamiliarity with business practices tends to make them think that all they earn is profit and they therefore spend freely. So common is the dairy owner who spends unwisely that suppliers are unwilling to allow credit on goods to dairies. One company representative explains:

Some of them get into the shop and think that everything that comes over the counter can go straight into their pocket. Well of course it can't. A business doesn't last long if none of the money is going back into it. Anyway to us this is a problem because the accounts have to be paid, so what we do is to require payment before they get any more stock.

Bechhofer et. al. (1974) note that for a group with limited resources "the shopkeepers do remarkably well when it comes to owning consumer durables". Given the ages of those in the sample and the current customer expectations, this contention is only partially supported by the present findings.

In all of the twenty four households included in the study there was a television. Three had a colour television. All had a refrigerator, a washing machine, and a telephone. But these items are now accepted as necessities of life by most families and it is hardly surprising to find them owned by members of the sample. It should be added that all of these possessions were fully paid for. The dairy owners manifested a strong dislike for credit, both in business and personal dealings.

How then do owners fare on more expensive items? They all owned a car, but seldom was this a new model as the following observation taken from field notes suggests:

I drew up outside _____'s place. There were about five other cars parked outside and I remember thinking that one of the cars could not be a dairy owners because it was a new model.

This suspicion was confirmed when I went inside and was introduced to a man who was a friend of one of the owners but not an owner himself.

In terms of luxury items like: boats, a second house, a second car, stereo equipment and elaborate furnishings the dairy owners did not fare well. Three of the owners had a stereo. None of the owners had any of the other luxury items. This situation might be explained in terms of the difficulty the owners would have in using them. It could also be argued, with reference to observations made in Chapter IV, that the owners were reluctant to buy luxury items as this might draw criticism from customers. Both of these arguments have merit, but in discussions with the owners it became clear that they simply did not have the money for expensive luxuries. However they hoped that upon selling the shop they would come into a substantial amount of money.

To most respondents the major material item to be gained through the shop was a house. Only four couples had a house at the time of the interview. The lack of housing can be accounted for mainly by the fact that many owners had mortgaged their house, or sold it, to get the dairy. Understandably, they were anxious to regain the status of house owner. A freehold house meant the owners could consider themselves to be established and free from constraints placed on them by others. To leave the dairy without achieving this goal of independence would have suggested failure.

At this point it is necessary to dispel any idea that the owners, in the majority of cases, did not think of themselves as doing well. On a number of occasions respondents listed items which the dairy had allowed them to buy, showed bank accounts which had grown by a few thousand each year, or recounted dreams of what would happen when they were out of the dairy. Thus, despite the fact that as an observer the researcher would have thought the respondents had grounds for high dissatisfaction with financial returns, this was not the case. But neither could it be said they were satisfied. They were in a state of anticipated satisfaction. Most lived in the firm hope that upon sale of the dairy they would reap satisfactory financial returns. This future orientation is a crucial point and it will be returned to a number of times in the remainder of the chapter.

Meaning

From the discussion thus far it seems difficult to believe that dairy grocers stay in the occupation for the money. The balance between inputs and outputs seems non-existent. It is time to seek a further explanation of their behaviour.

Bechhofer et. al. (1974), who also found it difficult to believe that shopkeepers were entirely economically motivated, sought to explain their behaviour with the concept of independence. The Bechhofer group saw the shopkeeper as wanting to own (or own the lease of)

a shop as the basis for autonomy and security which can come with independent status. Below is part of the argument they use to back their claim.

The fact that outright ownership of property confers a kind of independence has been widely recognised and one finds it, for instance, in Tawney in his discussion of the symbolic meaning of private property when he talks of "a limited form of sovereignty". Owning your own house (and if possible your business premises), paying "on the nail" for consumer goods ensures that you are beholden to no one and gives you a measure of control over your own fate. To adopt this pattern of ownership might not be entirely rationale when rates of inflation are high and when extensive credit facilities exist, nor does it fit with an orientation in which the calculative seeking after of profit is paramount, but it is perfectly reconcilable with a view emphasising 'traditional' levels of reward, stressing autonomy and security (Bechhofer et. al. 1974:476).

This is an especially persuasive argument and it finds support not only in the consumption patterns of the Bechhofer sample, but also in a number of characteristics of that sample; their fierce independence in the market place, their anachronistic business methods, their strongly individualistic philosophy on life. All these features were present in current research sample. The dairy owners were largely prevented from uniting to confront their common problems because of, as one owner put it, their "damned independence". Their methods of business belonged to a bygone age, and their desire for self reliance was ever present. In Chapter III a case was made for the owners first entering the business in response to a subjectively defined career goal of financial advancement with the intention of becoming

independent. Thus it may be concluded that the present research supports the Bechhofer group's thesis of small shopkeeper motivation. But this research cannot support the idea that shopkeepers remain in their occupation because of a desire for autonomy. The one fact that prevents this conclusion is the overwhelming desire of those in the present sample to leave the dairy. For this reason another explanation is necessary for an understanding of the shopkeeper's behaviour; at least the shopkeepers in this sample. By seeking an alternative explanation the suggestion is not being made that dairy grocers are not "economic traditionalists" (8) in the same way as Bechhofer's sample. It is, however, argued that such an orientation to life cannot adequately explain the behaviour of dairy-grocers.

An explanation of the dairy grocers' behaviour may be best stated using the concepts of value commitment and continuance commitment. Sociologists have long been interested in the commitment of people to a line of activity. In a recent paper Stebbins(1970), has provided clarification of the concept by dividing it into two dimensions. Stebbins maintains these two dimensions

(8) The term "economic traditionalist" originates from Max Weber. In the Bechhofer et. al. op. cit. (1974) the term is taken to mean: "They are for the most part men of limited ambition, men who aspire to a comfortable and steady income and whose goal is the development of a good business but not a retail empire".

of commitment are; 1) value commitment and 2) continuance commitment. The study of commitment to date has suffered from a general confusion generated because of a tendency by researchers to see the dimensions as one in the same and in dispelling this confusion Stebbins' analysis is something of a breakthrough. For example he provides a basis for separating Beckers' (1960) "side-bet theory", which is about continuance commitment, from value commitment.

Value commitment can be taken to mean an individual remains committed to some task because the gains from its performance are rewarding or anticipated to be rewarding.

This kind of commitment can be defined as a frame of mind which arises from the presence of an expected number of subjectively defined rewards associated with a particular position or social identity in which the person finds himself or hopes to find himself. These subjectively defined rewards....provide the answer to one basic question found in studies of value commitment: what attracts the person to a given position (Stebbins 1970:526-527).

In contrast continuance commitment is;

"...the impossibility of choosing a different social identity....because of the inconvenience of penalties involved in making the switch.... Continuance commitment is a psychological state that arises not from the presence or imminence of subjectively defined penalties associated with the attempt or desire to leave a specified position (Stebbins, 1970:527).

Stated briefly, it can be said that value commitment has to do with behaviour which is perceived to be

rewarding, while continuance commitment is concerned with behaviour which is forced upon the individual. The discussion can now return to shopkeepers and dairy-grocers.

It can readily be seen that the conclusions arrived at by the Bechhofer group are congruent with the notion of value commitment. The shopkeepers Bechhofer et. al describe are purportedly in the occupation in order to gain independence. This desire for independence is true also of the present sample. However, it has been argued that soon after entry into the occupation the shopkeepers adopt an instrumental orientation to work. Such an orientation is compatible with a continuance commitment to work (Hearn and Stroll 1974). Thus it is maintained here that once in the occupation those who stay do so in accordance with a continuance commitment. The high rate of terminations in the early months is best explained by a failure to attain values. In the sample two couples were making plans to leave the dairy after only three, and five months respectively. Discussions with these people made it clear they were leaving because their hopes for the kind of life the Bechhofer group describe, had been dashed by customer problems, and by pressures on the family caused by long hours in the shop. In comparison this chapter has shown that those who stay do so for the money. Staying in the job is best explained by the fact that none of these people could sustain the

financial loss of leaving the dairy. The owners all talked of having to make a decision soon after entering the dairy to "stick it out" to "see it through for a few years". Since most of them had mortgaged their house to get into the dairy, to leave would mean financial ruin. The object then is to lower the penalties of being in the dairy to a point where leaving will at least not prove costly. From the fact that so many dairy owners do not stay in dairies past five years it can be seen that once the goal is reached the family leaves. For those who stay longer it is usually a matter of the inability to sell the dairy and make a substantial profit which keeps them there. For example, one couple who have been in the dairy for 13 years have been trying without success, to sell for the last six years. The shop has a very sub-standard dwelling attached and buyers are just not interested. Thus, it is maintained here the people stay in the dairy because they have to, due to the penalties of leaving being too great. It is worth noting at this point that the Bechhofer sample included a cross section of the many types of small shops. This no doubt prevented a focusing on the problems on the problems of the small shop as is the case in this study. Perhaps this is the reason for their more optimistic view of the shopkeeper's motivation.

It should not be thought that on the basis of the above discussion it is being argued that dairy owners

have no commitment to values. They do in fact retain a strong interest in the potential life style of the dairy. This interest underlies their conception of the ideal customer and their ability to perform in accordance with the demands of the customer. But something of a contradiction is created because Stebbins (1970) argues that continuance and value commitment are "relatively exclusive of each other". To explain the dairy owner's behaviour however, both concepts are needed. For a reconciliation between the concepts Goffman (1964:90) can be used. Goffman maintains that both forms of commitment can occur when an actor is ambivalent about the attractions of his given position. Goffman gives the example of adoption agencies who, "deal with two kinds of couples, the too fertile and the insufficiently fertile, the first being committed to the parent role without being attached to it, and the second being attached to the role without being committed to it". It is the latter example which most fits the dairy owners. They are attached to the role but are prevented by the circumstances under which they must perform the role from becoming committed. There is little other research support for such a confluence of the two dimensions of commitment but the present research findings seem best explained in the above way.

Conclusions

This chapter was begun with a discussion of labour turnover and how this might apply to dairy owners. It can now be stated that owners leave their dairy because of a value commitment that is frustrated by the realities of work. People stay because of a continuance commitment; because they have to. Leaving would cause too great a loss for those involved and they therefore stay until they have some advantage, or they at least recoup their investment.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

You know, I'm glad you came round. I was just saying to my wife last night, I'm so fed up with the way we are treated that I might write a letter to the paper. People just don't know what we do for them (From field notes).

The survey of dairy-grocers presented here and discussed in various chapters goes some way towards filling the gap in social science knowledge of small shops in particular and small businesses in general. The dairy-grocery occupation has been outlined from the point of view of those involved through discussion of the problems and issues experienced by the shopkeepers. It has been made clear that from the point of view of the dairy owners the position of the dairy is indeed precarious. The owners enter the dairy occupation aspiring to financial and personal independence; however they are confronted with a reality of self exploitation and minimal return for effort. Customers tend to use the dairy as a convenience causing the owners to live close to the edge of economic failure.

It was noted at the outset that small shops were seldom the focus of government aid or research. This situation is, however, changing. There is a resurgence of interest in the small businessman in Europe and the

United States, and some of this interest is being directed at the small shop. As the problems of small shopkeepers in New Zealand reach the proportions of their overseas counterparts a similar rise in interest may be expected (1). The thesis arising from this research is that if something is to be done to help the small shopkeeper the position of the small shop and its owners in society must be appraised. It is the failure of the dairy to receive full support from customers and the consequent decline in the status of the occupation which is the root cause of dairy-grocery problems. On the basis of the present study it is argued that efforts to help the small shop must focus on the reintegration of the dairy into society as an important component of the retailing hierarchy. It will be suggested later that the conclusions applied to the dairy may also be applied to the small shop in general.

The Research Findings - A Recapitulation

Before moving on to establish a theoretical framework for the research findings, the main points of

(1) In fact it has already begun. See Retailing Seminar with the theme of investment in retailing. Institute of Economic Research (Institute of Economic Research Discussion Paper No. 16) 1974.

the research will be recapitulated. This will serve the dual purpose of highlighting findings and also drawing together themes relevant to the theoretical discussion which follows. The theoretical discussion, while not proven by the research, develops a number of inferences that arise from the research. Perhaps this theoretical discussion will be useful in guiding the comparative research necessary to validate the conclusions reached here.

Entrance to the Occupation

An occupation survives as long as it can attract people to enter into it. The small shop has, in the past, been proven attractive because of its ease of entry and the chance for employment it gave during times of unemployment (2). These conditions of entry into shopkeeping are no doubt still in operation. However, it was a feature of the present sample that the dairy was not merely an alternative form of employment, it was a method of advancement. The dairy fitted into a

(2) Several reasons have been advanced to explain the sharp increase of retail outlets during the 1930's. "Lewis and Maude (1953) point to "the general economic climate of the period and to the difficulties of finding employment and they argue that it is a feature of the trade that more people enter in times of bad trade than of good". F. Bechhofer et. al. op. cit. (1971)

subjective career, the goals of which were material security and independence. Regardless of their immediate reasons for buying a dairy, all those in the sample shared these career goals. Can the dairy continue as a desirable prospect if it fails to fulfil the career goals of those who enter the occupation? Perhaps even more important are the career goals of those who may enter the trade. It may be argued that today a man and his wife who wish to "get ahead" may be more able to realise this goal by working for an organisation.

If indeed the dairy-grocery does become less attractive to a wide range of individuals, it may become an occupation which is entered only by those who have no other options (3). This element was present in the sample used for this research. Men who were functionally redundant in their chosen line of work entered the dairy as a solution to their problems. When an occupation becomes full of people who have drifted into it as a solution to problems which make it impossible for them to be employed elsewhere, the prestige of that occupation is likely to suffer (4).

(3) This assumes the absence of such an economic reversal as a depression.

(4) There are a number of occupations which have attracted people who have drifted from other jobs where they do not appear to fit for one reason or another. See H.L. Hearn and P. Stroll op. cit. for an account of one such occupation.

It is unlikely that the dairy-grocery occupation will decline for lack of recruits as there will undoubtedly continue to be a supply of people who for reasons of health, redundancy, lack of skills or social marginality, will need an alternative to employment within an organisation. However, as Drucker (1953) has suggested, in a society which is characterised by employees, small business and small businessmen are likely to be labelled marginal. The combination of marginal people and marginal status can only be detrimental to the position of the small shop in society.

The Shopkeeper-Customer Relationship

Occupations vary greatly in their importance to society. Those which are thought to be crucial, like supreme court judges and doctors, receive a wide range of rewards from society. Such rewards include; money, prestige and deference. But of greater significance to those who are in these valued occupations is the fact that society has given them licence and a mandate to carry out certain activities and act in a certain way (5).

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- (5) These terms of license and mandate have been defined by E.C. Hughes, op. cit. p. 287. Licence - an occupation consists in part in the implied or explicit licence that some people claim, and are given, to carry out certain activities rather different from those of other people and do so in exchange for money, goods and services. Mandate - generally if people in an occupation have any sense of solidarity and identity, they will claim a mandate to define, not merely for themselves, but for others as well, proper conduct in respect to other matters concerned with their work.

Such a recognition of importance is not given to the dairy owner. In fact the opposite seems more true. The dairy owner contributes little to society not available elsewhere and therefore receives few rewards and has no licence or mandate over a defined area of work.

In Chapter IV it was made clear that the dairy fills a role at the base of the retailing heirarchy. Today's customer does not perceive the dairy as vital despite the high convenience value the dairy can have. Given this background the customer tends to treat the dairy and its owners with disdain which can, on occasions, reach the proportions of abuse. All this is in direct contradiction to how the shopkeepers wish their role to be seen. They believe they are offering core shopkeeping services of serving their public, representing the family in the distributive system and providing the family with advice on matters of food. The willingness of customers to innovatively reinterpret this shopkeeping role makes it impossible for the shopkeepers to derive intrinsic satisfaction from the job. When an occupation is not valued by those it serves, the incumbents are reluctant to become self-evaluatively involved because they too would be lowly valued.

In recognition of the realities of their situation the shopkeepers accept that they should be instrumentally motivated. This is a compatible stance to take given the customer's interpretation of the job and the failure

of the shopkeepers to gain self esteem from their work.

In Chapter V the focus shifted from the more defensive position the shopkeepers adopt in the face of customers using them, to the more offensive stance they adopt as they try to raise sales. It is indeed a feature of service occupations that the worker tries to enhance his position vis-a-vis the customer. However, for the shopkeeper such enhancement is a matter of survival. Customers are willing to buy only those lines which they need on an everyday basis from the dairy. These lines are low in profit and the shopkeepers could not stay in business if they sold such lines. This delicate situation causes the owners to learn as much about their customers as they can so they can avoid being cheated by them. The informal controls the shopkeepers place on credit were discussed to illustrate this point. The dairy owners also wish to learn about their customers so they can manipulate them. This manipulation is based on the shopkeeper responding to how the customer likes to be served. By shaping their behaviour to fit expectations the shopkeepers hope to encourage more sales.

A second method for improving sales was outlined under the heading of impression management. One shopkeeper's description of himself as a 'con man' seems an adequate summary of the samples activities as they tried to present themselves as honest, caring persons.

The con is perpetrated to give the shopkeeper a slim advantage over the larger stores. The degree to which the shopkeepers are committed to this false image of themselves is made clear by their willingness to tolerate abuse without getting rid of the customer. Only those customers who were of little financial advantage to the dairy were criticised. To make a profit the dairy owners must be prepared to place themselves at the customer's disposal. A service for which they cannot even expect a tip. This does not mean that the dairy owners do not have good customers. What is being discussed here is their overall situation.

A final technique for trying to encourage profits is dishonesty. It was common practice to stay open all hours selling all lines despite laws to the contrary. The dairy owners faced a fine of up to \$250 if they were caught; and many were caught during the period of this study. However, the dairy-owners can not afford to close in the evenings and in the weekends as it is during these periods of low competition that they make a small profit.

It is the pressure to make a profit which drives the shopkeepers to exploit the customer's ignorance of prices and sell goods at higher prices than they should. They are also 'guilty' of bending the rules which surround the sale of fresh goods and the appearance of goods. They do such things not because they want to, but because, they say, the system forces them to.

Chapter V suggests the conclusion that in trying to make their job economically tolerable the dairy owners make it personally intolerable. They are constantly deferring to customer needs, working long hours over seven days a week, risking legal reprisals for their actions, and contradicting their own needs in the work situation. It is questionable whether such a situation can be endured without some form of compensation.

Family Work

The family work unit belongs to an era which is fast drawing to a close (Caplow, 1954). In Chapter VI it was shown that there is little reason for the use of the family as an economic unit in contemporary society. It was shown that, for the dairy owners, family work has little meaning beyond that of its economic convenience. But the gains of the family system of work in economic terms do not seem to be worth the sacrifices necessary in personal terms.

With the decline of the extended family, only the nuclear family or the nuclear dyad (mother and father) is involved in the shop. The shop is essentially a male career which means that the others in the family must subjugate their own goals to that of the males. While this situation may be tenable when women have few other work opportunities and are socialised to 'serve'

their husbands, it hardly seems a tenable situation today. There is also the problem of involving children in the work of the store. Without question children are a welcome addition to the labour force of the store. However, given the contemporary emphasis on children putting learning and play before work, the dairy children are likely to resent being pressed into service. It was shown that in fact children do not like working in the store and their parents seem almost defensive about involving their children in work. The problem for the husband is that without the help of his wife and family there would be little chance of operating the dairy. If the system of family work, with its low cost high output formula, were to disappear then the end of the dairy-grocery would most assuredly be in sight.

Chapter VI provided a description of the work undertaken by the family. It was found that the family characterised shop work in terms of its fragmentation, monotony, excessive pace and loss of control. Work in the dairy seemed to have more in common with factory work than with the ideal of independence and autonomy which is usually associated with owning a small business.

The analysis of family work also placed in perspective the dedication to work which is so much a feature of those in the dairy. Using Parkers' (1972) theoretical approach to work and work and leisure, it was shown that

the dairy owners' work combines features of extension and opposition patterns. Work dominates the whole life of dairy owners. Work and leisure are fused together in a way which leaves little room for holidays, weekends or even nights off. But this single mindedness of the family is not entirely voluntary. It is enforced, since without it the dairy would soon fail as a business. It is this enforcement which seems responsible for the development of opposition to the job with the inevitable desire to get away from it as soon as it is possible.

Family work seems to require unnecessarily high sacrifices for family members. Despite the attractiveness of owning a small business it would seem likely that in the future families will choose alternative paths to independence and financial security. This would seem an inevitable outcome of the change in the family itself and the lack of opportunity for family work in today's society.

Money and Meaning

It was argued in Chapter IV that dairy grocers have an instrumental orientation to work. In Chapter VII the economic situation of the dairy owners was assessed in the interests of establishing why it is that people might stay on in a job which has so many deprivations. The dairy owner's economic situation was found to be poor. Some dairy owners were able to make

a substantial profit over the years. However the sacrifices which attend the making of profit make the effort-reward bargain appear unfair. For the majority of owners a substantial profit is not forthcoming despite their heavy input in the shop.

In considering why the shopkeepers might stay in their job, the idea of independence, used by Bechhofer et. al. (1974) was passed over. None of the shopkeepers were sufficiently attracted to the dairy as a way of life for them to think of it as a long term career that they wanted. Indeed it was of paramount importance to them to make enough money in a short time to be able to leave the dairy and buy a house. Commitment and meaning in the job did not derive from values but from the fact that dairy owners cannot leave their job until they recoup their economic stake in the business. To do otherwise would be financially ruinous. Such commitment is called continuance, which refers to the fact that people stay on in a job because the penalties for leaving are perceived to be greater than those incurred by staying. Hearn and Stroll (1974) have shown continuance commitment and an instrumental orientation to be linked.

Turnover among dairy owners was pinpointed as being a failure to fulfil values, if the owners left after the first few months of ownership and as the end of the need for continuance, if the owners left after some years in the dairy.

Chapter VII is in many ways the crucial chapter of this report. It serves to summarize the *raison d'etre* of the dairy-grocer. These people occupy an oddly contradictory position. The shop itself is needed by the community from which it draws trade, but it is so poorly supported that its owners can barely stay in business. The owners themselves must live a contradiction to remain in business. They enter the dairy with a value commitment which is soon reduced to a value placed on money. Yet to satisfy the customer, owners must appear as though they are not interested in money, but the customer's welfare. The need for such contradictions, it will be argued later, arises from the marginal position of the dairy and its owners in society. The contradictions point to the lack of a licence and a mandate for the dairy owners from the public they try to serve.

The Future of the Dairy-Grocery

What is the future of the dairy-grocery? The future is always a difficult thing to predict and it will not be attempted here. What follows is a record of the respondents' feelings about the future of the dairy. Their points have been split into two parts: 1) continuation; 2) role.

The future of the dairy, in the eyes of most owners, is in jeopardy. They felt that the deprivation

necessary to operate a dairy had reached a peak which could go no higher. When it was put to them that dairies are a declining store type they readily agreed with such an assessment saying they could see no alternative.

The dairy owners viewed themselves as being on the very periphery of the distribution network. They did not see themselves as having any power over suppliers, manufacturers or customers which could allow them to dictate their own terms. This lack of power was blamed for the inability of dairy owners to confront and solve their current problems. For example, many dairy owners would like to stop selling bread to demonstrate to suppliers and customers that the dairy is needed. However, the dairy owners are aware that supermarkets are handling more and more bread which would make their boycott ineffective. They are also aware that customers come to them, willingly, only for such items as bread and if the dairy did not sell bread, customers might quickly adopt a shopping pattern which excluded the dairy.

The dairy owners viewed the future as one of the dairy as being one of increasing use by customers as a convenience. They felt that the only groups who would continue to buy a lot from the dairy would be those who could not get to the larger store. Within this group would fit, shift workers (such as nurses) and students. With such a future in mind, dairy owners saw a decrease in regular trade, which they relied on for

their living, and an increase in passing trade. Since passing trade is not only less profitable (on a per sale basis) but also less satisfying in personal terms, the future of many dairies was predicted to be short. It was argued that most of the community based dairies would close their doors leaving only those dairies which were situated on a main road where they could rely on a very high volume of passing traffic to supply business.

The future role of the dairy was thought to follow the same trend as that described above. As the numbers declined the dairy would become increasingly, an outlet for convenience goods. Customers would use the dairy for only the goods they forgot to get at the supermarket. They would rely on the dairy to be open at odd hours for the purchase of emergency items. But the dairy would always be in jeopardy for as its service to the community declined the customer would become reliant on alternatives to the dairy. This inability to fill needs will serve to push dairies further toward the periphery of the retail network.

The problem of the dairy, at this time, was stated by the local Retailing Association Representative, as being one of customer loyalty. He cited a case of one dairy situated in a rural area whose owner applied for a legal extension of shopping hours. The owner's case rested on the fact that most of his customers shopped in town and he thought that if he could trade over longer hours people would patronise him. Unfortunately

the legally extended trading hours did nothing to increase trade and the dairy owner went out of business. The Retailer's Association representative argues that customers have no idea what the dairy owners do for them. If they did they would support the store.

Customer loyalty is of importance to all shops, but to the small neighbourhood dairy, with its limited supply of customers, loyalty is the only real guarantee of success.

Theoretical Conclusions

The foregoing summary has established the major conclusions of this research and it is now time to seek to place these findings in a wider framework.

In Chapter I the task was to outline the broad environmental forces which favour the growth of bigger stores to the detriment of the small shop. It was shown that the decline in the market position of the small shop has been aided by a number of changes in society which make it impossible to put the problems of the small shop in a simple economic equation. From this assessment it was postulated that any discussion of the future of the small shop should take into account the position of the small shop and its owners within the wider society.

Empirical evidence for these assertions is generally poor for few detailed studies of small shopkeepers exist. Indeed much of the writing on the shopkeeping occupation has been of a superficial journalistic nature serving to provide little more than a caricature of shopkeepers. They are depicted as being at the mercy of their own ineptitude and as having economic and customer problems (Malamud, 1959, Wells, 1959, Bugler, 1970). Despite their superficial treatment of the shopkeeper, these analyses have captured what seems to be the shopkeepers' true problem: the relegation of the small shopkeeper to the margins of society. Here they hang on as a result of their own perseverance rather than their social importance. It is this theme which will be developed in theoretical form during the rest of this chapter.

In the following discussion much will be made of the concept of marginality, but it is not the intention to travel the well worn path of those who would see the shopkeeper as economically marginal. This form of marginality will be taken to be a symptom of a more important form of marginality, structural marginality. The theory developed here derives from work done by Wittermans and Kraus (1974).

To begin with it should be made clear that structural marginality has nothing in common with the 'classical' theories of Park or Stonequist which have focused on a social psychological meaning for marginality.

The concern here is with what Goetze (1976) has called 'the category...of theories that interpret marginality as different degrees of institutionalisation'. This category of theories has more in common with the everyday use of the word marginality and has as yet few research examples(6). The lack of research using this more mundane meaning of marginality has perhaps been explained by Becker (1970) who suggests that sociologists are wary of using 'merely lay terms'. Until recently the institutional notion of marginality has indeed been a lay term. However, this should in no way imply it is an impotent conceptualisation. Wardwell (1952) shows that the American Negroes' position in the social structure can be profitably explained by this second stream of marginality. The importance of the Wittermans and Kraus theory is that it has raised the second stream of marginality to a place where it can be applied more readily to empirical work. Wittermans and Kraus' theory labels the institutional form of marginality, structural marginality and links this to the concept of social worth as a way of showing the impact such marginality has on people. It should be noted that the authors apply their theory to the category of youth while it is

(6) Two examples of this use of marginality are: J.H. Fitcher, 'The marginal Catholic: An institutional approach'. Social Forces, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Oct. 1953) pp 167-173. W.I. Wardwell 'A marginal professional role: The chiropractor'. Social Forces 30 (March 1952) pp. 339-348.

here being applied to an occupational group. However there is no conflict as the authors state that the theory could be used in the occupational area. They refer to the problem of automation and the consequent elimination of occupational roles as being fittingly described by their theory.

Wittermans and Kraus are concerned with structural changes in the division of labour having a deleterious effect on persons, they become structurally marginal. The theorists base their assumptions on four premises: 1) in a society the structure of relationships (i.e. social structure) involves institutionalised roles of varying importance; 2) the social significance of these roles is determined by the relative degree of consensus regarding the extent to which they contribute to the needs of society; 3) these roles always involve rights and privileges as well as responsibilities; and 4) institutionalised roles as the basis for the individual's participation in the society.

From these premises Wittermans and Kraus argue that people who do not have institutionalised roles of significance will be restricted from meaningful participation in society. Thus, they are marginal and because this is due to structural factors they are structurally marginal.

Therefore, "Structural marginality (is) the condition of those persons whose meaningful participation in the life of their society is adversely affected by certain structural arrangements. (Wittermans and Kraus, 1974:349).

Having established this basic concept the relationship between structural marginality and social worth can be established. Wittermans and Kraus argue that the roles people occupy in society have at least a minimal social significance; 1) the acknowledgement of society of the individual's ability to contribute something of value to his society; 2) the acknowledgement that he is worthy of carrying responsibilities; 3) the conferring of legal and/or moral rights and, 4) the assignment of status. Assignment of a role which has these minimum characteristics is a prerequisite to full participation in society. They go on to say:

Role assignment signifies that the person is included, reckoned with, and has some value for the group....he is a group member....if no institutionalised role is available, the personis not a full member. He is at most a hanger on, a marginal person (Wittermans and Kraus 1974:350).

While institutionalisation sets up role expectations it is social worth which refers to what is implicitly conferred on the person through role assignment. Individuals perform roles in society and look for something in return. The tangible return is economic, but perhaps more important are the acknowledgement of competence, the ability to carry responsibility, rights, status; in short social worth.

The concern here is not with how such an exchange as was described takes place, merely that it does.

The concept of social worth....refers to the acknowledgement, implicit in role assignment, of a person's competence, his abilities, his abilities to carry out responsibility, his rights, and his status. (Wittermans and Kraus, 1974:350).

Social worth then, the means by which an individual learns how important he is to society. Without social worth the individual must find it difficult to relate to the society of which he is inevitably a part.

The importance of social worth, on an individual basis, is that it signifies a place in the division of labour. The allocation of social goods is made on the basis of social worth. Therefore, exclusion from the assignment of roles involves a low evaluation from the perspective of the group and the deprivation of social worth from the perspective of the individual.

Structural marginality may now be more specifically defined as referring to the condition of persons for whom institutionalised roles are not readily available, and who, as a consequence, suffer from a deficiency of social worth (Wittermans and Kraus 1974:351).

The cause of structural marginality may be seen to fall into two categories; "temporary dislocations such as economic depressions, or chronic illness, and changes in the basis for the division of labour." (Wittermans and Kraus 1974:351).

The theory of Wittermans and Kraus offers an explanation of how people come to be marginal in society. It also enables a prediction of what such

marginality would mean in personal terms. With these observations in mind the discussion can return to the small shopkeeper.

The Structural Nature of Shopkeeper Marginality in Modern Society

The key to understanding the shopkeepers' position in modern society is the lack of meaningful roles available to the shopkeeper. Today the small shop is allocated the most trivial, the least rewarding of retailing tasks. During the last fifty years, during the course of what Davis (1966) calls the second retailing revolution, the small shopkeeper has been progressively separated from his core roles within an environment of social, technological, economic, psychological and demographic change. Whereas the small shopkeeper used to be the representative of the family in the distributive network, this is now a thing of the past. The roles which the small shopkeeper now fills are of such limited scope in relation to the needs of the community, the family and the individual, that they lack significance.

The dramatic change which has taken place in the shopkeepers' role can be demonstrated by reference to the pre 1920's. During that time the shopkeeper occupied a meaningful role. Davis (1966) talks of how

the shopkeeper used to be an integral part of the distribution of food and other goods. A family could best assure themselves of the goods they wanted by establishing a strong relationship with shopkeepers who were then relied upon to do their best for the family. In modern society this feature of a bond between shopkeeper and customer has all but disappeared. As this situation has developed the basis for a shopkeeper's status in society has been taken away.

What specific factors are responsible for the social situation of modern shopkeepers? It was established in Chapter I that there are a number of broad environmental forces which provide the background for the change in the fortunes of the shopkeeper. However, these forces are only related to the small shopkeepers' situation; they are not the direct cause of it. The shopkeepers' situation does not follow directly from rapid social change. Nor does it follow directly from the increasing dominance of big business, although it is associated with this development. Admittedly with the growth of big business the smaller shop has had to occupy a different role. It has had to be fitted into another area of retailing more suited to its qualities. However, such a role is not easily found and with rapid changes in retailing methods and consumer expectations, the possibility of establishing a role remains difficult. The small shop now sits on the periphery of the retailing

complex where institutionalised roles of economic, or any other significance, are not readily available. It is, therefore, the restriction of institutionalised roles which allows environmental forces to have an effect on the small shop. Environmental forces, although associated with the restriction of institutionalised roles, and although they contribute to this condition, do not appear to be the main cause. What would appear to be primarily responsible are changes in the division of labour within retailing whereby tasks traditionally carried out by the shopkeeper have lost their social significance, have been replaced by new ones, or have been usurped by other agencies of retailing.

Prior to the development of the larger retailing outlets, changes in merchandising and wider social dynamics, the small retailer occupied a strong central position in retailing (7). The position was based on the fact that skills and knowledge possessed by the shopkeepers were needed by the customer when they sought to buy goods. Of course this knowledge and skill could be used to the detriment of the customer, but this merely created stronger pressure for customers to build

(7) In Victorian times, for example, the shopkeeper formed what was called a 'shopocracy', which gave them considerable political influence.

up relationships with shopkeepers. The system of dependence on shopkeepers continued well into the 20th century until manufacturers began to process, standardise and brand their own products as part of an effort to market goods for themselves. The manufacturers' use of advertising has reduced the need for shopkeepers to make customers aware of products. Smelser (1973) notes that the standard of trustworthiness has become standard prices, guarantees, brand names and packaging. Such developments have reduced the shopkeeper to a functionary of the economic and social forces beyond his control (Mills, 1951:26).

In modern society, the criteria for being a good shopkeeper, so important in past years, are no longer important. In fact the current criteria of a good shop are often divorced from the shopkeeper. Customers are more likely to rate a shop on its stock than the people who run it. This situation provides conditions for the shopkeeping role to be judged superfluous. Today, advances in retailing technology have made it possible to completely depersonalise the purchase of goods (8). A direct result of depersonalisation and standardisation of shopping has been the decline in the

(8) In both Britain and the United States it is possible for customers to buy a whole range of products by feeding their requests into a computer. They do not even have to move about the store to select the goods.

number of shops which function as symbols of status. Customers from various class groupings are now willing to shop at the same store. Such developments make it difficult for shopkeepers to interpret their role as vital. There is no exclusive area of skill or knowledge left for the small shopkeeper to claim for himself and for this reason there is no way he can claim a set of rights and responsibilities.

The significant change in the division of labour within retailing has been from a human division, which recognised the need for human skill and judgement, to a machine division which is geared to the dispensing of goods. The human division of labour provided for social worth to be attached to those people who could offer expertise in the area of retailing. The machine division is based on ideas of efficiency with a view to the maximisation of consumption. Whereas the human division sought to bring consumer and shopkeeper together, the machine one seeks to keep them apart making the assignment of social worth, from consumer to shopkeeper, a difficult process.

The older retailing system was oriented toward the family and its welfare, making the shop an extension of the family unit. The modern system has in fact recognised that such a close liaison between family and shop is no longer needed. Today's retailer is successful to the degree that he can supply a wide range of

goods to a wide section of the community. For this reason the welfare of the customer is not related to personal service but to the competition between retailers who are seeking to make a profit. In short, the welfare of consumers is now related to prices.

The small retailer is peripheral not only in retailing, but also in the overall job structure. As both Hall (1969) and Drucker (1953) have pointed out, the small shop is no longer economically nor socially desirable. Where the shop was once a symbol of opportunity, within the context of the advantages attached to contemporary employment, it is now more likely to be associated with self exploitation, risk and few rewards.

With the ascendancy of the modern retailing system, the principle of organising sales on the basis of maximum efficiency has pervaded most spheres of retailing so that the exclusion of small personalised shops is now generally accepted. For the small trader, this process involves a rapid diminishing of support from the market place and their traditional role. Consequently they are now experiencing a deficiency of social worth. The personal ramifications of this situation have been elaborated during the course of the present research.

Small Shop Survival

The preceding discussion has been in general terms, as the purpose has been to emphasise that the problems

of the small shop are due to structural marginality, which in turn, according to the argument, is the result of changes in the division of labour within retailing, the question which arises now is that of small shop survival.

Structural marginality is an increasing problem for the small shopkeeper. But the question must be asked as to whether this constitutes a problem of wider concern. After all the fortunes of the small shop-keeping stratum have traditionally been variable. The problem in the past has, however, been one of economic conditions. Unemployment, for example, has frequently pushed people into shopkeeping (Bechhofer et. al. 1971). The current change in the small shopkeeper's fortunes may be of a more permanent nature. Since the small shop is in fact losing the basis for its role in society the reduction in shop numbers may be permanent.

Sociological arguments for the preservation of the small shop were presented in Chapter I and need not be reiterated here. A point which should be made now, in the light of the research, relates to the group which will be most affected by a decline in the small shop. Modern society is oriented toward big business and the employee (Child, 1969). It might easily be assumed that people who could be employed by themselves in a shop will easily accept the new character of society. But this is not necessarily the case. Bechhofer

et. al. (1974) argue that the small shopkeeper stratum represents a distinct group in society. "The small traders really do deserve to be treated separately as a separate stratum; separate that is from the so called lower middle class and from the skilled and independent manual worker" (Bechhofer et. al. 1974). If indeed shopkeepers are a distinct group in terms of values, beliefs and approach to life, (and this conclusion is supported by the present research) then a decline in the small shop may mean a closing off of yet another avenue to a distinctive life style. The absorption of this group into the mainstream life style is unlikely to create strains in social order, but it is likely to cause personal dissatisfaction. Perhaps it is reasonable for such a group to be able to expect to fill roles which suit them and provide them with social worth. Just as variety is desirable in retailing for the consumer; so too is it desirable in the job structure for the worker.

Efforts to preserve the small shop were also discussed in Chapter I, and the task now is to offer some alternative to these. It can be stated bluntly that there may be no alternative. While the present research suggests that current efforts to preserve the small shop are inadequate, the conclusions reached here provide for few alternatives. The recent developments in retailing have established a whole new system

of distribution and expectations among consumers. It must be appreciated that such developments portend that social relations in the area of retailing will take place upon a new set of assumptions about behaviour. Those values which provided the basis for the older style of retailing simply may no longer be viable.

The spread of the new system of retailing and what it means for shopkeepers, is gradual. It is a process of structural marginalisation. For attempts to preserve the small shop to be effective this trend must be halted by re-establishing the small shop as important within the new context. Put bluntly, it would seem this cannot be done (9). The future of the small shop lies in two directions. The first, which involves the specialisation of small shops in product areas which have only a small rapidly changing market (for example, high fashion), may prove to be the only viable direction. By specialising the small shopkeeper can be safe from the larger business concern and the new system of retailing. The customer still seeks the shopkeeper's personal service in the more specialised areas of consumption because they need guidance during purchases. An astute shopkeeper can respond to this situation and build up a good trade. In fact this is

(9) This assumes continuation of the social trends which reinforce the problems of the small shop.

the trend in small shops (10). The other direction is for small shops to try to retain a hold on the sale of general products. This must end in failure. There is no role for the small shop in the general product area for it is here that the new system of retailing has had its fullest effect. It is here that the customer has learnt to expect increasing distance between themselves and the shopkeeper. If the small shopkeeper insists on staying in the general product area the consequences can only be similar to those which have formed the focus of the present research. The dairy-grocery is after all wholly representative of the process of structural marginalisation as it reaches its height.

From the conclusions arrived at in this chapter there arises an important challenge both for retailers and social planners. What will the future of retailing be? This question is made vital when it is remembered that the retailing is affected by, and greatly affects, the society in which it takes place (McClelland, 1964: 38). Predicting what might happen Toffler (1970) says shopping will become, "more than a functional necessity" and be turned into a "prefabricated experience". Assuming that current trends in retailing may be leading to

(10) A. Kirby op. cit. points out that the small specialist shop is a high growth area made possible by the increase in affluence.

less desirable conclusion. The challenge then, is to ensure that the demise of a style of shopping which has for so long successfully met human needs, is not replaced by one far less successful. Already there is a critical minority who believe this is about to occur.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of introduction used in the
early stages of the research.



PALMERSTON NORTH, NEW ZEALAND

TELEPHONES, 69099, 69089
In reply please quote:

August 1976

SHOPKEEPERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Dear Sir and Madam,

During August and September I wish to conduct research with the intention of gathering information about owner operators of small shops. I am hoping you will agree to take part in the study.

The nature of my inquiry is as follows. I am particularly interested in gathering descriptive material about people in small shops and their work experiences. The research seeks to fill a gap that exists in our knowledge about the place of shopkeepers in the community.

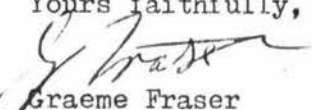
Your agreeing to take part in the study would commit you to an interview of about two hours length covering issues of concern to both husband and wife. I realise the interview could interfere with your work and have therefore set it out so the issues can be discussed by one or other person. Since the research asks you to give up your time it is reasonable you should ask what it would achieve. I consider the major benefit to be a contribution to a clearer understanding of a group who form a significant part of the New Zealand community. Such knowledge could have direct bearing on policies relating to small businesses.

I would like to emphasise that your participation in the study is entirely confidential. No names will be used and the results will be presented in such a way that it will be impossible to identify answers given by a particular individual. You have the right to look over the final report.

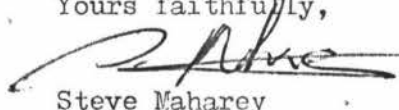
Within a few days of receiving this letter one of the researchers will call on you to discuss the research. If you are interested in the project arrangements can be made at this time.

I hope you find the topic of research interesting, I am sure it will be of benefit to us both, and I look forward to meeting and participating with you in the project.

Yours faithfully,


Graeme Fraser
Prof. of Sociology

Yours faithfully,


Steve Maharey
Jnr. Lecturer in Bus. Admin.

APPENDIX B

Schedule standardised questionnaire.

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

PROJECT
ON
SHOPKEEPERS IN THE COMMUNITY

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

AND

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

AUGUST

1976

Name of shop. _____

1. How old are you? (Nearest birthday) _____

2. Male ☐

Female ☐

3. Where were you born? _____

a) If not in New Zealand, how long have you been in this country? _____

4. Do you keep good health? _____

5. a) What is your highest educational qualification?

Proficiency ☐

University Entrance ☐

Form IV ☐

University Units ☐

School Certificate ☐

University Degree ☐

b) Please list any trade certificates or occupational training undertaken. eg. Apprenticeship.

6. Would you please write down the occupation of your father.

7. Would you please write down the occupations of your brothers and sisters (where applicable).

8. Would you please list the occupations of your children (if any are working). Please be specific.

9. Do you have any children attending -

Secondary School ☐

Technical Institute ☐

University ☐

Teachers Training College ☐

10. a) If you had a son who was about to choose an occupation and there was absolutely no obstacle in his way, which occupation would you hope he would choose?
- _____
- b) Could you tell me why you would hope he would choose this occupation? _____
- _____
11. Which of these statements most fits how you feel about your work?
- Completely satisfied ☐ A little dissatisfied ☐
Quite satisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐
12. Which of these statements most fits how you feel about the amount of money you make from the shop?
- Completely satisfied ☐ A little dissatisfied ☐
Quite satisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐
13. Do you hold a job outside of the shop?
- Yes ☐ No ☐
- If yes, what is the job? _____
14. Does the business involve both the husband and wife in some way?
- Yes ☐ No ☐
15. Who is the one who does most around the shop?
- Husband ☐ Wife ☐
16. Did any of your relations own the shop before you?
- Yes ☐ No ☐
17. Is the business a -
- Registered private company ☐
Individual ownership ☐
Partnership ☐
Registered public company ☐
Other (specify) _____

18. How many hours a week would you -

Spend in the shop _____

Spend on related jobs _____

19. How many days a week is the shop open? _____

20. How secure would you say the business is?

Dead safe ☐

Very insecure ☐

Fairly safe ☐

Don't know ☐

Rather insecure ☐

21. Some people say the trade unions have too much power in this country. On the whole would you agree or disagree?

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

22. Some people say big businesses have too much power in this country. On the whole would you agree or disagree?

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

23. a) What political party did you vote for last election?

National ☐

Social Credit ☐

Labour ☐

Values ☐

Other (specify) _____

b) Have you ever voted for any party other than this?

Yes ☐

No ☐

c) If there were an election tomorrow which party would you support?

National ☐

Social Credit ☐

Labour ☐

Values ☐

Other (specify) _____

24. a) If you had to put yourself in a social class which class would you choose?

Upper class ☐

Lower class ☐

Middle class ☐

Working class ☐

Lower middle class ☐

Don't know ☐

b) Could you tell me why you chose this class?

APPENDIX C

Nonscheduled standardised
questionnaire.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Husband and wife to answer all questions unless labelled otherwise.

A. Background and entry into the business

1. When did you start in this business?
2. What were you doing before you started the business?
3. What other main jobs did you do before that?
4. Now your first job was.....Why did you pick that?
5. Why did you leave that job?
6. What about the other jobs, why did you leave those?
7. What are the features of a job that you think are important?
 - a) Probe beyond first reason.
8. Many parents seem to have ambitions for their children. Was this the case for you?
9. (The wife) What were your reactions to coming into the shop?
 - a) Probe for her aspirations.
10. Thinking back to when you took over this shop, can you remember any particular factors which influenced you to take it on?
 - a) Probe for personal circumstances.
 - b) Probe for family ties.
 - c) Probe for the desire to be own boss.

B. The job

1. Could you briefly outline the tasks your job entails?
2. Could you imagine a typical day in the shop and tell me what happens?

3. a) Probe for - what is most liked about the job.
 what is disliked.
 what changes in the job would be liked.
 preference for another job.
 what skills, qualities needed for the job.
 experiences with staff.
 what do customers think of you.
 what makes a good shopkeeper.
 relations with company representatives.
 danger, i.e. theft, bikies.
 performance, do you think you have to put up a front.
 significance of the counter.
 do you raise prices to keep pace with inflation.

4. How did you learn the ropes, the tricks of the trade?

- a) Probe for customer's part in their job training.

C. The old days

1. The dairy is a type of shop most people have been familiar with for many years. Are you aware of any changes in the way people think about the dairy which have occurred over the years?

D. Customers

1. In general, what do you think of customers?

2. Do you have categories of customers?
 - a) Probe for the basis of categorisation.
 - b) Probe for ideal customer
 - c) Probe for bad customers.
3. How do you expect customers to treat the shop and you?
4. If you had a choice in what area of town would you most like to own a shop?
 - a) Probe for the type of customer involved.
5. Do you see yourself as a servant of your customers?
 - a) Probe for dominance and subservience.
6. How do you deal with difficult customers?
 - a) Probe for what is meant by a difficult customer.
7. Do you have sales techniques?
8. The basis of your business seems to be personal service. Is that how you see it?
9. What sort of enjoyment do you get from dealing with customers?
 - a) Probe for a balance in the relationship.
10. Are children problem customers?
 - a) Probe for the amount children spend in the shop.

E. Family and life style

1. How much does the shop involve your family?
2. How much does your private life and shop work overlap?
3. Is the shop a source of problems for you as a family?
 - a) Probe for types of problems.
4. What do your children think about life in the shop?

3. What would happen to customers if all dairies closed down?
4. What other services do you provide besides just selling goods?
 - a) Probe for feelings about this.

G. Personal factors

1. What do you think the shop has done to you as a person?
 - a) Probe for personality changes.
2. How do you rate this job in terms of status?
3. What sort of person do you think should go into a business like this?
 - a) Probe for whether they are the person.
4. Are you going to expand the business?
5. Are you going to change the way you run the business?

H. Money and meaning

1. Leaving aside money, what are the most important things about this job to you?
 - a) Probe for place of money in priorities.
2. Could you tell me if you have; a washing machine, television, phone, car stereo, house?
 - a) Probe for other items.
 - b) Probe for ownership of items.
3. How much income do you make from the shop?
 - a) Probe for what money is spent on.

I. Aspirations and future

1. What job will you go to after this?
 - a) Probe for reason for leaving.
2. What would you say is your goal to be achieved by working?
3. Have things been getting better for you over the last ten years?

5. How many chances does the family get to do things together?
a) Probe for the effects of this.
6. Do you like having the shop so close to your home?
a) Probe for the problems this might cause.
7. Does the amount of time you put into the shop cut you off from social life in general?
8. Do you find it difficult to have friends?
a) Probe for friends from before the shop days.
b) Probe for friends made through the business.
9. Do you have a sport, hobby, club or any interest of this sort?
a) Probe for the reason for taking up activity.
10. How would you characterise your life; family centred, work centred or leisure centred?
11. The sacrifices a family make to run a dairy seem quite large. Is it worth it?
12. Do you have holidays, or breaks when you close the shop?
13. How has your marriage stood up to the strain of being in the shop together?
a) Probe for adjustments made.
b) Probe for who is the boss.
14. How do you divide up the tasks between you?
15. (The wife) How do you manage the two jobs of helping in the shop and looking after the house?
a) Probe for husband's help in the house.
16. Do you draw on relatives to help in the shop?

F. Community role

1. Do you think that your shop is an important part of the community?
2. Do you think that people think of the dairy as "our dairy"?

APPENDIX D

CONTENTS

Extract from field notes

From field notes recorded during an interview on the 28th October 1975 between 1:00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m.

ON. I arrived and the shop was empty. He saw me from the house and came out to get me.

OC. It is a fact of life that the beginning of an interview is tense. I still can't get over it and I can see that people just don't know what to expect.

ON. We went into the house to find the wife cleaning up. The house looked very tidy. I asked her not to worry about tidying up for me and she replied that she always did it about this time of day. I noted that she said she did it.

TN. In terms of Leemings traditional type of marriage couple these people, like all the rest seem to be traditional. She does the work around the house. Now this is interesting as it stands to reason that if she helps in the shop he should help around the house.

MN. Ask a lot more questions about who does the housework and why?

ON. We settled into the interview quickly as they seemed happy to talk after a few minutes chat. Clearly it helps to reassure them of confidentiality and to find some common link which sets up a mutual attraction.

ON. They came into the shop because they wanted to have a go at doing their own thing.

ON. He used to drive a taxi immediately before he came into the shop but he couldn't stand the control others had over him so he thought he would try to do something on his own.

TN. Once again the shop emerges as a chance for opportunity to be one's own boss.

MN. Make up a memo on the idea of the shop as an opportunity device.

ON. He wanted to prove himself, prove he could do something on his own. Looked at all sorts of places. The dairy suited him because it had a house attached and they could therefore get in for less.

TN. I note once again that the wife fades as we begin to talk about why the shop became an occupation. is it not her career too?

MN. Check status heirarchy in the shop.

OC. How would I feel living so close to my place of work? This is a feature of work in the olden days. Perhaps I could ask if it has any advantages.

ON. These people have not been in the shop long (9 months) but he seems already a bit disturbed about the lack of support he gets from the community. He claims that all he needs is about ten dollars a week from the customers each and he would be right. But they buy elsewhere.

TN. Same story of lack of support from the community. Why do they think that people won't support them? Is it the retail image idea I have been playing with?

MN. How do the owners think the shoppers see them?

The above extract represented the first stage of analysing the data. It also served as a valuable mid-point in the handling of data. The data in this form served as an index back to the raw data on the tapes, and it provided the basis of higher forms of analysis.