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AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
ON GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE:
A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN WORKING IN HOTEL BARS

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THESIS SUMMARY AND SYNOPSIS

This work is an anthropological study of women engaged in serving drinks in hotel bars. The perspective I adopt highlights the theme of gender, contrasting the interactional and cognitive patterns of the work experiences of women and men bar workers. I relate these patterns to cultural constructs or ideologies of gender operative in Australian society.

As a case study of women's participation in the public domain, my conclusions suggest ways in which women's presence in the paid work force is perceived within an overarching rubric of cultural constructs of gender which present the home as the proper place for women. As an explanatory framework for my discussion, I draw on the argument of Ortner (1974) about the cultural definition of women and men in terms of the concepts of 'nature' and 'culture'.

In Chapter One, by way of introduction, I explore the substantive, methodological and theoretical issues raised by this study. In Chapter Two, I examine the institutional features of hotels and the ethnographic location of the research. Here I draw out the significance of women in mediating the contradictions of bar work. In Chapter Three, I explore cultural constructs of hotels as male domains and their use by women and men patrons. The inconsistencies which become apparent when patterns of patronage are lined up against cultural constructs of hotels are situationally and selectively perceived in ways which are supportive of cultural classifications of gender.

In Chapter Four, I explore the institutional features specific to bar work and identify general core characteristics and constraints of

the work which apply to those who work in it. This discussion identifies contradictions attaching to the work which are not gender-differentiated. In Chapter Five, by way of preface to an exploration of the ethnography relating to women workers in Chapter Six, I review some recent analyses of women at work in the Australian context. This literature raises a number of issues relevant to the data set out in the following chapter.

The descriptive data on women and men at work in hotel bars is contained in Chapters Six and Seven respectively. The importance of these chapters, especially Chapter Six, should not be misread by their description as ethnography.

The discussions of women and men in bar work are interlinked and lay the groundwork for a number of gender contrasts which I outline in the second half of Chapter Seven. Following this, in my conclusion, I explore and interpret definitions of women bar workers which draw on their sexuality. I refer to these definitions as the 'sexual code' which I argue is central to the interactions of women workers and customers in a number of ways.

I round off by arguing that for both women and men, the contradictions entailed in bar work stem from wider cultural constructs of gender. These are mediated by a number of neutralising or distancing mechanisms which mask these contradictions.

With reference to women bar workers, ideological 'work' is performed by the sexual code, which in paradoxical ways renders their participation in the public world consistent with an ideology which stresses the proper and primary role of women as mothers in domestic contexts.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

S. Grimes

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THEME, METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

Introductory statement of the theme

The theme of this thesis is gender. Gender differences are identified from a contrast between women and men engaged in bar work, and the significance of these differences is drawn out with special reference to women bar workers. The thesis is an anthropological study of the work experiences of those employed to serve drinks in hotel bars, explored according to a gender perspective which contrasts the interactional and cognitive patterns of women and men.

I conclude that one critical differentiating factor lies in the manifestation and significance of the sexuality of women bar workers in the social relations of the work place.* In my conclusion, I relate the social patterns evident in bar work to ideologies of gender operative in the wider society, moving my analysis beyond the social significance of work relationships internal to bar settings, explored in earlier chapters. Patterns of gender evident in bar work exhibit both consistencies and inconsistencies with the gender attributes stated in these ideologies. This leads to a critical point in my argument elaborated with particular reference to women bar workers. The argument is that the gender attributes which are operative in the wider society must be neutralised or distanced in bar settings with reference to both women and men bar workers. In this way, where the gender patterns apparent in

*My concept of 'sexuality' is a narrow one and is encapsulated in the notion of the 'sexual code', as elaborated below and in Chapter Six.

bar work are inconsistent with the gender attributes manifest in ideology, open contradiction between them is avoided.

For women working in predominantly male-frequented hotel bars, their work entails a range of interactions, including those which operate within what I describe as a sexual code.* This sexual code has a special place in the understanding of the work experiences of women bar workers. My interpretations of the sexual code are the foundation for a case study of how the presence of women at work in public domains is rendered consistent with, and so maintains, ideologies of gender which associate women with the domestic sphere. These ideologies highlight women as 'naturally' located in the domestic sphere and highlight men as located in the public world of 'culture' (Ortner 1974).

My analysis of the significance of the sexual code is an interpretation which inter-relates different levels of data. These include the interactional and cognitive details of the social and work relationships evident in hotel bars, when they are viewed as work places. These details, I argue, must be understood with reference to two sets of cultural constructs operative both within and outside of bar settings, and both relevant to the Australian context. First, there are cultural constructs of hotels as male domains which are rich in implication for an analysis of gender, and which I explore in Chapter Three. Second, there is a set of cultural constructs about gender which I identify as a pervasive set of ideological assumptions about women and men which have normative implications and which enter into the interactional and cognitive patterns of bar work in complex ways. I explore the nature of

*The notion of a 'code' in social relations is elaborated in a number of works, including Goffman (1967) and Kapferer (ed. 1976).

these gender constructs later in this chapter, and return to an analysis of them in the conclusion.*

My arguments about the sexual code, summarised in compressed form here, are also elaborated in the conclusion. One assumption underlying my argument about the sexual code is that in hotel bars both customers and bar workers come together in a setting where they are spatially and structurally set apart from their domestic ties.[†] However, the significance of this point, which emerges in the course of discussion, is critically different for women and men, since from an ideological perspective women are centrally defined by their association with the domestic sphere, while men are not.

Firstly, the sexual code operates to cut women bar workers off from an image of 'womanhood' in the sense of that which is 'high' and 'moral' (Ortner 1974), an image which could impede the ongoing social activities of hotel customers, including a range of drunken and other styles of behaviour.

Secondly, the sexual code facilitates the objectification of women bar workers by hotel customers. 'Objectification' entails the transformation of customer interaction with women bar workers through a

*Kaplan and Manners use the term 'ideology' to refer to the 'ideational realm of a culture' (Kaplan and Manners 1972:112). Under this rubric they include values, norms, knowledge, themes, philosophies, religious beliefs, sentiments, ethical principles and the like (*ibid.*). For the moment I follow this broad usage, equating ideological, cultural and normative constructs or classifications. I specify my usage of ideology in more detail later in this chapter. On the distinction between 'cognition' and 'interaction', referred to further in the conclusion, I follow Mitchell (1974). While on the point of usage, it should be noted that there are two senses in which 'culture' is used in this work: one derives from Ortner (1974), and is specified below; the other follows more orthodox anthropological usage, viewing culture as a system of symbols and meanings (Schneider 1968).

[†]This is not necessarily so for hotel managers, as I discuss later.

variety of modes of behaviour which include the dual processes of attention and non-attention. In this way, the woman bar worker becomes relevant for some of a customer's purposes, but not for others.*

Thirdly, the sense of solidarity and transcendence encapsulated in the concept of 'mateship' which characterises many stereotypic constructions of Australian culture, insofar as it is applicable to hotel bar settings, is as readily achieved by the controlled presence of women in the bar as it is by their exclusion from the setting. This is especially the case when the women who may be present in hotels are readily perceived as morally suspect in terms of their sexuality.

Fourthly, the sexual code separates women bar workers from cultural definitions of women in general, which centrally associate them with the domestic sphere. In this way the implications of women working in hotel bars need not be considered with reference to definitions of women which stress their domestic identification. So, for instance, the access that women bar workers have to non-domestic domains and the controls they exercise within them in virtue of working in hotel bars can be seen as normatively inappropriate for women in terms of gender ideology. In distancing women bar workers from constructs of women in general, the sexual code masks the controls and public access that women have by virtue of their work in bars. Paradoxically, because women workers are primarily defined in terms of their sexuality, this operates as a continual reminder that they are 'women', and enables them to draw in their work from a range of attributes which define women in cultural classifications of gender.

*For a definition of 'objectification' see the conclusion. I have also drawn on Goffman (1959, 1967) for the concept of 'objectification' elaborated here.

Finally, ideological work is done by the sexual code through processes of labelling and selective perception, so that patterns of women's bar work which contradict wider gender attributes of women are rendered consistent with them. For instance, the sexual code translates the patterns evident in the work of women in hotel bars into terms which are consistent with gender ideology, downplaying the economic realities of women's work by translating these realities into terms which ultimately stress the dependence of women on men. The sexual code, while it separates women bar workers from the ideological model of domestically-defined women, simultaneously defines women bar workers as firmly in the control of men.*

A gender perspective on hotel bars: definitions, research orientations and themes

By gender I refer to the cultural and cognitive classifications and social and interactional differentiations attaching to women and men. I elaborate on my usage of this concept in the course of the discussion in this chapter.†

Following Matthews (1978) and Rogers (1978), I interpret the bar work experiences of women in hotels according to a gender perspective which is relational, contrasting the work experiences of women with those of men bar workers. While this gender perspective was not formulated explicitly as the problem of my research from the beginning, it evolved in the course of the research from a combination of factors,

*Discussions with Bruce Kapferer were helpful on this point.

†The sources I have drawn on for this definition are Yeatman (1979) and Mitchell (1974).

including the initial definition of the study as one of women at work in hotel bars. The research setting and the methods adopted for collecting the data which are elaborated in Chapter Two, were additional factors which influenced the direction taken.

There are two major, although related, strands of enquiry. One derived from the focus on women as bar workers, stemming from the initial conception of the research; the other grew out of the fact that bar work is not exclusively engaged in by women, but is commonly taken up by men also. This led to a contrast which enabled me to draw out gender differences in the work.

A study of bar workers in hotels needs to confront the nature of the social setting in which the work occurs. In Australia, hotels are popularly conceived of as male domains *par excellence*. These conceptions tend to overlook the presence in hotels of women, both as workers and customers. One major line of enquiry stems from the regular employment of women to serve drinks in a setting which is popularly perceived as more appropriately patronised by men than by women. One task here is to explore the paradoxes arising from the situation of women bar workers who are regularly present in a setting which is problematic for women in a number of ways.

The second area of enquiry is made interesting by the fact that, at least in recent years and for the time of the research period (1975-1978), women and men who work for wages in hotel bars are legally entitled to the same rates of pay and perform a similar range of routine tasks associated with the work.* Because the division of labour in bar

*Equal pay was phased in over a period from 1973 to 1975. A legal barrier to women's employment in hotel bars, which restricted rather than excluded their employment, was repealed in 1967. I discuss this law and its implications in Chapters Four and Five.

work is not markedly based on a segregation of tasks according to the gender of the worker, bar work offers a valuable opportunity to analyse the significance of gender differences. For these and other reasons which are elaborated in the body of the work, hotel bars, when they are viewed as work places, are settings which are rich in implications for the study of gender and for the exploration of everyday assumptions about gender which underly the social relationships occurring in them.

The exploration of cultural constructs of hotels as male domains developed in Chapter Three, reveals an additional paradox especially relevant to male bar workers. That is, the work of barmen entails serving drinks to a predominantly male clientele in a setting in which the culturally appropriate role for men, as presented in these constructs, is that of a customer.

As the research problems emerged in the course of the study, a shift occurred away from the theme as initially conceived in terms of a sociological study of an unskilled servicing occupation which engaged women, to one which retained a focus on the work experiences of women but which was explored in terms of a gender perspective.* Since the data were gathered from a limited number of hotels the arguments are not intended to stand as typical of hotels in general, although there is a case that they can be so generalised. Instead, the data form the basis for a case study about the work experiences of women in public domains. As a consequence, I have focussed more closely on the perspectives of bar workers rather than those of managers or customers, and more closely, among bar workers, on perspectives of women rather than men. This

*Nevertheless, literature on occupational sociology was a formative influence on this project, including Berger's *The Human Shape of Work* (ed. 1964).

reflects both my closer access to women as bar workers and the problems posed in the thesis. With the exception of Chapter Three, little systematic attention is paid to the perspective of customers, whose social encounters, experiences and behaviours are relevant insofar as they enter into the social world of those engaged in bar work.

Gender and anthropology: issues raised by a critique of literature on bar settings

Davidoff comments that there is little gained and much lost when women are analysed as a problem separate from what goes on in economic, political and social structures (Davidoff et al. [eds.] 1976). This point leads to a second sense in which a gender perspective is relational, that is, not only must a social analysis of women's activities relate them to men's activities, but the study of gender must be related to the wider social context in which it is observed.

Later in this chapter, I indicate how theoretical perspectives adopted from anthropology can be used to take account of and inter-relate the wider social context with a detailed study of a particular setting. The issue raised here is a central one in anthropology, inherited from structural functional approaches which stressed as a central theoretical and methodological concern the importance of relating the object of study to its wider social and cultural context.

An overview and critique of some of the anthropological literature on bar settings draws attention not only to the need to attend to gender as a substantive theme relevant to the analysis of these settings, but also to the need to locate the study of gender in the wider social context. It was this literature which first drew my attention to the importance of specifying the concept of gender, so as to avoid analysis

in terms of implicit and unstated commonsense, everyday understandings. It follows from this point that it is important to make explicit the cultural constructs of gender operative in the wider society.

After a critical overview of Cavan's *Liquor Licence: An Ethnography of Bar Behaviour* (1966), and Spradley and Mann's *The Cocktail Waitress* (1975), I turn to a critique and reformulation of Ortner's 'Is female to male, as nature is to culture' (1974). I adopt Ortner's argument as an explanatory framework for this study in an attempt to avoid the problems identified by my criticisms of the literature on bar settings. I reformulate the argument as a statement of cultural constructs of gender applicable to the Australian setting, which I relate to gender patterns evident in bar work.

My criticisms are made with reference to literature drawn from the American context because of the paucity of sociological literature on gender and bar settings in Australia. I examine the comparative literature relevant to an analysis of gender in settings analogous to hotel bars in order to highlight theoretical and methodological issues and not to enter into comparative analysis. In the body of my work I adopt a culturally specific approach, avoiding cross-cultural contrasts.*

Spradley and Mann comment that anthropology has 'been remiss when it comes to studying women' (1975:11). Others have made similar points, including Ardener, who points out that anthropology orders the universe in a male fashion, in that functionalists have been using male models to explain male perceptions of society (cited by Rogers 1978).

*In the Australian context, apart from popular literature which is examined in Chapter Three, there is one article, 'The rules of "shouting" in drinking groups in Sydney public bars' (*Australian Journal of Social Issues*, May 1978) which touches only marginally on the issue of gender-differentiation.

In a recent article on the study of women in anthropology, Rogers refers to some of the ways anthropology has neglected women's activities (*ibid.*).

Rogers, along with the Ardener-edited volume *Perceiving Women* (1975), make valuable contributions in that they move beyond the bald assertion that anthropology has neglected gender, to explore in some detail what it is that has been neglected and how it has been neglected. It is important that attention be given these issues not only to sharpen awareness of the limitations of anthropology in this respect, but also to draw out and capitalise on the contributions anthropology has made or can make to the study of gender. In addition, sharpening awareness of how anthropology has neglected gender should draw attention to ways in which future studies can proceed. For these reasons, I explore the issue at some length with reference to Cavan's work, highlighting the differences between our approaches.

The context of Cavan's study of bar behaviour calls for more extended and systematic treatment of gender than it is given. Beyond this, Cavan's analysis is an instance where implicit and everyday notions of gender are incorporated when the cultural definitions of women and men require spelling out. That is, while Cavan's analysis has some interesting implications for a customer-oriented study of hotel bars, the implications of bar patronage with reference to gender differentiation are incompletely drawn out.

Cavan analyses interaction between customers in approximately one hundred drinking places in San Francisco. The critical argument is that 'it is the patron's expectancy of unseriousness and how this expectancy can modify the proprieties governing public conduct which are of primary concern' (Cavan 1966:8). The argument is that the setting

builds in expectations of 'unseriousness' where consequentiality is suspended and where constraint and respect is lessened, so that contact between strangers becomes a standing pattern of behaviour (*ibid.*:11).

Cavan acknowledges the influence of Goffman on her approach to a study of American bars (*ibid.*:12). One theoretical problem with an interactional approach such as Goffman's is that social settings are viewed as interactional units with little systematic attempt to relate them to the wider contexts in which they occur. I take up this issue with reference to Cavan's general model of bar behaviour and the question of gender differences.

To some extent the differences between Cavan and myself can be explained in terms of equally legitimate differences in focus. Relevant here is Cavan's explicitly stated concern with patrons, and not with those who work in bars. In contrast my study focusses on hotels viewed as work places. I regard Cavan's definition of bar behaviour through the notion of 'time-out' or suspended consequentiality as fruitful for understanding customer behaviour in bar settings, and one which could be applied to the Australian setting in any such study. Clearly, however, the concept of 'time-out' is less relevant to a study such as this which focusses on those who work in the setting.

Cavan's discussion of gender differences in interaction between bar patrons is unsatisfactory on several counts. I turn first to the detail of Cavan's references to women. Cavan's first mention of women comes under the heading 'methodological note' (*ibid.*:15). The source of data for Cavan's study was that of participant observation, under the guise of being an ordinary patron. The following quote from Cavan draws out the point that, due to policies which excluded women from an

unspecified number of bars, Cavan was dependent on the assistance of male field workers for some of the observational data:

The public drinking place is a setting open to all members of the community who have reached their majority...But at the same time, being a female in what is customarily a male setting made some difference...there were bars from which I was categorically excluded, bars with a standing rule that are open to males only. Some bars that are open to both males and females are typically patronised only by males, and in such establishments it would have been awkward, if not suspicion-arousing, for me to enter alone. In both cases, I was dependent on male assistance, either completely in the first situation, or in terms of an escort in the second situation (*ibid.*:16-17).

By commenting on this solely as a problem of methodology, Cavan overlooks the contradiction underlying the definition of public drinking places as open to all adult members of the community yet which are simultaneously described as 'customarily' male settings, with varying policies of exclusion toward women (*ibid.*:43). Given that an adequate methodology was only possible with male assistance, the implications of this for the analysis might have been more extensively considered.

As subject matter, Cavan does not ignore the phenomenon of gender relations, as in the chapter titled 'The Marketplace Bar' which deals with the 'pick-up' as an interaction. This instances how gender and gender differences enter into Cavan's discussion as relevant data in scattered references throughout the text with little systematic discussion of them. More critically, Cavan's general model of bar behaviour is formulated much of the time, for instance, in the introductory and concluding comments, in statements which suggest that the generalisations apply to patrons irrespective of gender. However, as the reader moves more deeply into the text, it becomes apparent that women patrons and men patrons are not similarly situated with reference to bar interaction.

Given the restrictions on the entry of women it is not surprising to find that, provided entry is possible, one set of interactional rules applies to women, another to men.*

Particularly critical with reference to gender is Cavan's comment that the long historical association of the public drinking house with licentiousness suggests that the virtue of customers is questionable and their morals not above reproach, '*and this is particularly true of women*' (*ibid.*:197; my emphasis). Cavan continues:

the unescorted female in a public drinking place is typically in a position where her virtue and character are indefensible. She is either open to all or a solitary, serious drinker, neither role having much moral status. This is not to say any unescorted woman in a bar is necessarily of little moral repute, but rather that if she is not, it is incumbent upon her to constantly prove this in a setting that offers her no protective support (*ibid.*:180-181).

Here the critical element in Cavan's explanation of gender differences is stated: that the virtue and morals of customers in public houses are open to question — and this is 'particularly true' of women and especially unescorted women (*ibid.*:179).

The substantive content of Cavan's point is not at issue. Rather my criticism is that Cavan's account of gender differences cannot be comprehended without reference to the cultural evaluations attaching to both public drinking houses *and* women. Cavan provides some

*For instance, Cavan indicates that there may be rules which restrict where women may sit, and that different rules apply also in the termination of encounters according to whether they are cross- or same-sex. In addition, with reference to Cavan's general model of the non-consequential nature of bar encounters, the cross-sex encounter of the pick-up is an exception to the general point that encounters are easily engaged in, although in general of no consequence. The pick-up implies a 'more intimate state of affairs is foreseeable...as a possible prelude to some other type of interaction at a future time and in another place' (*ibid.*:186).

substantiation of the wider moral evaluations of public bars. These are characterised as 'disreputable' on the grounds that the wider society holds suspect the activity of drinking and its associated lessening of control. My criticism with reference to Cavan's account of women is that there is virtually no exploration or substantiation of wider cultural classifications of women which would explain the different rules which underlie women's interaction in public bars in contrast to men's interaction. Thus women and men are both defined as open to overtures of sociability by their mere presence in the setting. Yet the meanings of same-sex and cross-sex encounters may be very different. Furthermore, it is not possible to comprehend why these gender differences should operate without reference to definitions of women and men which operate in the wider cultural context. It is only with reference to these cultural constructions that we can locate an explanation for the point that mutual accessibility, the linch-pin of Cavan's general model of bar behaviour, has entirely different meanings depending on the gender of those interacting. On this point Cavan's analysis is particularly weak, for Cavan seems to adopt the commonsense position that there is little to be explained — that it is naturally so, 'particularly true' that for women, entry into public bars is potentially damaging to reputation. This is the hallmark of commonsense interpretations of gender differences — it is taken for granted that women are subject to different conditions, in this instance, in public bar settings. Commonsense understandings therefore remain unexamined.

I turn now to *The Cocktail Waitress*, a study of women workers in a cocktail bar in an American city (Spradley and Mann 1975). The analysis of Spradley and Mann includes a number of points consistent with

my own. Firstly, the role of women as cocktail waitresses tends to be seen as an extension of 'their role at home - serving the needs of men' (*ibid.*:145). Secondly, in the author's view, bar work announces the significant differences that American culture attaches to gender, and various bar rituals are seen to express, re-affirm and validate masculine values. Finally, masculinity can only acquire its meaning in contrast to femininity and vice versa. However there remain differences in approach to the data which tend, as with Cavan, to turn on the problem of the relation between the wider social context and the world of the bar.

Spradley and Mann state an interest in tapping the perspective of cocktail waitresses, seen as an instance of 'a single sexual identity' - that of 'being female in American culture' (*ibid.*:144). One of my criticisms is that the relationship between 'the perspective' of cocktail waitresses and 'the culture of women' (*ibid.*:11) needs to be more carefully spelt out.

Spradley and Mann state their goal as 'to see experience through the eyes of' cocktail waitresses and 'to describe their culture in their terms, and to see the larger context in which such behaviour occurs' (*ibid.*:12; my emphasis). In line with this interest, Spradley and Mann advance a number of comments on the nature of male-female relations outside the cocktail bar. The problem is that the reader is given little information as to how the authors come to their understanding of women and men in the wider context. Take, for example, the comments that 'In our society, it is a cultural rule that males do the central, important tasks in the division of labor while females do the supporting tasks' (*ibid.*:49) and 'the values that underlie femininity and masculinity are restated continuously each night merely by the act of working' (*ibid.*:

34). I do not dispute the content of these statements, but it is important for an analysis of gender to indicate how one reaches an understanding of the constructs of women and men in a particular culture.

The case of 'gender' is an archetypal instance of commonsense understanding. We all know from our own experience something of the realities of gender. But sociological analysis needs to move beyond this level of comprehension based on unexamined common sense, and the procedures which are used to make connections between the macro- and the micro-social worlds need to be stated. I have dwelt on this question because it constitutes an issue for my own analysis, one which I resolve through a reformulation of the arguments of Ortner about the symbolisations of women and men (Ortner 1974).

An explanatory framework for the study of gender

Rogers points out that work in the area of gender is made 'both frustrating and stimulating by its lack of adequate framework, and indeed by confusion about exactly how to articulate the problem' (Rogers 1978: 124). One of the problems noted by Rogers is the failure of a number of studies to make explicit the various assumptions which inform them. It is to this issue that I now turn.

Ortner's argument posits that symbolisations of men which view men as identified with culture and the products of culture, and symbolisations of women which view women as more closely identified with nature and its products, underlie the cultural constructs of men and women in all cultures. My reformulation of Ortner's argument is intended to overcome some of the difficulties of relating patterns of gender evident in bar work to the wider social context. I adapt it as a model of cultural

classifications of gender which provides definitions of women and men which I will show are applicable in the Australian context, so avoiding the weaknesses raised earlier with reference to the work of Cavan and Spradley and Mann. One point to note with reference to the criticisms made earlier is that the adoption of Ortner's model does not liberate analysis from commonsense understandings. Rather, the framework provides explicitly formulated definitions of women and men which are evident in commonsense, everyday constructions of gender, as the discussion of the ethnography in later chapters will show.

There are a number of features of Ortner's argument which I have reformulated. Specifically I drop the assumption that a generalised structural identification of men as closer to culture and women to nature is a universal cultural phenomenon. In my view significant problems still attach to cross-cultural analysis, especially with reference to gender, as I discuss shortly. Instead, I suggest that Ortner's arguments be adapted as an approximation of a culturally specific ideology relating to women and men in our society.

In the discussion which follows, I outline my reasons for selecting Ortner's argument as the dominant explanatory framework for this work. I then explore Ortner's arguments, followed by a critique and reformulation. I discuss my usage of the concept of ideology, and indicate other anthropological perspectives which enter my analysis, before rounding off this chapter with a series of questions which Ortner's model raises about the data on bar work.

I adapted Ortner's arguments about nature and culture as an explicit formulation of culturally specific definitions of women and men for a number of reasons.* First, there is as yet still no body of

*It should be noted that my adoption of Ortner in order to analyse the data occurred only after it was collected.

sociological work on gender which could be used to fill out cultural constructs of gender in the Australian context, along the lines, for instance, of Schneider's *American Kinship* (1968). Summer's work (1975) is much more besides an exploration of the symbolic or cultural meanings accorded to women, although this is a part of its aim. However, it is unsuited as an explanatory framework for my purposes because it makes reference to symbolisations of only one side of the gender equation, that is, to women viewed in terms of the stereotypic oppositions of 'damned whores' and 'god's police' (Summers 1975). Ortner's formulation of 'nature' and 'culture' is better suited to my purposes because it spells out a symbolic structure of women as well as men, although in line with her stated interests, there is lengthier elaboration of the symbolisations of women.

Analogous to Schneider's stated intention in his study of American kinship, Ortner's framework can be read as a specification of 'core symbols' about gender, as an exploration of a 'coherent system of symbols and meanings' (Schneider 1968:8) unhampered by reference to 'the problem of social action' (*ibid.*:1). Because it gives content to symbolisations of gender, it has heuristic value over other frameworks relating to gender which may have provided an overall explanatory model for this study, for instance, Ardener's arguments (Ardener [ed.] 1975).

Ortner's analysis draws from the ideas of structuralism and Levi-Strauss. Commenting on structural analysis, Murphy notes that 'one of the failings here is the neglect of social action', that structural analysis remains in the realm of cognitive aspects of culture as a kind of mental code (Murphy 1972:107). Others have made criticisms of structuralism for its remoteness from social variables (Douglas 1973).

Relevant here is Schneider's comment that 'One essential problem...is to chart the relationship between the actual states of affairs and the cultural constructs so that we can discover how the cultural constructs are generated, the laws governing their change, and in just what ways they are systematically related to the actual states of affairs of life' (1968:7).^{*} In my adaptation of Ortner's argument as a culturally specific ideological statement about gender, I shift it from the realm of structural analysis or 'pure symbol' in an attempt to follow a part of the programme suggested by Schneider as essential, that is, to relate cultural classifications of gender, as read from the nature-culture framework, to the cultural and 'social arrangements between the sexes' (Goffman 1977) evident in the work of women and men in hotel bars.

An important point relates to my choice of Ortner's framework over Rosaldo's discussion of public and domestic domains in the same volume (1974), which was made for several reasons. Apart from factors of economy or simplicity which favoured a choice of one analysis over the other, the symbolic form of Ortner's argument makes it more appropriate for use as a statement of gender ideology over Rosaldo's discussion which is both more analytic and ethnographic. Also, Ortner subsumes the concepts of 'public' and 'domestic' domains central to Rosaldo's analysis, thus adding to the level of generality of argument. However, my debt to Rosaldo should be clear since, although I have included little explicit discussion of it, I refer to the concepts of public and domestic domains, often interchangeably in the body of the work with

^{*}Having stated this programme, Schneider then states his intention to remain in 'the realm of the pure symbol, studied without reference to action, although he promises to combine the two at a future date' (Murphy 1972:210).

nature and culture, on the grounds that they are subsumed in Ortner's framework (Ortner 1974:78).

A final point about my selection of Ortner is suggested by Rogers' comment that developments in the study of gender will only come as a result of relating already existing analyses of gender to ongoing research (Rogers 1978).

Ortner's argument

Ortner's stated aim is primarily 'to attempt to explain the universal secondary status of women' (Ortner 1974:83). Ortner's general argument is that women are more closely associated with nature, and men with culture, with differential evaluation of culture over nature. Ortner stresses the point that women are seen as 'being *closer* to nature than men (*ibid.*:73; emphasis in original). That is, cultures represent women as having more direct affinity with nature than do men. Ortner comments that it is women's 'natural association with the domestic context, motivated by her natural lactation function' (*ibid.*:80), which underlies her potential for being viewed as closer to nature.

Ortner states, 'my point is simply that every culture implicitly recognises and asserts a distinction' (*ibid.*:72-73) between nature and culture; further 'that the distinctiveness of culture rests precisely on the fact that it can under most circumstances transcend natural conditions and turn them to its purpose' (*ibid.*:73).*

*The dual senses in which Ortner uses 'culture', as that with which men are associated, and as that which defines women and men differently, grow out of Ortner's definition of 'culture' given on the next page.

In this way, according to Ortner, we are able to understand why it is 'that everywhere, in every known culture, women are considered in some degree inferior to men' (*ibid.*:69). Ortner comments that 'nature' and 'culture' are conceptual categories, 'one can find no boundary out in the actual world between the two states or realms of being' (*ibid.*:72). Women are culturally perceived as closer to nature than culture, and culture is equated relatively unambiguously with men.

Culture is broadly equated 'with the notion of human consciousness or with the products of human consciousness (i.e. systems of thought and technology) by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature' (*ibid.*). Nature remains undefined, apart from emerging as that which every culture devalues or 'defines as being a lower order of existence than itself' (*ibid.*). Nature emerges as that which culture transcends, and with which women are more closely associated than men.

I will not dwell further on the complexities of Ortner's analysis but instead draw out those elements of the characterisation which approximate cultural definitions of women and men applicable in the Australian context.

The core of Ortner's paper shows why 'women tend to be assumed... to be closer to nature than men' (*ibid.*:84). Ortner summarises:

Woman's physiology more involved more of the time with 'species of life'; woman's association with the structurally subordinate domestic context, charged with the crucial function of transforming animal-like infants into cultural beings; 'woman's psyche', appropriately moulded to mothering functions by her own socialisation...all these factors make woman appear to be rooted more directly and deeply in nature (*ibid.*).

Ortner's analysis of women's identification with the domestic sphere involves the argument that in order to ensure properly socialised

individuals who will see the world in that culture's terms, and more or less adhere unquestioningly to its moral precepts, the functions of the domestic unit must be carefully controlled and its stability ensured. 'Insofar as woman is virtually the embodiment of the functions of the domestic group, she will tend to come under the heavier restrictions and circumscriptions surrounding that unit' (*ibid.*:85). As a consequence, Ortner argues that 'in virtually every culture her permissible sexual activities are more closely circumscribed'. In addition, women are offered a much smaller range of role choice and are afforded direct access to a more limited range of social institutions. The end in view is that 'the stability of the domestic unit as an institution must be placed as far as possible beyond question' (*ibid.*:84).

With reference to women's involvement in transforming nature into culture, as with the socialisation of children, and the cooking of food, Ortner argues that the involvement of women here is at a lower level to man's involvement. That is, men take over the higher level of male socialisation, and similarly are associated with specialised or skilled cooking (*ibid.*:79). Finally, women, as mothers, are drawn into unmediated, personal relationships. This means that women operate at a lower level of abstraction and categorisation in contrast to men's social relationships, which in turn places women at a lower level. At the same time, women's mode of relating is also the basis for the highest moral unity available to members of a society. This, according to Ortner, explains the common phenomenon of women's dichotomised statuses as that which is exalted and debased (*ibid.*:83).

The concepts of domestic and public domains drawn on in Ortner's analysis are elaborated more fully in Rosaldo's discussion:

'Domestic'...refers to those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organised immediately around one or more mothers and their children; 'public' refers to activities, institutions, and forms of association that link, rank, organise or subsume particular mother-child groups (Rosaldo 1974:23).

Men are associated with public domains, which are differentially evaluated over and above the domestic domains associated with women.

Critique and reformulation of Ortner

Ortner indicates that the analysis of observable on-the-ground details of women's activities, although not her central aim in the article, is an important line of enquiry. But Ortner insists that such analysis will be misguided if it focusses only upon 'women's actual though culturally unrecognised and unvalued powers in any given society, without first understanding the overarching ideology and deeper assumptions of culture that render such powers trivial' (Ortner 1974:69).

In examining the value of Ortner's arguments about 'nature' and 'culture' as a culturally specific ideology, I touch on various areas of debate with reference to gender. Ortner has been criticised on a number of counts in recent publications, and I cite some of these criticisms primarily to draw attention to my reformulation of the argument. The following discussion is not intended as an all-encompassing critique of Ortner's theoretical contribution. Instead, I adapt Ortner's formulations in order to explore a specific empirical context.

A critical implication of Ortner's analysis for my arguments is the issue of the role of women in economic production. I indicate how, despite the fact that Ortner makes little reference to the role of women in economic production, the framework is applicable to an analysis of women at work in an industrial setting.

Ortner comes close to an almost complete identification of women with the domestic sphere. Ortner speaks of 'woman's confinement to the domestic family context, a confinement motivated by woman's physiological function, ...no doubt, by her lactation processes' (*ibid.*:77). Elsewhere, Ortner suggests a less rigid notion than 'confinement' and speaks more loosely of woman's 'association' with the domestic circle. 'Women are associated with, and indeed are more or less confined to, the domestic context' (*ibid.*:79), that is, 'woman's place is in the home' (*ibid.*:77).

Given these characterisations, how is it possible to extend the analysis to apply to data drawn from women engaged in working outside of the domestic sphere, in hotel bar settings? I suggest that Ortner's model of women's association with the domestic sphere can be read as a statement of ideology particularly appropriate to Western industrial settings. Reading Ortner's model as ideology it is possible to argue that the proposition that 'woman's physiological functions have tended ...to limit her social movement, and to confine her...to certain social contexts which *in turn* are seen as closer to nature' (*ibid.*; emphasis in original) is a statement of ideology which, in stressing women's role as mothers, overlooks or downplays women's contribution to economic production, among other things facilitating an alternating expansion or contraction of the proportion of women vis à vis men in the workforce, a point which I develop in the conclusion.

Turning to the role of biology in Ortner's arguments, Ortner dismisses biological determinism on the ground that 'it is fair to say that it has failed to be established to the satisfaction of almost anyone in academic anthropology' (*ibid.*:71). That is, it is not that biology is irrelevant, nor that men and women are not different 'but that these

facts and differences only take on significance of superior/inferior within the framework of culturally defined value systems' (*ibid.*). Here as elsewhere, Ortner stresses her focus is on cultural evaluations (*ibid.*). But the role of biology seems to rest uneasily in Ortner's as it does in Rosaldo's analysis (Rosaldo 1974:23). It stands dismissed, but ever-present as the basis which ultimately determines woman's identification with the sphere of the domestic and nature.

Cultural notions of the biological determinants of gender have been a point of confusion in a number of discussions of gender. Many studies have followed some version of the line adopted by Rosaldo and Ortner, that it is not biological differences which are primary, but how culture and society perceives these differences which is important. Some (see, for instance, Matthews 1978) emphasise this by citing Oakley's distinction between 'gender' which refers to strictly cultural conceptions of women and men, and 'sex' which refers to biological differences (Oakley 1972:16).

The problem with reference to biological differentiation is related to the difficulty of distancing anthropological analysis from culturally-bound notions of biology. I note this point as argued by Rogers shortly. The problem is aggravated by the extent to which biology is referred to as a rationalisation for the socio-economic situation of women.

In the culturally-bound notions of biology expressed in gender ideology, a biological differentiation between women and men is asserted in which women's activities are seen to be inherently linked to and limited by their biological attributes, while men's activities are not. That is, man's biological nature is not held to account for his activity

in the sphere of culture. Rather, men are seen to be capable of transcending their biological nature, while women remain firmly in its grip.

Several studies suggest the basis for a firm position with reference to the debate over biology and gender. Douglas cites Mauss' 'bold' assertion that there can be no such thing as 'natural' behaviour, that 'every kind of action carries the imprint of learning.,.,,above all, sex', that nothing is more essentially transmitted by a social process of learning than sexual behaviour (Douglas 1973:93). More recently, Goffman analyses the cultural manufacture of biological differences. He comments that social situations are created 'in which men and women can effectively play out the differential human nature claimed for them. Thus, the image can be sustained that all women are muscularly less developed than all men in all respects, a binary division alien to the biological facts' (Goffman 1977:321). It is not a denial of biological differences which is at issue here, but a denial of biology as a determinant of social and cultural differences.

Relating to the issue of biology, critics of Ortner have felt unease at Ortner's description of the centrality of motherhood and the circumscription of women to the domestic sphere taken as a universalistic assertion about women (Tilly 1978:167). Tilly's point is that Ortner has overstated the determinative role of women as mothers, at the expense of their role in economic production.* Rogers makes a similar point, commenting that

*Tilly comments that the neglect of the role of women in economic production not only overlooks the contribution of mothers active outside the home, but also that of women at different stages of life cycle, as in young or older women of pre- and post-child bearing age, and generally that of single women, both unmarried and widowed (Tilly 1978).

any general theory of sexual differentiation based primarily on the constraints of women's physiological functions and childbearing responsibilities is therefore a clear reflection on our cultural priorities. Our notions of the constraints imposed by menstruation and pregnancy, and of the personnel and amount of attention required for childrearing are not generalisable to all societies. The universalisation of these notions constitutes unwarranted ethnocentrism (Rogers 1978:137).*

While I agree with the substantive points of both Tilly's and Rogers' criticisms of Ortner, when the nature-culture framework is viewed as a statement of ideology, the biological characterisation quite fruitfully highlights an ideological preoccupation with women as mothers which ignores or downplays the role of women in the workforce. Ortner's model in positing the centrality of women's role as mother corresponds to a preoccupation of ideology.

I adopt a similar line of reasoning for Ortner's discussion of the relative standing of women and men. Ortner argues that feminine symbolism far more than masculine symbolism manifests a propensity toward polarised ambiguity — 'sometimes utterly exalted, sometimes utterly debased' (Ortner 1974:86). This characterisation of female symbols with their propensity to both subvert and transcend is more consistent with my data on women working in hotel bars than the co-existing view in Ortner's discussion which identifies woman as embedded in a firmly secured secondary status. I agree with Rosaldo and Ortner that there is an ultimate sense in which this culture accords women a secondary status vis à vis men. But for analytical purposes the simple statement that women's status is secondary to men's is unhelpful.

*In an article titled 'Matrescence, becoming a mother, a new/old rite de passage', Raphael comments 'the amount of time it takes to be a mother needs study' (Raphael [ed.] 1975:70).

Rogers argues against adopting as a universalistic assumption the view that women have a secondary status, and in particular, that cross-cultural analysis should not hamper itself with the assumption that women's status is universally secondary. She claims that views which adopt this position have not been sufficiently cautious about the extent to which cross-cultural analysis has projected American cultural values and conceptions. Rogers argues that if one assumes males are dominant, this may lead the investigator away from exploring male activities, to the assumption that we know and can treat as unproblematic the social situations of men. She argues that assuming universal dominance leads to an over-emphasis on women, and that an over-emphasis on one or the other of the two sex groups makes it impossible to adequately understand the relationship between them (Rogers 1978). However, as a statement of ideology the bald assertion that women are embedded in a secondary status vis à vis men is appropriate.

With reference to my reformulation of Ortner's arguments, Rogers' comment on anthropological studies relating to women, and their assumptions and methodologies is relevant:

While these may ultimately tell us relatively little about women in other societies, they at least indicate a great deal about the ways in which women are viewed in our own, and the ways in which our perception is limited by our culture (Rogers 1978:161).

Ideology, gender and anthropology

Before considering my use of the concept 'ideology', I comment briefly on the applicability of the nature-culture framework in the Australian context. This shows up in the body of the work with reference to popular conceptions of hotels as male domains and the gender-

differentiated implications for customers discussed in Chapter Three. The argument I elaborate is that men have unrestricted access to the range of services offered by hotels, while the patronage of women is restricted, and defined differently according to whether it takes a form which is consistent with the domestic identification of women stated in gender ideology, as is the case, for instance, with male-escorted women customers. However, when women use hotels in ways which parallel male patronage, when, for instance, unaccompanied women patronise hotels, social processes of labelling and definition come into play. In this way, the symbolic rendering of women's use of hotels precludes the possibility of their patronage parallel that of males, by separating the perception of women who so use hotels from the general identification of women with the domestic sphere. Important data discussed in Chapters Six and Seven also shows how the nature-culture framework enters the perceptions of female and male bar workers. Finally, I return to the significance of gender ideology for bar work in the conclusion.

Moving away from the data on hotel bars, the relevance of the nature-culture framework to the Australian context is evident also in the overview of literature on women at work in Australian society in Chapter Five. For instance, the 'Harvester case' judgement of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court dating from 1907 was responsible for the enshrinement in law of the notion that a fair and reasonable (i.e. 'basic') wage was a family wage, based on the assumption that a male worker was a breadwinner for a family, and that a woman was not. As a consequence, Australian women's wage rates were to be adversely affected for over sixty years (Ryan and Conlon 1975:89). In the same chapter, Corich's study of women

workers in South Australia documents the extent to which women remain clustered in domestically-oriented, low paid 'female' occupations, with limited promotional opportunities (Corich 1978).

Outside of the data on hotels and women at work explored in this study, the continuing applicability of the nature-culture framework to the Australian context can be read generally from Summer's *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975). Equally suggestive is Auchmuty's article, 'The truth about sex', which examines sex education texts and dates 1969 as the year of the first 'realistic' sex education manual published. Prior to this, sex education publications are cited which presented women's sole career as wife and mother, with women endowed with the responsibility for maintaining the standards of the opposite sex (Auchmuty in Spearitt and Walker [eds.] 1979:176-177).

In the political context in Australia, perhaps the most outstanding recent instance of the applicability of the nature-culture ideology came from the Minister for Youth and Employment, Mr. Viner, who on an occasion of threatened industrial strike action appealed publicly to 'the wives' of workers to persuade their husbands to go to work. This plea came from a Federal minister in the area of employment at a time when women constitute over one-third of the total workforce (cf. Chapter Four).*

Finally, a sociological view point on the nature of domestic life and the roles of women comes from Encel, who comments that 'the "normal" woman is expected to conform to the stereotype of femininity, seeking her satisfactions in house-pride and the care of husband and children', in card parties, tennis, bowls, entertaining, gardening and watching television (Encel, Mackenzie and Tebbutt 1974:41-42).

*The occasion was the national strike action threatened over arrests of unionists in Western Australia.

The significant point suggested by these selective instances of the applicability of the nature-culture framework is that a gender ideology which stresses women's 'natural' location as the domestic sphere is still operative in a social situation where women constitute an increasing percentage of the workforce, a point to which I return in the conclusion.

I have chosen to describe the nature-culture formulation as an ideology rather than a normative or cultural construct, or a system of symbols of values. To this point and in a number of contexts these concepts can be used interchangeably, as they often are in anthropological usage (Kaplan and Manners 1972). However, the arguments in my conclusion relating to the nature-culture framework only make sense in an interpretation of this framework as ideology. The concept of ideology which I have adopted refers to a set of beliefs and symbolisation only imperfectly and partially related to social practice. Ideology, as defined here, operates to mask inconsistencies between social practice and cognitive phenomena, and functions to perpetuate an existing socio-economic or power structure.*

Moore speaks suggestively of ideology when she says that the instance-by-instance use of ideology permits reinterpretations, redefinitions and manipulations, 'sometimes an ideology or part of it can be constructed precisely to cover the "complex mess" of social reality with an appearance of order, simplicity, harmony or plan' (Moore 1975:236). But usually in action, in particular situations, only pieces of ideology

*I have derived this usage of the concept from a number of sources, including the anthropological discussion of Moore (1975) and Murphy (1972), combined with perspectives drawn from Marxist-feminists, including Barker and Allen (1976) [2] and Mitchell and Oakley (1976); also from seminar discussions in the Anthropology Department, University of Adelaide.

are invoked. 'Since ideology is used this way — piecemeal inconsistencies are not necessarily apparent, as they might be when put together in an analysis' (*ibid.*). It is also the case that because it is stated in a symbolic form, Ortner's framework is rich in ambiguity which makes it appropriate as a 'pure' statement of cultural constructs relating to women and men. The significance of these ambiguities is suggested by Leach's comment that 'when social structures are expressed in cultural form the representation is imprecise' and the inconsistencies 'thus produced are necessary to the functioning of the system' (Leach as quoted by Moore [1975:215]). Becker makes a similar point about the ambiguity of values: in virtue of their ambiguity, they function as an umbrella over a variety of different types of behaviour (Becker 1963:133). Precisely because Ortner's framework is removed from a consideration of 'on-the-ground' activities, it is suitable for use as a statement of cultural constructs of gender.

These comments raise issues critical to a discussion of ideology, which I comment on briefly without claiming to solve. They relate to the insistence that analysis of ideology attend to the question of how it is that ideology is grounded in social situations, and in the action of individuals within them. One dominant perspective adopted in a number of recent anthropological analyses insists that ideology grows out of social action, or that analysis should focus on the relationship between social process and ideology (Moore 1975). For instance, the insistence on the incongruence of norm and social activity, on the constant state of flux and conflict in social action, evident in the discussion, for instance, of Murphy (1971), is useful. However, following Moore I see extreme statements of these points of view, such as Murphy's, as an

over-reaction to earlier anthropological theory which tended to present individuals in society as over-determined automatons reacting to an externalised social structure. The problem with an approach such as Murphy's is that there is no room in the model formulated by him which stresses that social action is in a constant state of flux, opposition, process and transformation, for an analysis of power structures and their influence on social action or for what Moore describes when referring to ideology as a 'regularising process' (Moore 1975:236). In my view, a perspective which sees ideology as an aspect of a power structure is not necessarily inconsistent with one which acknowledges the complexity of social action, along the lines suggested by Murphy. I return to these and other issues relating to gender ideology in the conclusion.

Murphy's discussion raises the question how analyses which attempt to relate small-scale social settings to a wider social and political context are to proceed. This problem is magnified for analyses of small-scale social contexts which are located in the context of industrial settings, partly because the formulation of much anthropological theory and methodology has occurred in the context of non-industrial societies.

While I have adopted Ortner's arguments as the dominant explanatory framework for exploring bar work and gender differentiation, I have drawn on a range of other anthropological perspectives in the course of my discussion, for reasons similar to those which prompt Murphy to comment with reference to anthropology, that 'what makes it adaptive to its subject matter is its eclecticism' (Murphy 1972:209). I indicate here some of the major sources of these influences.*

*Seminars in the Department of Anthropology, University of Adelaide, have been important in generating my understanding of the substantive and theoretical perspectives mentioned in this section.

In my understanding of the social relations entailed in bar work, I have drawn upon the analyses of everyday life by Goffman, particularly the earlier publications (Goffman 1959, 1963). My discussion of bar work and social regulation takes shape from Maussian and subsequent perspectives about social control and the role of gift-giving (Mauss 1969; Sahlins 1974). Analyses of joking, primarily those of Radcliffe-Brown (1952) and Handelman and Kapferer (1972) influenced the questions I raise about the significance of joking in the social relations of barmen, in contrast to women workers.

Finally, in my discussion of the relationship between cultural constructs of gender, viewed as ideology, and patterns of social behaviour, I draw on the perspectives of labelling theory (Becker 1966) and Mitchell's discussion of the process of situational selection (1956). Both these approaches are concerned with the inconsistencies evident in social life between cultural constructs and observable patterns of behaviour, central to the concept of 'ideology' which I have adopted for my analysis.

Questions raised by gender ideology with reference to bar work

I round off this chapter by setting out lines of enquiry raised by gender ideology in relation to bar work.

The nature of work in a bar may be seen in terms of a nature-culture dimension. Women's work in bars may be seen as an extension of their domestic orientations, stemming from their closer association with 'nature', as spelt out by Ortner. If so, if work in bars is especially appropriate to women due to the domestic orientation of the work tasks, what are the implications of men taking on the job?

From the customer viewpoint the bar as a setting is describable in terms of a nature-culture polarisation; to some extent the bar is the epitome of culture, of a public (i.e. male) domain. The consequences of women being present in a public domain are explored in Chapters Three, Six and the conclusion. One point to note is that being charged with the function of transforming animal-like infants into cultured beings may suitably qualify women for work in public bar settings, extending on this role with reference to the drunken behaviour of men. This point also raises questions about the performance by men in the structurally equivalent work of bar-tending.

Relations across the bar can be seen in terms of a nature-culture dimension. There is considerable ambiguity in a customer's relations to bar personnel. It is possible to show with reference to customer behaviour to women bar workers, the applicability of the nature-culture ideology to interaction within bars, posited on contradictory and ambivalent evaluations of the women who work behind the bar, transformations occurring between these without them being perceived as contradictory.

According to Ortner's model, women's intermediate position between nature and culture accounts not only for her lower status but also for the greater restriction of women, vis à vis men. Although not explicitly commented on by Ortner with reference to women at work, this holds for women in the non-domestic sphere of work also. Similarly applicable to an analysis of women at work are Ortner's comments that women are offered a much smaller range of role choices with direct access to a more limited range of social institutions, with more limited social contexts for adult life.

Finally, there are a number of ways in which hotel bars combine elements of public and domestic domains. This perspective is elaborated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES OF HOTELS
AND THE RESEARCH LOCATIONS

What is a hotel?

In Australian society, there is what amounts to a cultural obsession with drinking and hotels.* Here, I focus on a description of the institutional nature of hotels in general and the particular hotel bar settings in which this study took place. I discuss in some detail a range of answers that can be given to the superficially commonplace question 'What is a hotel?'

The simplicity of the question 'What is a hotel?' is misleading. Hotels are complex social institutions. Hotels may be viewed, as I do later, as workplaces. But for the lay person a hotel is not a workplace in the sense that a factory is, and a hotel is likely to conjure up a setting, either negatively or positively evaluated, where the drinking activity of men is a prominent feature. The drinking takes place in a setting which is technically defined as public, and which is set apart from the drinker's usual workplace or place of residence. However, it may be workplace or residence for hotel managers and workers, and either a temporary or permanent place of residence for those members of the paying public who stay in them.

My argument in this chapter is that the institutional features of hotels can be interpreted so as to view hotels as partaking of both public and domestic domains. This point is strengthened when the domestic orientation of some of the routine servicing tasks associated with the work is noted in Chapter Four. The interpenetration of the domestic and

*This is reflected in a variety of newspaper articles, and popular and other literature on hotels, some of which is referred to in the text.

public spheres raises a number of contradictions which underlie hotels as social settings.

Drawing from their institutional features I identify contract, regulation and sociability as major defining features of hotels. It is this combination of their defining features and the inconsistencies between them which give rise to their underlying contradictions. I then argue that women, more easily than men, are able to draw on the qualities attributed to them by gender ideology to mediate the contradictions entailed in providing the services offered in hotel bars.

There are several reasons for elaborating on the nature of the settings within which bar work occurs beyond the ordinary requirements of describing the social context within which the work occurs. As an occupation, bar work has several unusual features, which include the continual performance of the work with public as audience. This links to an equally significant point, that the individual who engages in the occupation of bar work is jammed into a setting of sociability as part of the job. Many tasks must be performed under the glare of public scrutiny, and the job also entails sociable involvement with customers, along with the serving of drinks. Because a bar worker's tasks are centrally located in a public setting the nature of this setting is elaborated in this chapter, followed by an exploration of features of bar culture in Chapter Three.

There are a variety of different levels of response to the question 'What is a hotel?' Firstly, hotels as social institutions have a number of unique social features compared with other public settings, such as restaurants. They share a set of physical characteristics and they have a range of legal, economic, social and historical features and

functions in common. These are explored in this chapter. Secondly, there are stereotypes of hotels, which I refer to variously as popular or cultural images or constructs, and discuss in the following chapter. Given the differentiation of the surrounding society, these are likely to be varied. However, dominant patterns will be identified. Finally, hotels as cultural and social institutions are associated with appropriate forms of social behaviour. A question of interest here is how these appropriate ways of behaving are to be identified in a setting where a range of 'lax' or drunken behaviour may be expected. What are the factors which encourage the behaviour of individuals into appropriate channels? How do individuals come to know the range of permissible behaviour? What happens when behaviour moves outside this range? These aspects are explored in later chapters from the perspective of bar workers.

Despite the different perceptions, motivations and meanings that individuals may bring with them into hotels, there is a common social situation operative. Hotels are widespread and long-standing social institutions in Australian society, and as such have a number of shared institutional features. These play a part in structuring the social behaviour which occurs within them, even though they may not be a part of the commonsense understandings of the individuals who frequent them. For instance, with reference to public bar settings, the minimal comforts commonly found within them, may in those hotels tied to breweries, reflect brewery financial policy. An alternative interpretation of this feature of some public bars may count it as among the reasons why women typically would not want to venture into them. The two perspectives are not necessarily incompatible but the interpretation about women's limited use of public bars can be made more reliably against an understanding of the wider institutional complex in which hotels are placed.

Drawing from the institutional character of hotels, I identify contract, regulation and sociability as the major defining features of hotels viewed as workplaces. The discussion of the institutional features of hotels is followed by a description of the hotels on which this study is based, drawing out some of the variations and different styles of hotels. I then return to the point that the institutional features of hotels give shape to the definition of hotels, as centres for a style of sociability which, while informal, have contractual and regulatory limitations. These limitations are muted by a number of factors explored in the course of later discussion, but in concluding this chapter I focus on the characteristic that hotels are often run as businesses with a family basis, a practice which is given institutional support, and among other things, draws the wives of managers into hotels. I argue that the presence of women has a special significance in playing down the regulatory and contractual basis of hotels in favour of informal sociability. In addition, hotels may be viewed as social spheres where the domestic and public domains interpenetrate, having special implications for the presence of women.

Economic features of hotels

One major fascination of this study has lain in studying some part of a major capitalist enterprise which must tread carefully due to the paradox that it promotes, sells and profits from a less than respectable product (Polsky 1967), and which while making profits for a section of capital industry is said to cut other industries' profits, through their employees' drinking habits and absenteeism. In making a study of hotels, some fascinating features become prominent when that

industry is placed in the wider context of the laws and institutional bodies which control the sale and consumption of alcohol in hotel settings.

Hotels provide for the sale and consumption of alcohol in public settings. It is important to recall this basic economic feature of hotels. They sell a product which is surrounded by a range of legal restrictions, including the compulsory licensing of the premises by the State to be discussed shortly. In their study of an American cocktail bar, Spradley and Mann note the contradiction arising from the operation of a bar as both a business and 'ceremonial' centre (Spradley and Mann 1975:130). The provision of pleasant service in a hotel, from the management point of view, may have the economic aim of attracting custom, and from the bar workers' point of view, have the economic aim of retaining work. From this point, I identify contractual sociability as a part of what is entailed in the work, as elaborated in Chapter Four.*

Hotels provide a livelihood for a range of staff, including kitchen staff and others involved in the provisioning of food or other hotel services such as entertainment. They fall outside the scope of this study. Those hotel staff who regularly work within the confines of hotel bars are wage-earning bar workers and the management or licensee of the hotel, where these engage in the everyday running of the bar. Where the functions of management and licensee are separated into different personnel, management may receive a salary, while the licensee typically takes the profits or some proportion of them.†

Viewed as a profit-gaining enterprise, there are three significant categories of hotels in South Australia. Hotels may be 'freehold' or independently owned, or they may be leased from an independent owner, or they may be owned by the local brewing company, in which case they are

*For a definition of contrast, see Chapter Four.

†Husbands and wives are commonly co-licensees.

typically leased out to individuals on a contractual basis for a proportion of the profits.

As capitalist enterprises, hotels may have a complicated ownership and profit structure and are embedded in a wider institutional setting which may include an economic relationship with a major brewing company. The industry generally must tread carefully since it promotes a product which is open to varying negative cultural evaluations stemming from social problems connected with the consumption of alcohol (Cavan 1966). One institution which has a public relations function is the Australian Hotels Association (A.H.A.) which is divided into a number of state branches. The A.H.A. is an interest group of hotel licensees, with a paid staff and city and branch offices, which concerns itself also with hotel licensing, the Licensing Court, prices and wages.

Other bodies connected with hotels include the South Australian branch of the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Union (F.L.A.I.U.). The union award states that:

Any person who performs work in a hotel, other than in a purely managerial capacity, comes under the terms of the Award, and as such should be a member of the Union excepting clerks (F.L.A.I.U. 1973-75:95).

Neither does the award apply to the parent, spouse, son or daughter of a licensee (*ibid.*:5). Other bodies connected with hotels include:

- The Industrial Commission
 - The Department of Labour and Industry
 - The Licensing Court (discussed below)
 - The Department of Consumer Affairs (sets maximum prices for retail)
 - The Retail Industry Council
 - The Commissioner of Trade Measurements
 - The Department of Health (re food and drug regulations, packaging)
- } Both deal with industrial matters

There are a range of restrictions which underlie the serving of alcohol and other consumerables. Pricing, health and measurement restrictions which are watch-dogged by the appropriate authorities are among these.

Out of this description of economic aspects of hotels, points which are important for my later arguments are those relating to the contractual nature of the setting and the union exemptions which apply to a manager or licensee and his family.

The legal character of hotels

Customers may have a hazy awareness of the extent to which their drinking behaviour is surrounded by legal and other restrictions. The legal restrictions which operate tend to be muted by a number of factors operative in the setting.

Laws which relate specifically to hotels derive primarily from the Licensing Act. The Licensing Court is concerned with the policing of the Licensing Act. Apart from specifying certain behavioural standards relating to hotels, it deals with administrative aspects, for example, applications for licences, transfers, etc. (S. Australian Government 1967-72).

Drawing from the Licensing Act, a legal definition of a hotel is that it is licensed premises which must remain open for specified hours. The licensee must be of good character, and has legal responsibility for the maintenance of the premises, and the right to refuse service to customers. Throughout most of Australia, it was this right which was invoked in the past to exclude women. It was primarily this regulation which limited their presence in hotels, rather than any specific law which prevented the presence of women as customers.

I especially want to draw attention to those laws which relate to drunkenness. The point to note is that to permit drunkenness on licensed premises is an offence (South Australian Government 1967-72: 102). It is not necessary to move beyond this point to show that hotels constantly infringe the law. My material on infringement of the Act is incomplete, but it suggests that prosecutions are relatively rare. Fines for these are light and loss of licence for such infringements are rare.*

The law provides support for publicans from the police force, as stated by the Licensing Act:

Any person holding a licence under this Act may refuse to admit to and may turn out of the premises in respect of which his licence is granted any person —

- (a) who is a reputed prostitute or thief;
- (b) who is drunken, violent, quarrelsome, or disorderly; or
- (c) whose presence on the premises would or might subject the holder of the licence to a penalty under this Act.

. . .

Every member of the police force shall, on demand of the holder of the licence, or his agent or servant, expel or assist in expelling every such person from the premises, and may use such force as is required for that purpose (*ibid.*:102).

Estimates of the number of times police are called into bars range from none, according to the publicans who are proud of their ability to maintain control, to maybe once or twice a year. The arrival of police late on the scene in time of trouble is only one factor which

*According to an A.H.A. official, fines for infringements are in the area of \$40-\$50; he could recall one case in the last five to six years of loss of licence for infringements relating to prostitution, and one to three cases of the same for serving customers out of hours.

contributes to the operation in hotel bars of mechanisms of social control other than the formal means of resort to the law. The implications of these legal formalities for the social relations of bar workers will be dealt with in Chapter Four.

Provisions from the Act relating to the family include Section 157 which states:

No holder of a full publican's licence, limited publican's licence, wine licence or club licence shall allow any female other than his wife, his daughter, his sister, his step-daughter, his mother or his mother-in-law to sell, supply or serve any liquor at or in any bar-room unless there is in force at the time an industrial award, determination or agreement under any Commonwealth or State Act binding on the licensee providing that a female engaged in selling, supplying or serving liquor in or at a bar-room shall receive the same remuneration therefor as a male engaged in the same employment (*ibid.*:115).

In addition, licence may be forfeited if a licensee

permits any person whomsoever, other than a member of his family, to manage, superintend or conduct the business of his licensed premises during his absence for a longer period than one month, without the previous consent of the court (*ibid.*:74).

Historical background of hotels and hotel bars

Freeland (1977) has written a dedicated and detailed history, *The Australian Pub*, and there are other useful sources. The history of hotels is difficult to divorce from the history of legislation over the control of liquor retailing in hotels, recently documented in some detail in a Victorian government report (Davies 1978). The area of the history of hotels in which I am interested includes the historical background of hotels as centres of hospitality, conviviality and sociability, the historical background of hotels as physical entities (i.e. what factors

lie behind the physical shape and use of space in hotels), and relevant to both of these, the economic history of hotels including the history of legislation and changes in ownership from independent concerns to brewery interests.

Hotels retail a product that the community judges to be the cause of a number of social problems. The rationale for hotels and alcohol as a source of government revenue are of interest in this light. The history of hotels indicates that the interest of governments in hotels is intertwined with a concern for the citizenry's health and pocket, reflected in a web of government legislation, reports and committees about hotels. The histories of hotels that have been written have paid little systematic attention to issues of this kind. What is needed is a social history which would include an analysis of the ideological implications of hotels and the wider institutional complex in which they are set, with a systematic analysis of the linkages between the social, political and economic aspects. In the historical details which follow I have drawn heavily on Freeland's *The Australian Pub* and my sources are from that account unless otherwise indicated.

Freeland's brief comments on the link between English inns and taverns and those established in the early days of Australia (Freeland 1977:3-4) are useful in understanding the derivation of the tradition of convivial hospitality which is a part of the cultural images of hotels. Early Australian hotels, we are told, combined the functions of the English inn, providing accommodation, hospitality and comfort to travellers, with the function of the English alehouse or tavern. At an early point of time in Australian settlement, the accommodation-providing town inn and the purely drinking tavern and alehouse were established as

'a ubiquitous part of the Australian scene' (*ibid.*:22). While the town inn selected its clients, the tavern was open to any and all who wanted 'to tipple the hours away' (*ibid.*). Offering nothing but alcohol, the tavern was open for business, except for the hours of divine service, 'as long as the money and senses of the imbiber and the wakefulness and avarice of the publican lasted' (*ibid.*). Freeland comments that in those first wretched years in Australia the taverns 'provided a sort of community anaesthetic to despair' (*ibid.*:3), a point which contrasts with the convivial image of hotels.

The early hotels were housed in the normal houses of the day and at that time, no special provision for their role as hotels was incorporated into their design* (*ibid.*). It was common for houses to be run for a year or two in this way and then revert to their original use. In the taverns drinkers took their drinks in one room, 'the public room, set rigidly apart from the remainder of the house used by the family' (*ibid.*). The domestic location of early hotels had generally faded by the 1850's (*ibid.*:60-61).

The total population of New South Wales was approximately 10,000 in 1809, about half of them convicts. There were 101 licensed pubs plus an unknown number of sly-grog shops and 50 alehouses in Sydney alone (*ibid.*:24-25). In 1800, the first real curb on the hours of public house business was introduced.

In 1816 Governor Macquarie passed legislation which was to lay the foundation style for Australian hotels in subsequent times. The regulations forbade breweries to retail beer or spirits, and more significantly, laid down that those receiving spirit licences must also serve

*Note that the usage 'pub' is a shortening of the term 'public house'.

beer when called upon. 'The result was to obliterate the alehouse and the private inn and create the public house' (*ibid.*:28). No longer was choice determined by preference for a type of drink, but by attractiveness, service, atmosphere and location (*ibid.*). Significantly the private inn which offered drink to its residents only was eliminated. 'Every licensed house, no matter what its social ambitions, had now to provide for the casual drinker' (*ibid.*). Private parlours for guests were maintained in some establishments, while spartan and utilitarian conditions continued to characterise public rooms. The entrance was as direct as possible, both to attract custom and to keep the casual drinker and the guest separated.

The hotel bar as known today also seems to have emerged from Macquarie's legislation, if indirectly. It grew, Freeland documents, from the merging of the private inn and alehouse into one, from the needs of those publicans who had to attend to both a public and private parlour. The tap room containing barrels was in many instances screened from the public room by a timber partition with a small space ('bar-screen') for passing through drinks (*ibid.*:31). This space grew until it became the bar familiar to us today.

With the development of specialised buildings, the typical pub of the 1850's had only one bar open to the public. About this time, the four types of bars that were to be standard for the next 100 years were established. Two of them, the saloon bar and the private bar, were to change their character appreciably in that time and the parlour bar still had to lose its privateness and comfort, but the public bar was fixed and immutable (*ibid.*:60-61). In time, the public bar emerged as the most inexpensive and basic style of bar characteristic of hotels, and notorious in its reputation as a male stronghold.

Freeland notes that in the 1850's bars remained chancy places to drink for those who valued their health owing to the practice of adulterating liquor which plagued hotels from the earliest times (*ibid.*). In the 1880's liquor adulteration was the subject of a government enquiry which supported beer-drinking and the local industry (*ibid.*:114-115). Adulteration of liquor, especially spirits, had led in the 1840's to hotels commonly having two public bars, one more expensive in which the customer could be assured of obtaining what was paid for (*ibid.*).

That these practices are not only a thing of the past is suggested by a popular account of a scandal about the dilution of beer in Victoria in 1968. The author comments: 'Here were licensed publicans breaking the law, twice robbing the public, and getting away with it' (Pearl 1969: 90). He continues, reflecting an unpopular stereotype of publicans when he says: 'It's a pity that such a pleasant commodity as beer should be distributed by such unpleasant creatures as publicans' (*ibid.*:88).

Freeland notes in the 1880's that 'the malted liquor onto which successive relays of administrators had tried to wean their charges became the national beverage' (Freeland 1977:125). The change to slowly-drunk beer and a 'seven-fold' increase in its consumption required more bar space (*ibid.*).

Freeland comments that conditions were so wild and unconfined by the middle eighties that all colonial governments took strong action to curb the situation. Acts tightening up conditions relating to hotel licences, with steeply-increased penalties to discourage violators, and requiring a severe reduction in the number of licences, were introduced into Victoria and Queensland in 1885. In the next year, the New South Wales government, on the grounds of concern for crime, drunkenness, and

immorality, appointed an Intoxicating Drink Inquiry Commission. 'The Commission took a close look at the whole business from the problem of the employment of barmaids to the quality of drink served, from the tied-house practice to upstairs bars, from closing hours to the ratio of licences to the population' (*ibid.*). New South Wales legislative recommendations of the 1880's which limited the number of bars and licences resulted in 'the consequences of more drinking in worse conditions' (*ibid.*:126). 'By crowding people into the pubs that remained, they introduced the degrading jostle that characterised Australian bars for the next 80 years' (*ibid.*).

Freeland lists general activities and customer attractions common in hotels in the 1860's (*ibid.*). These included free counter-lunches; gambling was outlawed but dog-fights, cock-fights and rat-fights were to be found by 'those in the know' (*ibid.*). The organisation of all types of sport was ardently cultivated, including football, cricket, horse-racing and skittles. Pig-races conducted by hotels became a national pastime. The long-room, a standard part of the accommodation of the best hotels, was the centre for community activities including public meetings, church services, court sessions, school-rooms, dances, dinner, concerts and theatricals. Entertainments ranged from porridge-eating competitions to more orthodox concert-style entertainment, liable however to the occasional outburst of drunken fighting (*ibid.*). These show up a range of community activities lost in later developments in hotels.

In a direct comment on the nature of social relations in hotels which smacks of romanticisation not altogether justified by his own account, Freeland says that

the intimate and highly personal relationships between a host and his customers that existed in the innocent years (pre-gold rush) gradually waned, to be replaced by an impersonal distance in which immediate contact was often rare and seldom constant. The loss of warm personal service had several causes (*ibid.*:116).

As causes, Freeland lists the growth of a materialist outlook, the increase in the size of pubs and significantly, the rise of the tied-house in which the licensee was no more than the agent for a 'faceless' brewery (*ibid.*). With the growth of hotels, especially during the expansionist 1840's to 1880's, came a demise of personal ties and their replacement by the impersonal (*ibid.*). Due to an increase in the number and size of hotels after the gold strikes the necessary capital expenditure became beyond the grasp of many licensees. Breweries assisted and the standard arrangement in the 1880's was one-third of the capital outlay provided by the publican, two-thirds by the breweries. Many publicans found themselves mere employees, 'and to recapture their independence', sold out (*ibid.*:117). As they did so, the breweries bought up the hotels. By 1880, half the hotels in Sydney were tied to breweries, and, Freeland comments, 'the impersonalisation of pubs well under way' (*ibid.*).

With reference to the doubtful reputation that hotels may be accorded, it is fruitful to highlight, not only the activities of the Temperance Movement and those sections of the community which opposed the sale and consumption of liquor but also the related history of legislation.* A government Act in 1825 stressed the point that 'where strong liquors were sold, that it was necessary for the orderly conduct

*The theme of community attitudes to hotels, the Temperance Movement and other historical factors are elaborated in Chapter Five, with reference to women at work in hotel bars.

of public houses, that the characters of the occupants should be the subject of strict examination' (Davies 1978:15).

Legislation was also concerned with hotel hours. In the 1860's in New South Wales, legislation extended trading from 4 a.m. to midnight, six days a week. This led to a rash of get-rich-quick pubs, whose compulsorily-provided 'mean' accommodation was let at hourly rates. Freeland comments that while 'conceived with the best of intentions in the minds of the legislators, the combination of compulsory accommodation and long trading hours produced in fact, no more than a tavern with a brothel above' (Freeland 1977:115).

The 1890's began to see a decline in hotels with the onset of the depression. The decline continued with a widespread public unpopularity based 'on a not unfounded belief that the pubs were hot-beds of crime, immorality and drunkenness' (*ibid.*:144). The causes of teetotalism and temperance became popular, and were given support in newspaper campaigns. In New South Wales in 1905, legislation whereby taxpayers could abolish or determine the number of hotels in the district became law.

As part of the war-effort, from 1914 closing hours were reduced to 9.30 or 9.00 p.m. Temperance forces thrived around this time. In New South Wales a riot of drunken soldiers in Liverpool fired agitation which resulted in a referendum, as a result of which 6 o'clock closing was introduced. Through 1915 and 1916, three of the most populous states, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, introduced 6 o'clock closing (*ibid.*:144-147). It seems likely that World War I restrictions which forced early closing as a temporary measure, partly through pressure

from the temperance movement, became permanent, starting the so-called '6 o'clock swill'.* This move brought changes in the physical character of Australian hotels. Until this time bars, which had only occupied a proportion of the hotels, now became the dominant part (Freeland 1977). The significance of these changes lie in the implications they had for the images of hotels as male domains discussed in the following chapter.

In the years following the Second World War (1945-1955), hotels lost custom to clubs and this led to a renewed effort on the part of hotels to regain community custom (*ibid.*:163). The introduction of 10 o'clock closing facilitated this trend (in New South Wales in 1954, in Victoria in 1966, in South Australia 1967). This period witnessed another major change in the physical character of hotels. Spurred on by the Liquor Control Commission, old pubs were renovated with modern drapings, carpets, comfortable seating, soft lighting. There was a boom in the numbers of large low buildings where up to 500 could be seated in massive lounges, described by their detractors as 'big beer barns'.

I round off this discussion with a comment on the historical changes in hotels made in a report by the South Australian branch of the A.H.A. The report states that the

rationale for restrictively licensing the retailing of liquor has diminished in two ways: hotels are no longer a monopoly; today there are specialist competitors in all sections of the liquor, food and accommodation industries. Also social values of alcohol have changed...with a greater acceptance of alcohol evident and demand for hotels as social recreation centres, not just retailers of liquor (A.H.A. 1973:2).

*A colloquialism referring to the excessive consumption of alcohol which occurred in the closing hours of trade.

The ideological aspects of this comment by the A.H.A. calls for some comment. The history of hotels as documented by Freeland does not support the A.H.A. point that hotels in the past were 'simply' outlets for the retail of liquor. However, the A.H.A. view brings out some problems attaching to the documentation of a history of hotels, given the powerful economic and political interest of hotels. Freeland's account also raises problems in this respect. There are unresolved contradictions in Freeland's account, and the implications of his ironic statement, made with reference to tales of bushrangers and smugglers' tunnels that 'for pubs, the romantic is just plain good for business' is not consistently followed through (Freeland 1977:116).

The extent to which convivial hospitality is simply part of a romantic image of hotels or the extent to which it is an actuality for many hotels is a question worth raising. Freeland's comments that the developments of the 1880's, with increasing brewery involvement leading to decreasing personal ties, should not detract attention from the tension that has existed between the pursuit of profit and sociable service toward customers throughout the history of hotels. Numerous examples are suggested by Freeland. One point to note here is that there are at least two dimensions to the potential for sociability which operates in bar settings. One involves customers and those who work behind the bar, and is a primary focus of this thesis. The other dimension is that of the sociability of customers with one another which I touch on in the next chapter. The tension between economics and sociability is relevant primarily to one of these dimensions, to that of bar staff and customers.

Social dimensions of hotels

Some mention of the physical characteristics of hotels is relevant in a discussion of the social functions of hotels. The internal organisation of hotel bars is documented further in the ethnographic description.

Hotels are a space set aside from home and work place which provide for the consumption of alcohol. They have a typical physical shape and characteristics — notably the presence of a physical bar which spatially separates customers from workers.

Some of the generalised physical features of hotels were elaborated in the discussion of their history. Whether small or large, the hotels of today are specialised buildings, whose spacing and functions are affected by a variety of legislative restrictions. Common to all hotels, and springing from legislative requirements, is bar space for the consumption of liquor in specified hours. They must also provide a meal on request, and until recently, due to a law which required that some accommodation be made available for residential guests, hotels were frequently two-storeyed buildings with a variable amount and quality of sleeping accommodation, which often doubled, as it does still today, as a residence for publicans and their families. Only recently in South Australia did legal changes permit the licensing of non-accommodation-providing premises classified as 'taverns' (South Australian Government, 1967-72).

The provision of food in hotels has increased in significance in recent years. The hotel dining room for guests has re-appeared in many instances as a restaurant open to the public. In Adelaide, the provision of counter meals, either lunch, tea or both, is widespread and therefore

requires a hotel to maintain in running order the requisite kitchen facilities and to hire kitchen staff.

Public bars are typically directly accessible from the street while the most expensive sections of hotels are more internally located, and usually more comfortably and lavishly furnished.

Hotels and hotel bars are settings for sociability. They are used as meeting and talking places for those already acquainted. As well there is the possibility that the unacquainted or strangers may engage socially either with other customers or with bar staff. The potential for sociability in a hotel bar is aided by the physical features of hotel bar settings where, unlike a restaurant, customers are not necessarily separated into table settings. The loosening effects of alcohol may also encourage informal sociability among the unacquainted, a theme dealt with in Cavan's analysis (1966). Certainly the continual presence of one or more bar personnel on the other side of the bar provides a greater potential for sociability than is possible with, say, the intermittent nature of restaurant service. In addition, the well-established custom of buying drinks for bar staff, both workers and management, and the opportunities for bar staff to provide drinks 'on the house' are linked to this potential for sociability.

Taking the perspective of hotels as workplaces, the sociability of a bar setting may be described as contractual insofar as it can be attributed to the economic structure of hotels. The possibility for convivial relations between publicans and customers may be seen as part of an economic strategy to encourage customers to linger and return to the setting. This may also hold for the sociability between customer and bar workers, whose easy friendliness may attract custom. This

contractual element places certain constraints, explored later in Chapter Four, on the social relationships of customers and bar staff.

A point of view on the social function of hotels put forward by an A.H.A. report is that hotels define and reinforce community values, operate as meeting places, and as communication media reinforcing social integration (A.H.A. 1973:6-7). This perspective is relevant to the viewpoint of customers, as is the view that hotels are 'leisure' settings. Customers in hotels are neither at work nor at home. The concept of a leisure setting has built into it a notion, similar to Cavan's notion of 'time-out' (Cavan 1966) of a potential for 'lax' or drunken behaviour. The consequences of this point for the social structure of bars, as with other everyday settings, is that it is not easy to identify a definite set of rules, of concrete norms guiding behaviour within them. That is, there is no prominent code of formal, official rules. This raises the question: how do people know how to behave toward one another? In the conclusion to this chapter, I imply that hotels, while seemingly loosely structured and informal, are instead highly structured settings. My point is similar to that of Spradley and Mann who comment that the conviviality and easy interaction of the cocktail bar often hides 'the social structure and status hierarchy that organises people' (Spradley and Mann 1975:28).

In the preceding discussion I have suggested some of the institutional factors which shape and structure hotels as social settings. After some description of the ethnographic settings of the study I argue that the presence of women in hotels is one significant factor which structures social behaviour and cognition within them (Mitchell 1974).

A note on the limitations of this study: the setting and research locations

For the sake of convenience, I locate an overview of the chronology and methodology of my research with a discussion of the hotel settings on which the study was based.

The generalisations made in my discussion are not meant to apply across the board to all or most hotels. Instead they cover a limited number and style of hotels and a few words about these are appropriate. Firstly, the generalisations do not apply to the small local or other kind of suburban hotels. The hotels are city hotels, all located in the same main street. The street is an important centre of the city's night life. There is a mixture of ethnic groups in the area who make up a large part of the clientele of the hotels in the street, along with Australian customers. The location of the hotels inevitably flavours the nature of the generalisations made.

As a study of gender, it is arguable that the main street setting with its nearby red-light district will mean that male-female interactions across the bar constitute an extreme and exaggerated variant of barmaid-customer social relations in general. Insofar as this is the case, it is arguable that an extreme or exaggerated statement of those relations can be valuable in highlighting features of the less extreme forms.

The variety of ethnic groups who frequent and have commercial interests in the street is one element in the dubious reputation that the street has among the wider community. In addition, the street is an area of potential trouble which constitutes another element in its reputation. It is the regular haunt of a set of youths, the so-called

'bikies' and 'ripple-shoe kids' who visit the street. Regular centres of attraction for them include a fun-parlour and at least one of the hotels. As well, the street and some of the hotels operate as a point of contact for prostitutes, mostly young, and their customers. Police patrols, both on foot and by car, proceed continually. Paradoxically, the regular presence of police in the street may explain why, in the view of one publican, the hotels in the street generally do not have the problems of violence confronting publicans in large, suburban hotels. The use of specialised 'bouncers' is not predominant.*

Despite the location of the hotels studied, which might suggest a transient custom, they have a smaller percentage of transient customers than might be expected. A number of the hotels discussed had a relatively stable and regular clientele over the time of my familiarity with them — primarily 1975-1978. A number of factors determine the stability and style of custom at particular hotels. These include factors such as location, management policy, opening hours.

Research chronology and methodology

I began formal fieldwork for this study in November/December 1974 and rounded off intensive field experience in May 1978. Working behind the bar in two hotels provided contacts and direct experience. The first of these jobs was full-time work in Hotel I (see below) from late January to mid-March 1975 and subsequently on odd nights as a casual. The second job experience in Hotel II lasted a span of a little over a month of part-time, casual weekend evening work in the period December/January

*'Bouncers' refers to those hired to 'bounce out' people who cause trouble and therefore have to possess physical prowess.

1976-77, and again for a similar period in 1977-78. Outside of work, I maintained contact with bar staff, continuing informal visiting and interviewing. I was a regular customer at one of these hotels (Hotell III) for several years prior to and throughout the period of fieldwork. Throughout this period (early 1974-78), I was also an intermittent customer at other hotels in the street, and from January 1977 I engaged in intensive customer participation for several months mostly in the company of a male escort.

There was a total of eight hotels operating in the city street which emerged as the location for this study. I achieved some familiarity with each of them, although most deeply with five of them, minimally as a customer and researcher, maximally as a worker, customer and researcher and I deal primarily with these five. I have in-depth interview material with nineteen women who worked as wage-earners in bars and working familiarity or informal contact with approximately ten more. I have observational and interview material from three barmen, and working familiarity or informal contact with five more, two of these in depth. I had interviews with a total of eight managers or licensees, two of these were women, one who worked in a managerial capacity, the other the wife of a hotel licensee. Beyond these, I had working familiarity or observational data for another two men and three women of managerial status.

Outside of those engaged in hotels as workplaces, I interviewed a public relations officer of the local brewery, an official from the union and one from the A.H.A., and an officer of the Licensing Court. Outside the field area I have some less systematic, mostly observational data on seven more hotel settings and those who worked in them.

I began this study with a conviction of the importance of a sociological study of hotel settings within Australian society — in no more specified form than that. It was the suggestion at the time that I focus my study on women working in hotel bars, a suggestion welcomed largely because it permitted me to study hotel bars as social settings. I was unaware then of the potential of this suggestion for a study of issues relating to gender. The suggestion had one obvious advantage, it enabled me to gain access to the setting and make fruitful contacts more easily than if, as a woman, I had set about a study of hotel bars primarily from a customer focus. Cavan's (1966) experiences are relevant here and are referred to earlier.

However, despite a general orientation toward the study of women, I saw myself as engaging in an occupational study. Yet the results of my study inform more about gender in the workplace than they do about the occupation of working behind bars. This is so because my research question was phrased not as a study of hotels as occupational settings in a general sense, but a study of women occupationally engaged in bar work in hotel settings, servicing a predominantly male clientele. Therefore, while some of my research interests were phrased with a view to obtaining the kind of data which a sociological study of an occupation might require, I do not view my study as primarily within the field of the sociology of occupations, although it should make some contribution towards it. Related also to the definition of the research is the point that I have not taken the typicality of bar workers as one of my problems. For similar reasons, my study did not take the course of an in-depth analysis of hotel settings as organisations, although this would be a legitimate and interesting line of enquiry to adopt.

It should be clear from my comments to this point that I am not dealing with hotels from a customer perspective or with drinking behaviour as a social problem. More critically this study is not addressed directly to issues of social change. Given my interest in gender, and the current awareness in the society of change in male-female roles, this requires some comment. Issues of social change are not entirely put aside and I make some mention of them in Chapter Three in my discussion of women as customers in hotels. However, with reference to my primary interest in hotels as workplaces, I view the work that women do in hotels as falling squarely within the orthodox avenues of work available to women both in the past and today, and which itself requires exploration as much as the avenues of change. In addition, I see my study as one which explores the factors sustaining a particular pattern of gender differentiation and classification.

I turn now to describe each of the five hotels which formed the primary basis for my observations. They are described in terms relevant to the discussion of later chapters and suggest variations in styles of hotels.

HOTEL I

In a number of ways this hotel stood out as the white elephant of the street. It had four management changes from 1974 to 1979. It was a large hotel, requiring a staff of 30-45. Despite numerous and varied attempts by managements to change decor, dress regulations and bar styles, staff-customer relations impressed as more troubled than others in the street. I worked here full-time for the long vacation period of 1975, and briefly afterwards as a casual. My remarks apply primarily to that time.

Not only were its three bars large but also it carried a restaurant, a beer garden and discotheque. Bar employees numbered over thirty, with approximately sixteen back-of-house employees. Bar staff employees consisted of six full-time and eight part-time men and four full-time and fifteen part-time women, an overall ratio of nineteen women to fourteen men.* Turnover was rapid; management cited an instance of 'fifteen girls in one month'. The longest serving bar employee, the public barman of seven years, lost out on long-service leave as a result of a change in management. Otherwise, complaints about job conditions were not commonly commented on by bar workers.

As a result of management initiation I became a member of the union, but otherwise there was little sign of union activity. At least one girl was fired while I was there, a number of others left voluntarily. Staff turnover was matched by high management turnover. This turnover may have been related to the ill-repute attaching to the hotel and the difficulties of working in it. The manager of another hotel commented

*These figures are based on a questionnaire I used in interviews with hotel management.

that the only sensible thing to do with hotels like this one is to stay out of them.

The hotel had a regular rough element, partly constituted by the youths who frequented nearby places of interest in the street. The public bar custom had a regular clientele of Greek customers and as well was a point of contact for customers and prostitutes. This generally non-homogeneous custom led to tactics like that evinced by one female employee, who after buying one of the potential trouble-making youths a drink, commented that 'it pays to keep in with them'. The public bar was usually envisaged as the worst of all the bars in terms of social regulation. The hotel had bouncers, but they were mainly restricted to the discotheque or employed at peak times, and while the management were usually to be found somewhere on the premises, often engaged in mixing with customers, bar workers had to cope with many situations, without calling for assistance. Bar employees varied in their capacities and skills to regulate customers. The regular public barman evinced a range of such skills. The assistant manager commented unfavourably on the capacity of women to cope with trouble, in the course of making an objection to women having been granted equal pay. Another member of the management commented that the police were called approximately once a week, a relatively high rate compared with the other hotels discussed earlier.

The problems of social regulation in the public bar were added to by tensions between women who regularly worked in other bars in the hotel and who, on being required to assist in the public bar, typically resented this, citing abruptness and rudeness by customers, especially, in their view, Greek customers, as the reason. On the other hand, a degree

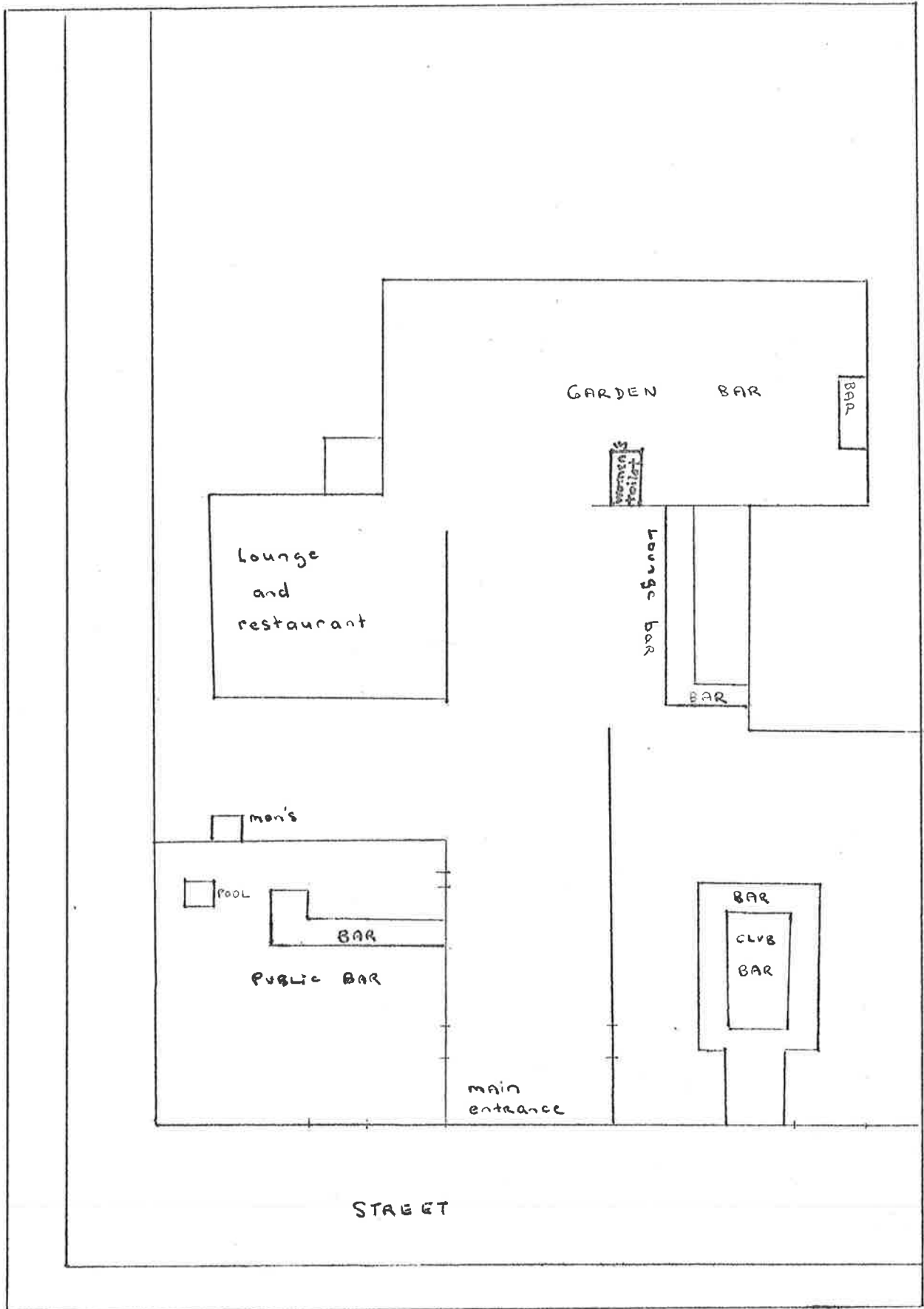
of stability stemmed from the links between the Greek clientele and the barman, who often spent time out of work hours drinking with them as a customer.

The management of the hotel was more differentiated than elsewhere; the hotel had a complex ownership-management structure and it was non-brewery-owned. The regular management were employed on a salaried basis and consisted of an assistant manager, a manager who was an ex-sporting personality and a manageress. One or more of them were usually on the premises; their roles were typically in the non-routine aspects of the work, and a high percentage of time was spent socialising with customers.

A degree of informality marked management-employee relations; drinks after work were frequent and some casual sexual encounters reported between management and female employees. The manageress commented on this as a problem leading to jealousy among staff. Pulling rank and levels of competence were also causes of friction between bar employees. Social relations in the hotel were marked by a degree of back-biting and gossip between and across all categories, from customer complaints to employees about management, and customer complaints to management about employees. Management commented on the issue of reliability of employees as a problem.

Information on Hotel I came primarily from my work experience there which led to contacts with employees and management. These were maintained through several subsequent management changes.

HOTEL I*



*Hotel diagrams are not to scale.

Hotel II

Hotel II was located near Hotel I but contrasted with it, being a small, one bar hotel, with attaching restaurant and reception area. The bar can be operated by one person, with assistance provided by management or a casual employee in peak times. I worked casually in the bar for two short periods and my observations stemmed primarily from those work experiences. The hotel employed only women, with the only male staff working in a managerial capacity. In response to an enquiry about employing males, one of the managers commented, in a reference to customer preference, 'You know what this place is like'. There were a total of six employees, and the wives of both of the male managers gave assistance behind the bar, one only infrequently.

There was some overlap with the clientele of Hotel I, and a high percentage of mostly Italian customers, with some Yugoslavs and Greeks. The groups of tough youths who frequent Hotel I were absent, but some trafficking between prostitutes and customers occurred on the premises. Problems of social regulation were less apparent relative to Hotel I. Despite some ethnic differentiation, the hotel had a more homogeneous custom than others in the street. Although the customers presented bar workers with some problems of regulation, only rarely did these verge on violence.

Some tensions resulted from the employ of Australian-born women in a setting with a mainly non-Australian-born clientele. There was some stability of staff, management and especially of custom. Of the two regular full-time barmaids, one worked for a span of four years, another slightly less. There was greater turnover with casual staff. The longest-standing employee was a woman who had worked there as a cook for

nine years. The management consisted of two married couples with young families, who resided upstairs. It was their first experience of hotel work; one of the couples dropped out at an early stage and were replaced; the other couple lasted about four years before the hotel changed hands.

The lack of experience of the management, and their fairly constant presence in the bar were points of tension for bar employees. Management would provide assistance in obviously busy times, but that assistance was erratic, and depended on their not always accurate perception of when assistance was required. When not actively assisting, management spent time in the bar socialising with customers. Their regular presence in the bar may have been an advantage to bar employees if they had more experience with regulating customers. One point of tension arose from the management's regular and quasi-personal ties with customers, and those occasions which demanded some firm regulatory action by management, often not forthcoming. A number of employees commented that one of the male managers was unpopular with customers.

Work conditions were a source of complaint by all the female employees, who commented on a number of ways management failed to conform to union regulations, as in failing to provide a lunch-break, or paying wages which did not conform to the award. Despite knowledge of these infringements, most employees were either not prepared or at a loss to rectify matters.

Hotel III

Like Hotel II, this was a small two-bar hotel with a public and combined saloon-lounge bar, and a restaurant area. Apart from management, there were usually two full-time employees, with some casual assistance. For a three-year period the hotel was managed by an Australian-born couple, with no previous experience in hotels, who resided on the premises. These were succeeded by an Italian couple.

The location of the hotel on the outer edge of the street set it apart from the more active, potentially more troublesome central area of the street. The custom was drawn from neighbouring workplaces by day, and by night a core of largely single migrant men, who regularly ate their meals there. Some of these men were miners in town for a short time only. The restaurant (a point of pride for the licensee's wife) was a source of entry for a more professional style of clientele, some of these women.

Bar employees consisted of one full-time male, Italian-born, the longest staying employee of five years, who was employed in the public bar. Women were employed in the saloon bar with a turnover which varied but fell around a range of 6-18 months. One full-time female employee, Polish by birth, had worked for three years in the hotel. At one point she left, and subsequently returned twice to resume work, on one of these occasions as a casual. With the exception of this woman, glamorous in style and presentation, and in her forties, the women hired were younger and usually low-key in presentation and style of dress.

The licensee helped out in both bars, but less regularly in the public bar. Despite having a fairly rigid style of socialising, some amount of time was spent talking with and drinking with customers.

Several people commented that he was a drinker. The licensee's wife's ease of mixing and friendliness counterbalanced the more restrained style of the licensee. While both saw their association with hotels as on a short-term basis during a time of transition, the wife appeared to derive more pleasure from the opportunities to socialise than the husband. Her role was primarily restricted to the food side of the business, to some serving in the dining room, mostly assistance when busy, and similarly in taking orders for and serving meals in the public bar. She never worked behind the bar serving drinks, unlike the wife of the succeeding licensee, who also had a greater ease of interaction with customers than her husband.

Tensions in social relationships were evident. These included some resentment by one Australian-born woman bar worker over her perception of the management favouring an Asian-born girl, who worked casually in the dining room. The same girl experienced tensions with the older woman worker.

The barman expressed impatience with what he perceived as arrogance or distance on the licensee's part — and also an exasperation over the point that when he needed assistance from the licensee, it was not forthcoming. The bar worker was not in a position to call for the assistance from management. As with Hotel II, it depended on the management's perception and inclination, only in Hotel III the situation was exacerbated because the management not only had additional areas of the hotel to attend to, but had fewer management personnel between whom tasks and shifts could be split.

At one point, following a shift in management, the incoming management justified putting off one of the female casuals on the grounds

that tensions had developed between her and the permanent full-time barman over the point that the woman was earning more money on a casual basis while working less hours.

Spatially the hotel presented few problems. This was mirrored in the area of social regulation also. The hotel did not present the problems of social regulation evident either in Hotel I or II. Those areas of trouble that did occur were usually handled competently by the barman; as well, the manager had an air of control about him and was quite firm in executing decisions. He also had personal contacts with police, resulting from an earlier work experience. An alarm device which bar staff could use to attract the attention of management while upstairs was installed in one of the bars.

The hotel had a public bar scene which was not dissimilar to that described for Hotel II, with a high proportion of migrant customers in the evening and in the day a crowd expanded by the local brewery workers. Generally speaking, the migrant custom of this bar was less grouped into cliques, and there was less of a conversational atmosphere as in Hotel I or II. The pool table and a slot machine were points of customer concentration and contact, often noisy, and points of attention for other drinkers. Evening meals were popular with migrant men, either alone or in company with one or two others. Except for the intermittent noise generated by pool playing, the bar was generally quieter than either Hotel I or Hotel II — a small and regular number of migrant men seemed to use it as their eating place before heading off to other hotels in the street.

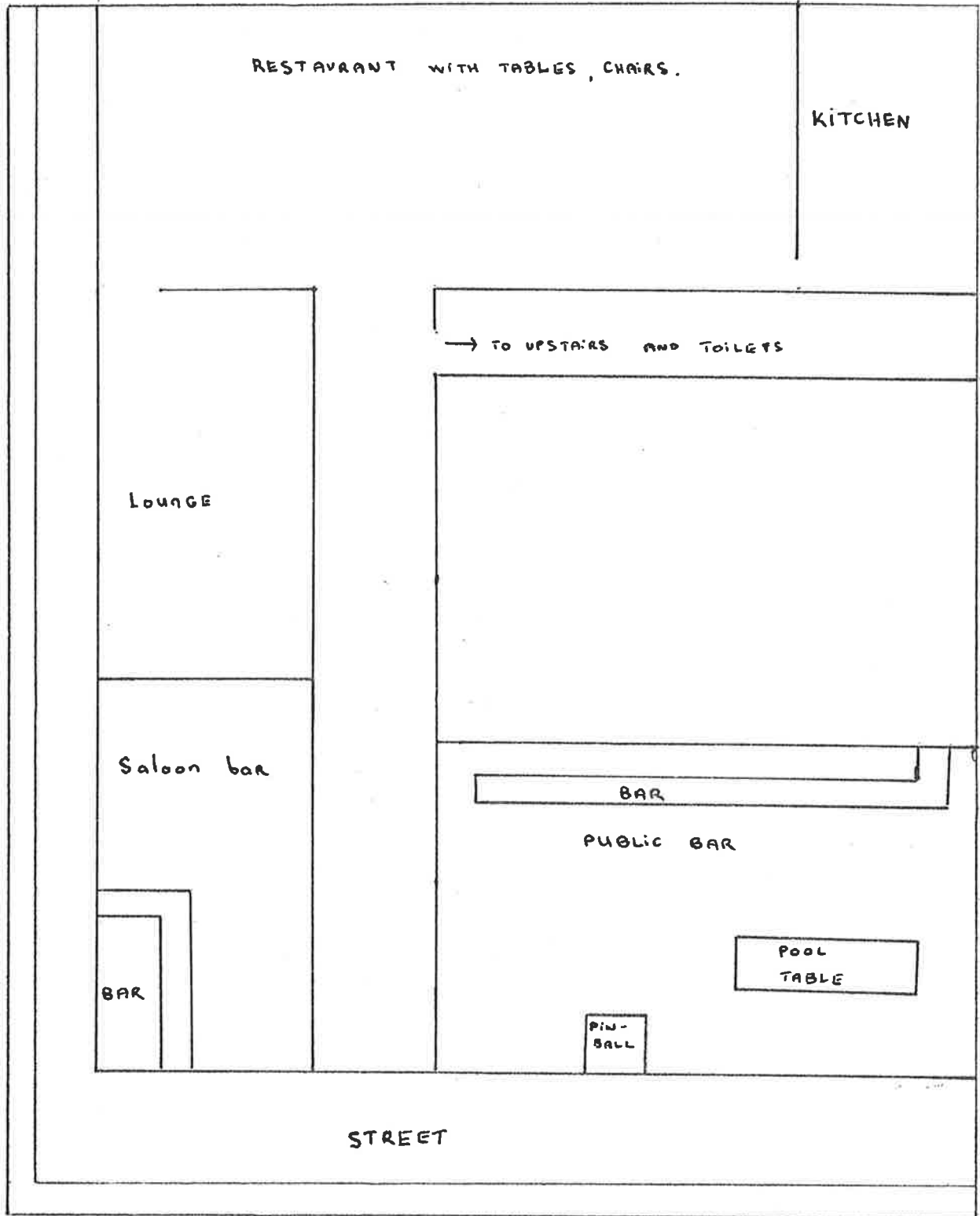
The main female custom, apart from an occasional male-escorted drinker or diner, was a group of professional women who visited the hotel

one night a week, usually entering the front bar after eating in the dining room. Usually, by the time of their entrance, the bulk of the locals had departed or soon did so. Points of tension but also contact developed around the pool table between pool-playing women and locals. The front bar did not seem to constitute a problem of social control for the regular barman whose main tasks seemed to be the policing of the bar from wandering 'derros' and other single drunks.* The control of large groups of drinkers arose only occasionally when the bar was invaded by a group of miners, infrequent but periodic regulars over the years, primarily seeking pool. Contact between this group and the women could constitute points of tension.

The bar provided meals, stools, chairs and tables; there was carpet on the floor and bar ticket machines. It opened in the evenings as did Hotels I and II.

*'Derros': old alcoholic down-and-out men.

HOTEL III



Hotel IV

This hotel had four bars and about fifteen staff; women employees outnumbered the men in the proportion of about nine women to five men. The hotel employed a couple of older women in their sixties who worked as casuals, and one older man of similar age. Turnover of staff in the hotel was less than others in the street. The publican cited periods of seven, five to four years, and more gloomily, of eight to ten months. One of the few long-spanning woman workers interviewed, who had a history of work in hotels of about thirty years, worked there for five and a half years and is now retired. She continued to visit the hotel regularly as a customer. Others had been with the hotel for periods ranging from seventeen to eighteen months up to four years. Judging from comments made by employees, job conditions were fair. Although not uniformly well-regarded by all his staff, a number of staff made favourable comments about the fairness of the licensee as an employer. Hours, wages and general conditions, such as the provision of a lunch-break, seemed to accord with the union award, again in contrast to some of the other hotels in the street.

I have not got precise figures on profitability, but the then licensee, for seven years, was about to leave in favour of a wholesale liquor business. The hotel was changing hands, and the incoming licensees were also people with considerable experience of hotels. In both cases, there was a family link, sons having followed their father's footsteps in the hotel business. This suggests, despite the outgoing licensee's lament about the decline in the profitability of hotels, that the hotel was a favourable commercial proposition. The hotel was leased from the brewery.

The location and style of custom had two features which may explain why it was a relatively trouble-free hotel, again compared with some others in the street. Two employees interviewed said fights were rare to non-existent. The hotel was located on the outskirts of the street, at the opposite end to Hotel III, and toward the business and shopping centre. The most striking feature of its custom was a large lounge, which spanned the front of the hotel and to which there was direct entry from the street. This lounge was frequented by predominantly middle-aged or older, female clientele, further referred to in Chapter Three. Included in this hard core of women was the now-retired female bar worker already mentioned. She was friends with the older women who remain casual employees. As well, there was an elaborately decorated club-style bar deep in the centre of the hotel, which was the regular haunt of white-collar businessmen. This and the small public bar out the back both were shut in the early evening.

The relative stability of management, employees and customers, and the ties between customers and staff may have been factors which lessened the amount of trouble here in contrast to other hotels in the street. Also, as suggested, the physical character, a large lounge area at the front, with little bar space and numerous tables and chairs, and a predominantly older woman clientele may also have been relevant. The lounge area was also the location for marriage celebrations from the nearby registry office, this despite the fact that the hotel served no food. For this reason, it was dubbed 'a real drinking pub' by the incoming publican's son. The hotel had a well-stocked bottle department, and a cellarman who exercised some, although limited, authority over other staff.

One of the tensions expressed by management about staff related to younger women employees having their unemployed boy friends visit them at work. In addition, there was tension between a barman of nearly two years' duration, and the outgoing management. This barman was promoted to assistant manager by the new management and was then sacked. It appeared that from the publican's point of view, an issue of trust was at stake, reflecting as he saw it the general problem of finding trustworthy managerial staff. Also there was a suggestion that the employee was over-ambitious to a point unsuited to the position. Apart from this instance there was little indication that the arrival of a new management resulted in job loss for employees. Some physical changes were made by the new management but without any apparent change in custom. Some degree of formality marked the style and service of this hotel, as suggested by the policy that staff wear uniform on the job, a policy that was retained by the new management.

With reference to the staffing of the bars, a predictable division was apparent between the businessmen's club bar and older women's lounge. In the early-closing businessmen's bar, both a male and female employee were used in peak times. The style of the women in this bar typically was of low-key, attractive and decorous. In contrast to the club bar, the Ladies Lounge was typically staffed by a number of women, including both older and younger women, less glamorous in style. There was little overlap of staff evident in the two bars; in both, employees would typically be working with at least one other person, especially at peak times. The back bar, the haunt of older male customers (some being pensioners), was staffed by a male employee similar in style to the customers; girls from the lounge would give assistance. The downstairs

bar, the most variable in custom in the hotel, usually was staffed by younger women. With reference to hiring policy, the incoming management commented that the relatively trouble-free, relatively non-violent nature of the hotel made it a matter of indifference whether employees were men or women.

The older women's lounge, which was an unusual feature of this hotel, was, according to the now-retired barmaid, encouraged by the then estranged wife of the former licensee. This employee had a considerable regard for the publican's former wife. While the licensee's wife had a hand in creating the style of the lounge, it seemed her role did not include regular assistance in the routine tasks of bar work.

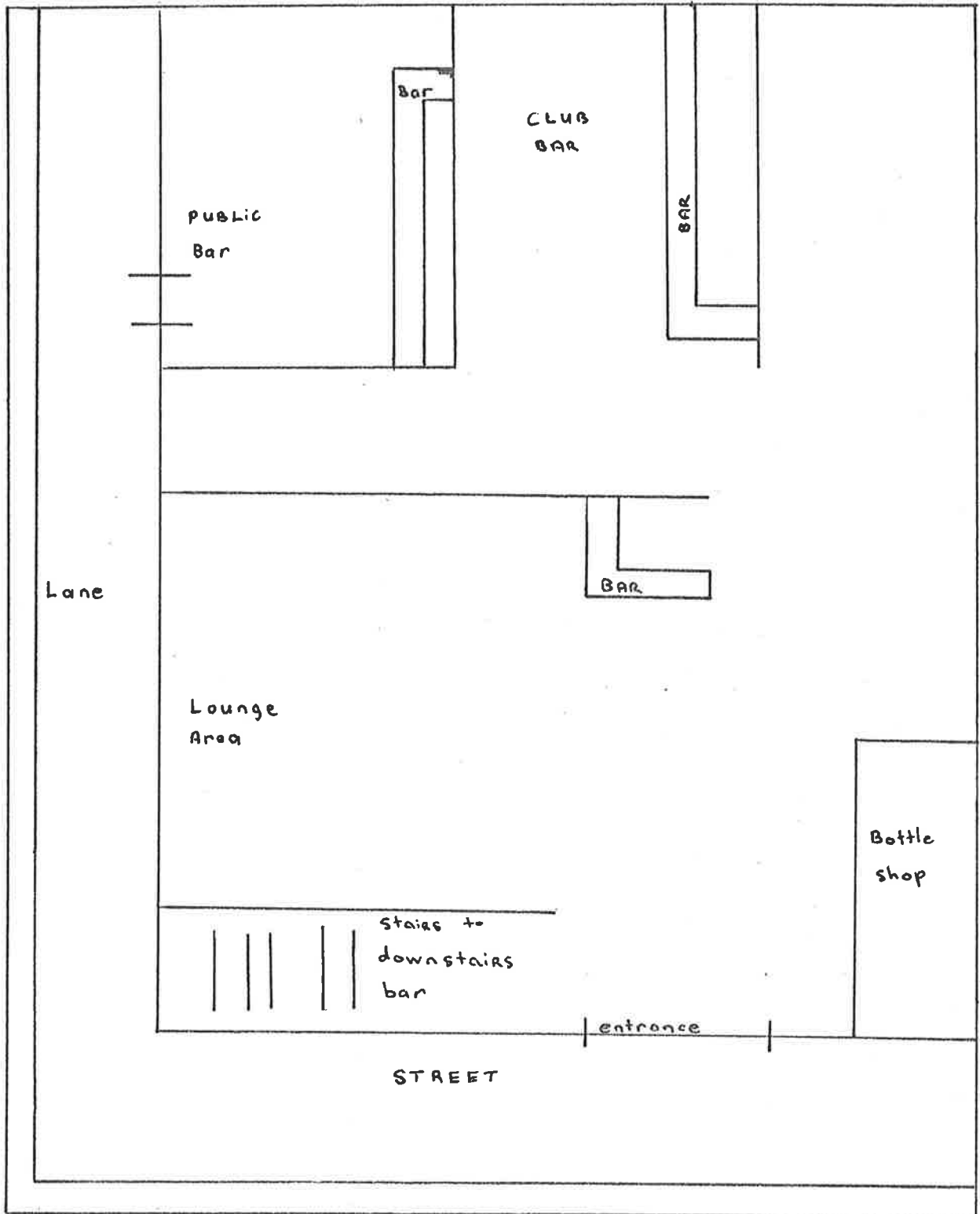
The time span referred to in this description is primarily 1978. Interviews were obtained with the incoming and outgoing management, with the barman who subsequently was fired, and three of the younger female employees. Finally, I had several sessions with the now-retired older woman worker who remained a regular customer at the hotel.

Hotel IV had a public bar contrasting to the three described earlier. It was situated at the back — via a lane entrance, behind both the women's lounge and an elaborate, mostly male, club bar. The public bar was perhaps the most basic in the street — some stools, and little to entertain customers, reflected in the atmosphere given off by the usually unanimated, older male and possibly pensioner drinkers; at any one time, seven or so of these may be present — served by an older male barman who would not look out of place as a customer, sometimes assisted by one of the women workers. The impression was one of non-conversational isolated drinking, although regular to heavy drinking but falling short of rowdy drunkenness. I never saw a woman customer in there — and on my

usually brief visits felt mostly indifferent reactions evidenced in the backs of the customers. With their backs to the entrance they seemed to spend most of their time staring ahead.

This bar contrasted with the nearby elaborate club bar, venue of executives and white-collar workers; in some ways the archetype of a classy style of gentleman's bar: mirrors, flowers, timber panelled walls, racing photographs, mostly lunchtime, post-work crowds of men, well-dressed, in varying sized groups, rarely solo. Women patrons were rare here also. A generally non-migrant clientele was typical throughout the hotel.

HOTEL IV



Hotel V

Now closed, the hotel was located near the hotel just described; a notable feature of Hotel V was the style of its management and staff. The manager was an ex-company executive, with interests in wine and food which were imprinted upon the hotel. Born elsewhere, from a solid middle-class background, he took over the hotel in 1972, when it was renovated to include a restaurant aimed at attracting white-collar business custom in the surrounding area. To that end, hiring policy was primarily directed at employing, in the words of the manager, 'good-looking, attractive and personable girls'. Despite renovations and employment policies, the hotel seemed to have had problems in keeping the kind of clientele preferred by management. In the category of customers the hotel would prefer to do without, according to one employee, were 'skin-heads' and 'blacks'. Apart from this, the night-time crowd included some heavy-drinking, potentially rowdy customers.

Employee-management relations were personalised to a degree and more informal than the hotel just described. Notable here was a liaison of some years between management and a female employee which had a number of complications for employees. Beyond this, the most striking feature of staff-employer relations was the attitude voiced by a number of employees towards management. In the words of one employee, the manager was 'a nice guy, he just doesn't know how to run a pub'; this employee cited the manager as leaving on a trip without putting someone in charge, and being difficult to find when needed. Married, with a family, the manager's wife had no connection with the day-to-day routine of the hotel.

Apart from the restaurant, the hotel had three bars and a relatively small number of bar employees, about six or so. Predominantly young, balanced between casual and permanent, the male-female ratio of bar employees was about fifty-fifty. This only partially reflected management's preference for hiring women. The ratio of women bar employees was increased by the young women employed casually for lunch-time service in the restaurant, numbering around twelve, a number of these being students. Turnover of bar staff again seemed variable. A couple of female employees had stayed for time spans of four years with time-off, then returned to work in the same place. The manager cited a period of eleven to eighteen months as fairly usual, with women leaving either through dissatisfaction with the work, or to marry or travel.

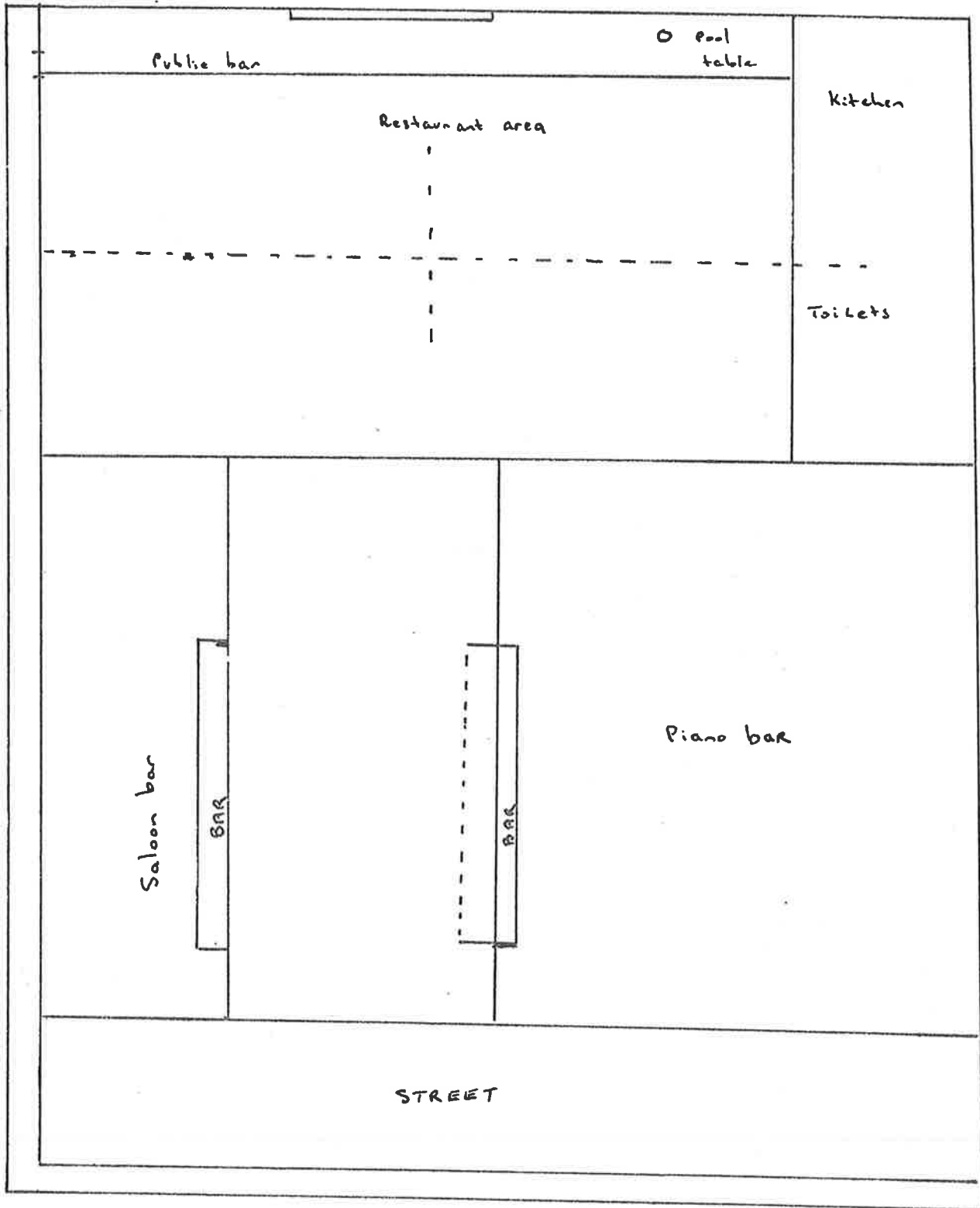
With reference to work conditions, no employees I talked to made direct comments; although something of the nature of these, as well as management-employee relations, was suggested by one informant's statement that they got extra money for overtime 'when needed'. Other comments made were that because the hotel was not managed properly, employees got the blame. The hotel opening late in the morning was instanced. Several of the women employed saw themselves as doing quasi-managerial work, as in stock ordering. Employees' comments about the manager, suggest he was in some ways an easy-going employer; the regular woman worker in the public bar played pool with customers during work hours, and read on the job, a habit not encouraged by other employers. The management's limited capacity or inclination to socialise with customers was also raised as a problem by employees. Customer jealousy was raised as an issue, as when customers resented the time management spent with others.

The hotel was not brewery-owned but leased from an independent owner. The profitability of the hotel in the management's view had declined since its renovation, mainly due to labour costs, and a combined effect of drink-driving legislation and discount liquor practices which was keeping more people at home. A varying perspective was provided by the comment of one bar employee that the hotel business, like all businesses at the time, has its rough patches.

In the area of law and social regulation, the hotel appeared to face more problems than those of Hotel IV, but less than some in the street. Like Hotel IV, it was located on the seemingly more respectable edge of the street. Some problems stemmed partly from the non-homogeneity of the custom. The day-time trade was primarily businessmen and other workers in the area. The manager commented that a range 'from Q.C.'s to bus-drivers' was especially characteristic of the public bar. The public bar shut early and was staffed regularly by a woman, factors suggesting a low-trouble threshold. A few women were evident at lunch or office parties, but basically the hotel was described by the manager as a largely male province. Customers the management viewed as undesirable or potentially troublesome tended to locate in the saloon bar. The saloon bar tended to have a heavy-drinking custom, varying from lone drinkers to a group of older, regular and heavy drinkers, variously constituted, one a woman, who were also given to spilling over into the next-door bar which had a piano. Here the hotel provided on weekend evenings a nostalgic style sing-along which encouraged singing and some, mostly drunkenly exaggerated, efforts at dancing. As well, the hotel in the early days had a problem with unwelcome visits from what were described as 'skinheads'. As well, some black men and women drank there

from time to time. The more problematic nature of the hotel custom was indicated by the manager's comment that 'A pub is to some extent a potential trouble spot, I guess; at night, especially, alcohol is generative of violence. For this reason', he said, 'there is always a man on at night.' The publican himself worked some nights, but would have preferred not to. Only one bar was kept open at night. One of the full-time barmen commented that the manager kept trying to get him to work nights. One of the women commented on occasions when the police came in for after-hour drinks; another that being a woman had some advantages in the expulsion of drunks, that as it was easier to, in her words, 'coddle' them into leaving. Each of these women were unusual in some respects as bar employees. One stressed that her involvement in bar work was on a casual basis for the money, but also that it was an involvement bordering on a managerial capacity. The other, the regular public bar worker, evidenced an enjoyment of the work, and a style which included playing pool with the customers and shouting them drink rounds during the course of work. The above observations were made mainly during a period spanning 1977 and 1978, and are based on several interviews and informal sessions with the management, one full-time barman, and two female employees, one casual, one full-time.

HOTEL V



This chapter has explored in broad outline common institutional features of hotels which contribute to the cultural concepts of what a hotel is in the Australian context. I also outlined the ethnographic setting and the main variations of five hotels on which this study is based. The institutional features of hotels influence regularly recurring patterns of social behaviour within them, although they are not necessarily part of the commonsense knowledge or understandings of those who frequent them. By way of conclusion I want to draw out this point with reference to the family basis for the running of hotels, and the significance of managers' wives (often called 'the missus') in hotel bar settings. My argument is that the presence of women in hotel bars is a factor which plays down their contractual and regulatory features in favour of sociability.

Provisions in the Licensing Act define the family of the licensee in corporate terms for various purposes. This legal underpinning of the running of hotels as family businesses is supported further by the union award which exempts immediate family members from wage provisions.

Where hotels have a family basis, this legally and economically supported characteristic will be a factor contributing to the sociability of the setting, with the licensee and his wife hosts in what may double also as their home. The presence of family members behind the bar is a factor which mutes the contractual basis of hotels.*

These features of hotels provide the grounds for an identification of them as partaking of elements of both public and domestic domains. The role of managers' wives in two instances referred to for Hotel III indicated how their sociability compensated for the less outgoing interactions of their husbands with customers. Their 'womanly' virtues showed

*Half of the hotels in the street, and three of the five of those which were studied in depth, utilised family services, most commonly those of wives.

up in interactions muting, not only the contractual, but also the regulatory nature of the setting. My point here is that it is publicans who are more likely to exercise the *formal* contractual and regulatory responsibilities associated with the everyday running of a hotel, such as physically evicting customers, or delivering serious reprimands to them about their behaviour, while the interactions of managers' wives with customers can defuse the seriousness of these events.

In those hotels which are not run on a family basis, mediation between the variables of sociability, contract and regulation can be achieved through the employment of wage-earning women workers. However, wage-earning women are critically marked off from managers' wives by the patently domestic identifications of the latter. The domestic identifications of publicans and their wives contrasts with the structural separation from the domestic sphere of both bar workers and customers. I return to this argument in the conclusion. In general, managers' wives are not subject to the same evaluations, explored elsewhere, of other women present in hotel bars. However, whether they are managers' wives or wage-earning bar workers, women are significant in mediating the contradictions inherent in hotel settings, yet paradoxically the presence of women in hotels is in general downplayed in popular perceptions of hotels as male domains, as I explore in the next chapter.*

*With reference to the status of managers' wives, it may be marked off by their avoidance of serving behind the bar, where they concern themselves primarily or exclusively with the organisation of food and its service to customers, as in Hotel III. In another situation, the manager's wife rarely gave assistance in the public bar, but did so in the more expensive bar.

CHAPTER THREE

HOTELS AS PUBLIC DOMAINS

Kerleuit drowsed. It had an old dark church muffled in dark trees; and, across the bubbling creek, a sunny hotel where white ducks put forth from the kitchen garden and tilted up their pointed tails as they searched for water, quick-beaked. There were lilies in front of the hotel, marigolds, daffodils, and an old, bee-beloved hawthorn tree. But no one except men could be seen going there as it was such a wicked place and sold beer.

K. Tennant, *Ride on Stranger*

A cultural image of hotels and hotel bars widespread in the Australian context presents them as drawing their custom, if not exclusively, then largely, from the male and not the female section of the population. This chapter has several aims centring around this image, discussed in terms of the relation of cognitive or cultural constructs to social patterns or practices.* Through a variety of documentary sources I examine cultural constructs of hotels as male domains. I situate these constructs against what I have observed of patterns of patronage of hotels by women and men. This provides the basis for an identification of what is described as 'bar culture', a predominantly male patronage of hotels. Finally, I draw some conclusions about the relations between cultural constructs and observed patterns of the use of hotels by women and men with reference to the nature-culture framework, discussed in terms of the opposition between domestic and public domains.

The central argument is that where women's patronage of hotels parallels that of males, as when women enter hotels unescorted or patronise public bars, cultural conceptions of this style of patronage are underpinned by processes of selective perception or negative labelling (respectively, Mitchell 1956; Becker 1963).

*I have adopted Mitchell's (1974) distinction between cognitive and behavioural patterns, and return to a discussion of it in my conclusion.

Women who regularly patronise hotels in this way must either define themselves in terms which are consistent with these cultural conceptions, or acquiesce in a definition of themselves in these terms by others. When women use hotels in ways which are similar to men, cultural identification of such women with the domestic sphere is impeded. This process of labelling is one of a variety of social mechanisms which contribute to a circumscribed or controlled patronage of hotels by women.

Following the direction of the previous chapter, I downplay the theme of the hotel as workplace. I restrict my attention here to a discussion of customers in hotels. I return to the theme of women and men as workers in later chapters. These earlier chapters form a background to the arguments developed there.

Images of hotels as 'public' domains

In the early days of Australian settlement the concept of a hotel as a place which, by law, was public in the sense of open to all, as opposed to a selected clientele, had emerged (Freeland 1977). It is not this use of the term 'public' which I refer to in this chapter. Instead I am following the sense in which it is used by Ortner and Rosaldo, and is spelt out more fully in Rosaldo's analysis. Rosaldo proposes a structural model which relates recurrent social, psychological and cultural aspects of relations between the sexes to the domestic orientation of women and the 'non-domestic or public ties that, in most societies, are primarily available to men' (Rosaldo 1974:17-18). According to this model, men are everywhere the locus of cultural value, so that some area of activity is seen as exclusively or predominantly male and 'therefore overwhelmingly and morally important' (*ibid.*:20-21). 'Public' refers to

'activities, institutions, and forms of association that link, rank, organise or subsume particular mother-child groups' (*ibid.*:23). I draw on Rosaldo's use of the concept 'public' in this chapter as that which is available to men as the locus of cultural value. I pose the question — to what extent are hotels and especially hotel bars 'public' in Rosaldo's sense of associated with male activity?

To summarise the course of my discussion:

Hotels are characterised as male domains in popular imagination. Women use hotels but this usage is selectively perceived in cultural conceptions in ways I document. Cultural constructs of hotels as male domains are based on a symbolic generalisation of the renowned and predominantly male public or front bar section of hotels. I explain these selective cultural constructs with reference to the 'public-domestic' distinction as formulated by Rosaldo. The principles of selection on which these perceptions are based are related to the reproduction of cultural patterns of femininity and masculinity in this society. These arguments are developed through an examination of women's patronage of hotels in the first part of this chapter. I then turn to an examination of bar culture, to patterns of patronage evident in the use of hotels by men. The arguments developed in the two sections are interlinked.

I begin by examining some scholarly and popular conceptions of drinking in Australian society, drawing attention to constructs of drinking in hotels as an activity predominantly associated with men, rather than with women. These include the notion that in the Australian context heavy drinking is a normal and not a pathological social activity, at least for men. The cultural configurations surrounding the drinking behaviour of men are entirely different to those surrounding the drinking behaviour of women.

The first cultural image to be examined, that Australia is a nation of heavy drinkers, is not difficult to document. Dixon makes the following comments: 'Somewhere during the nineteenth century, the unusual prevalence of male drinking seems to show up as a much-noted aspect of emerging national patterns' (Dixon 1976:170). On the link between Australian drinking and mateship Dixon notes 'that the "cultural attitudes which seem to affect Australian drinking as a whole, and have particular reference to heavy drinking...(include) drinking as a symbol of mateship and social solidarity"' (*ibid.*:169).

With reference to drinking among Australian women, Summers comments that their 'imbibing' has been circumscribed by rules and conventions which have prevented them from being able to freely and openly use drinking as men do. 'There has always been, and remains, enormous social disapprobation for drunken women' (Summers 1975:84-85). Summers quotes Norman MacKenzie's comment that 'Australia is more a "man's country" than any other industrial democracy' (*ibid.*:21). Summers echoes with the characterisation of the 'basic "maleness"' of our culture. Turning to the topic of hotels, Summers comments:

Many hotels will not serve women in the front bar, forcing them to patronize dingy 'ladies' lounges' where the discomfort is exacerbated by the higher prices charged for drinks (*ibid.*:82).

Throughout most of Australia, there was no legislation specifically designed to limit the entry of women patrons into hotels. As discussed earlier, in South Australia, publicans had the right to exclude categories of customers on the basis of a law which stipulated against the presence of prostitutes, drunkards and a vaguely defined category of undesirables. A further feature of South Australian law discussed in a

later chapter was a stipulation against the employment of women wage-earners in public bars, repealed as late as 1967.

The historical background explored in the previous chapter gives some pointers to legislative trends which may have encouraged a clientele in hotels which was customarily and predominantly made up of men (Freeland 1977). Six o'clock closing was one piece of legislation which led to the expansion of bar space, presumably to make the best of the so-called 'swill' which characterised the introduction of early closing. It may be that the 'male' image of hotels is in part a legacy of this early twentieth century legislation. A number of popular commentators on the Australian scene see a lessening in recent years of the 'maleness' of Australian leisure life. One of these accounts comments that 'a woman's life is no longer necessarily in the home' (Horne 1970:162) although Horne's account primarily fills out yet another image of the Australian male drinking cult and its exclusion of women (*ibid.*).

The notion that the maleness of Australian leisure life is lessening and that there is greater participation by women in life outside the home is critical in this context and requires some comment. In the ensuing discussion I am not concerned with questions of the historical accuracy of perceived social changes in the participation of women as customers in hotels. Whether there has been a recent increase in women's participation in hotels is difficult to judge on the basis of the material at hand. In any case it is not necessary to engage in debate over historical accuracy to establish my arguments. As already mentioned, major issues of social change are not a dominant theme in this analysis. A systematic examination of this question would require separate analysis. In this context there is one item of data which is

relevant since it occurred during the span of this research and in one of its primary locations. This was a demonstration by women against a ban on women drinking in the public bar of one of the hotels. This culminated in a hearing by the Sex Discrimination Board, which upheld the women's right to drink in the bar (Sex Discrimination Board 1976). This data could be interpreted either as a sign of the continuing resilience of male-dominated drinking scenes, or as evidence of the increasing participation of women in hotel social life. My conclusions in this chapter relate to the former rather than the latter interpretation.

Some popular images of hotels suggest that the situation has not been one of an all-encompassing male domain, as shows up in David Ireland's anecdote quoted below. Rather, women may be present in hotels as customers but there are different cultural constructs of the patronage of hotels by women and men. That is, women patrons use hotel bars although different conditions and meanings attach to that use in contrast to men. The Sex Discrimination Board's decision upholding the protesting women's right to frequent the public bar highlights the point that it is not so much women's entry into hotels that is at issue, but, among other things, women's entry into certain sections of a hotel. I now turn to the data which explores the conditions and meanings attaching to women's entry and use of hotels as customers, with reference to some of the main hotels observed in this study. The data show up processes of labelling and selective perception relating to women's patronage. My aim ultimately is to understand neither the social patterns of patronage by women and men, nor the cultural images, but the relationship between the two.

Women as customers in hotels

I now turn to the hotels themselves, and to the issue of their patronage by women. This issue is more complicated than represented in popular images of all- or even predominantly-male hotel scenes. The ethnography shows that it is not so much hotels taken as a whole, but rather front or public bar settings which are more accurately viewed as male domains, and even here the ethnography weakens the images encountered in popular and cultural constructs.

The implications for women of the street in which the hotels are set, as discussed in the previous chapter, require some comment. The street is a night-life centre with a disreputable image due to a number of factors, including its reputation as a drug outlet and workplace for prostitutes. One of the women publicans I spoke with recounted that her mother would have been shocked to know that her daughter helped run a hotel in this particular street. Yet I often saw this woman in the daytime moving about in the street unescorted. A few of the women working in the pubs had reservations about a nighttime departure home, but the view which was delivered more strongly by women workers was that an unescorted woman felt safer in this street than in other parts of the city or suburbs.

To begin, I quote from an interview with a public relations officer from the brewery. He said:

Fellows come in today with their girls to a greater extent in hotels, and this requires tables and chairs and carpets and music and perhaps a better range of food. This has taken place gradually, and as far as our hotels are concerned, they've been changed if the tenant believed it was that sort of operation that he needed.

As the data will show, there is a range of ways women use hotels which is not referred to in the brewery officer's perception of 'girls' coming in with their 'fellows'.

I summarise the main patterns of women's patronage in three of the hotels before looking in more detail at specific ethnographic instances for each hotel. Three main styles stand out. The first of these occurs in a hotel where the lounge bar is the regular meeting place for a group of older women, one of them a former barmaid at this hotel (Hotel IV). The second occurs in a hotel where a number of mostly younger women frequent the public bar of Hotel I, some of these in the course of their work as prostitutes. Finally, Hotel III is the location for a once-a-week gathering of largely professional women, different in style from the women customers of the other settings.

These three styles of patronage, the older women's, the prostitutes' and the younger, professional women's stand out because they contrast with the other most common form of patronage by women, that is, when women enter hotels escorted by, or expressly to join, male companions. Sex-linked patronage occurs most typically only in circumscribed sections of hotels. Beyond this, entertainment or meals, especially at lunchtime, may draw women into hotels, usually in the company of other women or men.

Three instances of detailed ethnography highlight the three main styles of patronage already identified and are suggestive of processes of definition and interpretation made of women customers which are relevant to my conclusion.

Hotel IV: The first instance was located in the lounge bar of Hotel IV, on a late weekday afternoon (5.30-6.15 p.m.). Here, the lounge,

which fronted onto the main street, was the regular haunt of a group of mostly older women. One of the central characters of this social scene was a former long-term woman worker at this hotel, in her sixties and by then retired. She was a focal point for a clique of women of roughly similar age, who gathered regularly on an afternoon or early evening for drinks and conversation. This clique included a woman who currently worked part-time in the bar, and several ex-barmaiding friends. The friendship between these women spilled outside the bar, to bingo nights and holiday trips. On a regular afternoon the clientele were predominantly female and over forty. Their drinking group did not exclude men. Men of similar age, but in smaller numbers, joined the women, to buy them drinks, and engage in greetings and banter, but generally remained peripheral to the core of drinking and talking women. The lounge had a respectable tone, and impressed as a conversational bar, with no food provided. It was a large space with a small bar area, with twenty or so tables and chairs, a television, mostly little attended to, a beer ticket machine and a red phone.*

The scene was typical for this hotel at this time of day. The crowd was predominantly the older women already described, a few couples of varying ages, and some older men, either alone or with male companions. The total number of customers was around thirty-five. Most of the older men wore suits; the women habitually dressed carefully for their visits. The style of dress and appearance suggests a range of background in the lower- to middle-income bracket.

*The use of this lounge by women in this way had, according to one informant, a considerable time depth reaching back to the post-World War II period.

The older women mainly populated the tables; a few of them might stand for a time at the bar, but more usually a small number of men were positioned here. Those women who stood at the bar might chat with one another or the bar workers, typically a woman in this bar, or simply drink. The scene gave off an impression of active conversation accompanied by some flexibility in the patterns of sociability. A large number of the customers seemed to know one another -- at least by name -- to say 'hello', both among the women and the men. But it was the women who dominated the scene -- both conversationally and numerically; on this occasion, they outnumbered the men in the ratio of roughly 25 to 10. In moving into the lounge bar from the nearby club ('gentlemen's) bar, there was a definite change detectable in the conversational overtones from men's to women's voices.

The conversation of the women was intermittently interrupted by calling out greetings to incoming customers. On this occasion topics of conversation included plans for their vacations with the possibility of cruises. Everyday activities were also discussed, with one of the women recounting how she had brought some fruit or vegetables in for another customer who had not yet turned up, and so she had given most of it away to others.

Two of the older women's clique had already departed by the time a large man entered; he was bumbling, shuffling, and seemed drunk, and was carrying a large bunch of flowers. He moved to the bar, where about four women were standing drinking. A couple of men gave up their bar space while this man was there. In the course of his stay, for a short period of five minutes or so, the man with the bouquet made a number of loud and pointed comments on the scene surrounding him. This went along

the lines, in mocking, sing-song tones, of 'Look at that pack of females over there — yak, yak, yakking'. This was repeated several times, with variations, as in 'Yak, yak, yak', or 'Look, down the road there's a pack of molls, and these women, they just go on yak, yak, yakking'. One woman responded with, 'Why don't you put your hand in your mouth?'

The bar staff, including one older barmaid, and the other customers found themselves interrupted by the man. The manager of the hotel made an entrance around this point, but quickly moved out, passing out of the situation, jokingly peeping out from behind the curtain which covered an exit. This left the situation with the invasive man as before. The question of anyone doing anything about the man to shut him up was solved by his sudden exit, to the disparaging remarks of remaining customers, including the comment from one older male customer 'I admire the woman that accepts flowers from that man'.

I intend to draw on the significance of the three ethnographic instances together after exploring the other two. In all instances I have included more detail than is necessary to make my point, which in the instance described above is that the 'gossiping' women are quizzically compared with the 'molls' down the street. Critically, 'gossiping' women are women engaged in activity which is defined as unimportant — their activity is negligible. This is suggested by their comparison with the sexually active 'molls down the road' while these women meanwhile continued to engage in their 'gossip'.

Hotel I: The next instance concerns the use of a public bar by women labelled as prostitutes. The account is drawn from records made during the time I worked in the public bar of Hotel I, and is intended to

draw out aspects of the labelling process relevant to women who patronised this bar. I have consciously not disguised my involvement in these processes. The socialising pattern of these women varied from entering and drinking alone or in the company of one another or with male customers. To begin with, when I was first working here, I had no notion that women used the bar in the course of their work as prostitutes and I saw these younger women as an interesting group whose use of the bar paralleled that of male customers. My socialisation into viewing them as prostitutes is documented shortly.

The bar had a rough reputation, and because of this, the management who took over after I left my job banned women from drinking in the bar on the grounds that this would keep the prostitutes out and so 'clean up' the bar. The barman at a nearby hotel in the same street commented disparagingly on this hotel, where incidentally he worked for some years before moving to his new job, as the scene of 'bad black women'. As the following description suggests, women who entered this bar unaccompanied were in general likely to be labelled as prostitutes. Beyond this, a number of mixed sex couples or groups drank in the bar. Whether these were similarly labelled depended on a number of factors, including the time of the day and whether they were known as regular customers.

This particular weekday evening the women were in the bar in force, maybe six to ten of them in all. A couple of young ones had come in fairly early, about 5 or 6 o'clock, with a clique of Greek customers. One of them, about nineteen, was sitting with the bikies having a drink, but she insisted on buying her own.* The bikies ordered another round of

*In the Australian context, 'bikies' refers mostly to young men belonging to motorcycle gangs; I tend to apply it to most of the rough-and-tough youths who regularly visited the street.

drinks and they offered to pay for her drink but she said, 'No, I'm paying for my own'. They moved off and she left after saying something like 'Ugh, men', to which I responded jokingly saying 'Well, you're hardly in the right place to escape from them'; she said 'Ah, now that's true'.

The women seemed to have different approaches. In some cases they would come into the bar and keep buying themselves a drink until someone offered to buy them one. Different to this style was the mixing that went on between some of the girls and some of the regular customers, especially the younger Greeks, second generation. On one occasion, several of the younger women spent much of the night with this clique, who bought them many drinks, and in some cases there was a fair amount of superficial sexual contact made. I was surprised, because I had thought until this point that these men and some of the women were merely good friends, that is, that the men were not necessarily clients of the women. (My remoteness from understanding a client-prostitute relationship is evident here.) I found it hard to work out what the exact relationships were. In any case one of the customers was certainly out for some kind of sexual action, but whether or not it ended up going beyond the pub, I did not discover.

A different style again was adopted by one woman who used to come in on her own and buy a drink. She would then be approached by a customer, on one occasion by two Australian men who seemed merely to buy some drinks and then leave, whereupon another man came in and bought her some more drinks. As this often happened when it was busy I was unable to follow through what happened here. A few nights previously this same woman had entered the bar with a regular customer. They had a number of

drinks and a laughing conversation. I had no idea whether he was a regular client of hers or not but that night she did not go off with him, nor did she seem to pick up any other customer.

The critical interpretation is made in my fieldwork notes from which this account is taken and which I now quote directly:

I only found out fairly recently with any degree of certainty that they are prostitutes from one of the other women bar workers. I had thought they seemed too nice to be prostitutes...They are pleasant enough to me. Some of them call me by my name or say goodnight when leaving. A number of these things made me feel that they were not prostitutes.

Further, noting that their appearance gave me few clues to an identification of them as prostitutes, I continue:

Their clothes are strange and variable. Some are quite unglamorous, as in a simple top or jeans; especially the younger ones do not seem to take much trouble with their clothes. Some of the older ones do more so, like the blonde one I saw dining with T (a regular customer) the other night up the road. I thought then it was T's girlfriend he was with, and perhaps it was, but now I have my suspicions of every girl in that bar.

This comment indicates that I had come to interpret any woman who came into the bar as likely to be a working prostitute.

I came to this interpretation after an incident when one of the women I worked with had been out to the toilet. On returning she recounted that she had run into one of the prostitutes there, who complained that a customer was annoying them and that he was bad for business. In the course of this account my co-worker said to me 'Didn't you realise that they were prostitutes?' My records state that 'she said this about girls who had been coming in fairly consistently, who had always struck me as quite ordinary girls, possibly students'.

The labelling process evident in this account was a part of my socialisation in this bar and continued to enter my definition, especially of unaccompanied women customers, in other bar work experiences. Its full significance comes out in association with the other instances.

Hotel III: The third instance is more briefly documented. In contrast to the older women who had a regular, mostly daytime or early evening haunt in Hotel IV, Hotel III was the setting for quite a different clique of women. They drank in the public bar and were younger, tending to a higher level of education and involvement in professional jobs; in general they were feminists in style and attitude. This group was similar to those commented on by Summers who says: 'Some inner-city hotels have their bars taken over by university or other non-conformist groups' (Summer 1975:83). It falls into the category of the use of hotels by younger, professional women who may venture into bars on their own to have a drink as an assertion of their independence or as an expression of their working life-style.*

This instance concerns this group of young professional women, and some instances of the labelling process relating to them. The style of women and the role of men in the group has changed over the four or five years of their existence. At an early stage, a number of radical feminists whose style and self-definition was overtly non-feminine drank at the hotel. In addition, from the beginning there were always other styles of women, less overtly radical, more a professional style of woman. As well, a number, usually a shifting minority, of male companions, some

*Cavan comments on the use of bars by single people and alternative groups (Cavan 1966:205-210).

boyfriends of the women, some homosexual men, again mostly single professionals, drank in the bar. The group underwent changes in personnel, including a break-away from one hotel to another by the more overtly radical of the women. Subsequently, the style of the women shifted more to a middle ground, and some males of the group became more regular. The more moderate shift in the style of the group went along with a shift from socialising in the public bar only, to a combined dining room and public bar patronage.

I comment briefly on some suggestive pointers in the way in which these women were perceived by people outside the group, by other customers and bar workers. Firstly, around the time shortly after the bulk of the radical drinkers had moved to another hotel, one of the women drinkers recounted to me an incident she had witnessed. A woman in her forties, pleasantly dressed, who was exiting from a neighbouring lounge bar in the company of a man, put her head through the side door of the public bar, and commented to her escort, in accented tones, 'Ah, the leso's, I just want to have a look at the leso's'.* Supporting this perception, at a very early stage in the drinking history of this group, and at a time when it was self-consciously being established as a mixed drinking hotel scene, the group was derisively labelled as the 'red lesses'" by some university people who heard of it.

I visited this hotel as a customer for a number of years, beginning prior to and continuing through the time of my research. On an occasion toward the end of the research phase, and well after the shift from more radical to more moderate women customers had occurred, I

*'Lesses' and 'leso's', presumably colloquial for 'lesbian' or due to the woman's idiosyncratic accent.



arranged an interview with one of the casual women workers. Another contact in the hotel, also a woman worker, told me that the casual woman worker had commented after I had lined up the interview, 'I wonder if she's after me'. This suggests that, despite changes in the clientele of the women who visited this hotel, the labelling process which was selected from the character of an earlier clientele remained operative.

I turn now to draw out some analytical points about the material. If women use hotels in a variety of ways, only some of which are popularly acknowledged, what sense can be made of the popular image that hotels are male domains? Popular constructions of 'pub' culture, while making some recognition of the role that women perform as workers, most notably as the colloquially-termed 'barmaids', tend to ignore or downplay the role of women in hotels as customers, as users of hotel services.* Hotels are commonly characterised as exclusively or predominantly male domains. The public or front bar in particular is notorious for its reputation for excluding women as customers. It is this vision of the front bar as an all-male bastion which colours a great deal of popular imagery about hotels in general.

While there is substance in representations of hotels as male domains, they overlook other areas in hotels which women may enter with greater ease and frequency. Saloon bars, dining rooms and especially 'ladies' lounges' or lounge bars may offer facilities aimed at catering for women customers. The terminology here, 'ladies' lounge', is suggestive of women drinking in comfortable, homelike

*The recognition of women workers is evident, for instance, in the Cusack-introduced autobiography of *Caddie: a Sydney Barmaid* (1966), and the film of that name.

surroundings. For many women, a visit to one of these areas in a hotel, especially in the company of a male escort, falls within the bounds of socially acceptable behaviour.

These comments on women's use of hotels as customers justify a cautious description of the use of hotels by male and female customers, along the lines that hotels are social centres which offer to men wide-ranging access to a number of services and facilities, and which permit women some restricted access, but through various means, discourage them from frequenting certain areas of the setting, most prominently front or public bars. This area is typically out of bounds to women as customers unless they feel comfortable as 'fair game to drunken cavaliers' (Summers 1975:84), or with some variation of negative labelling processes.

There are a number of contrasts and similarities between the three groups of women customers. One telling similarity is that women who gather in groups in ways that parallel male use are, unlike their male counterparts, likely to be viewed in some way as deviant and lacking in respectability. In contrast, men who seek out other men for companionship and sociability in hotel settings are, if at all, less harshly judged.

Apart from the process of labelling, which was illustrated in the instances referring to women described as prostitutes and lesbians, there is another process operating whereby women's use of hotels is disregarded in popular conceptions. This disregard holds for the older women's use of Hotel IV. I elaborate on the principle underlying these selection processes, with reference to the opposition between public and domestic, after the discussion of 'bar culture' which follows. A critical point to note here is the centrality of sexuality in the labelling process which applies to women as hotel customers. The label 'lesbian' carries the

connotation of 'non-woman'; while the label 'prostitute' suggests an exaggeration of sexuality, and the 'old bag' image, an irrelevance of sexuality. The most socially acceptable way for women to use hotels in when a woman's patronage occurs in the company of a male escort. It is when women's use parallels male use of bars that the processes of selective perception and labelling come into operation most strongly. I extend these arguments in the conclusion to this chapter, after the discussion of public bar culture, to which I now turn.*

Public bar culture

The Pub Widow

Friday nights were busy, drunks everywhere. So much noise you couldn't hear the BB guns popping at the butterflies. In the trees along the creek cicadas sparkled, croaked, throbbed, blared and deafened. You could hear them in the pub.

One Friday, the day of Freddy Mott's funeral, when there were still a few mourners who hadn't bothered to go home and change, dotted here and there in suits too tight and black ties, a woman came to the door of the pub.

There was nothing strange in that, but this woman wasn't a drunkard or a fighter or even an old bag, she was nicely dressed and sort of neat. She carried a small something in her hand but the remarkable thing about her was the look on her face.

If she was a man you'd say he'd come looking for the bastard that just ran him off the road in his nice new car.

But she wasn't a man. She was the angriest woman you've ever seen.

'Listen to me, you useless lot!' she screamed above the hullabaloo and the cicadas. 'I'm Missus Mott. We had Fred's funeral today. When he was alive he spent all his time with you always down here in the pub, so you can have him now!'

*Spradley and Mann (1975) make some reference to women as customers (cf. pp. 81-84, 106ff., 141).

She took the lid off the something in her hand and with one furious sweep of her arm let the contents fly all round. Most of it fell on the nearest pool table. Drinkers and poolplayers gaped.

It didn't go far, just settled slowly on the green tables and the floor round about.

Freddy's ashes.

D. Ireland, *The Glass Canoe*

The 'public' bar of a hotel is that section of a hotel which is the cheapest bar, and if a hotel has only one bar, its prices must be public bar prices as laid down by the Department of Consumer Affairs; that is, hotels must make available drinks at public bar prices. Public bars are alternatively described as 'front' bars but the setting of public bars is not necessarily, although often is, located at the front of the hotel. One historical feature of hotels which may explain the alternative usage of the term 'front' bar stems from the early days of Australian settlement when hotels were located in private homes. In those days, public bars, the most likely location for rowdy or disreputable custom, was located at the outer point and cut off from the rest of the house. Customers entered by a door off the street. This location contrasted with the more comfortable and internally located lounge area where residential guests were provided for in a room that also served the family's needs (Freeland 1977). An additional point of interest is that frontal location may conveniently locate the potentially busiest and drunkest area of the hotel where it is most easily found. Generally speaking, the more expensive the bar, the more elaborate the setting, and the more internal is its location. Public bars are often basic, aesthetically and in terms of comfort. Most provide some kind of seating, an increasing number have carpets, and a range of special features, such as pool tables, may be provided.

One recent sociological point of view put forward by Oxley, in his study on mateship and local organisation, is that bar settings are egalitarian and this characteristic of bars depends on their maleness and the exclusion of women (Oxley 1974). This is only an element in an argument that takes a direction less relevant to my purposes. I draw out of Oxley's analysis the point that status-levelling social activities are viewed as a culturally normative characteristic for male customers in hotels. This point is discussed in later chapters with reference to the situation of male bar workers.

A number of Oxley's comments about the nature of egalitarianism as an ideology apply to hotels, for instance, the rating of members according to how well they fulfil 'heavy obligations of mutual support' (Oxley 1974:52). Oxley comments that 'egalitarianism can be arrogantly exclusive' (*ibid.*), instancing that 'collectivist males often keep a low place in their ideal world for females' (*ibid.*).

While Oxley does not clearly argue that male egalitarianism and solidarity requires the exclusion of women, egalitarianism, mateship and masculinity are equated at least to the point which suggests this relationship. Certainly the point gets made in a number of popular and scholarly analyses.* For instance,

In Australia the most obvious discrimination...has been the exclusion of women from the pub bars, which continues to be a remarkably pervasive phenomenon even though it is now *de facto* rather than *de jure*, and there are breaks in male solidarity in this area (Nestor 1978:42).

This point of view is expressed in a popular account as follows:

Loathing for the female has a long history in Australia. Firstly, it was the carrying on of an English tradition...But in Australia we developed the idea. We developed a mystic thing with strange homosexual overtones called 'mateship'.

*With reference to mateship depending on the exclusion of women, see also Bell (1973).

So the theory developed that we could not really stand females. Women, after all, were a different species. They rarely talked about sensible things like football, racing and the quality of the beer. It was better if they were separated at schools from a very early age. Pure bliss was the all-male haven like the R.S.L....Apart from the R.S.L. clubs, there were the working mens' clubs, the immensely popular lodges, Apex, Lions, Rotary, Legacy...and then there has been that haven of havens, the Australian Pub (Dunstan 1972:50-51).

Dunstan continues:

Of course it was social ruin for a lady even to be seen entering a hotel. Slowly this stain disappeared and we acquired the 'ladies' lounge'. Here a lady, properly escorted, could be taken for a drink, which would be paid for at a higher price than in the public bar; a further discouragement intended to keep the girls out of the place (*ibid.*).

In the following discussion, cultural images of public bars as predominantly male will be compared against patterns of use by male patrons. This comparison provides the basis for a conclusion about the constitution of maleness in public bar culture with reference to the role of women in that culture. My argument is that in public bars, we are dealing not with the exclusion of women in general, as suggested by a number of the accounts just cited, but the exclusion of women perceived as 'respectable', as established in the previous discussion. My point here is that the presence of women patrons in a bar setting who are readily accorded a negative label, acts as the basis for a sense of identification or commonality among men, which simultaneously facilitates a state of transcendence of men over women. To restate the argument, 'bar culture' or what is popularly conceived of as 'mateship', stems not so much from the exclusion of women but may be related to the presence of women in the setting. This presence is controlled through a variety of processes including those of selective perception and labelling. The

process which underlies the perceptions of women in public bar settings is a basic factor in the development of male identity or commonality which is a feature of bar culture. In other words, the comraderie, solidarity and mateship renowned in popular images of bars, may be constituted on little else than the state of transcendence, which the bar setting makes available to men, over women readily perceived of as low-status.

I return to the argument after some ethnographic instances of bar culture, drawn from one of the hotels already referred to and an additional instance. These situations demonstrate aspects of the maleness of bar culture. The early items are located in Hotel I, the setting of my first job. The items are drawn from my field records.

Hotel I: A customer came in and sat on his own for a while; he appeared to be a working-class Australian. Later, a Greek customer came in. They greeted one another at length, so it could have been an accidental meeting, or perhaps they had not seen one another for a long while. There were hugs, arms around one another and banging on the back. This was mainly restricted to their opening greetings but it seemed to extend for a time. What little I heard of their conversation, the Aussie-type was talking about past problems that he had at work, and about some 'woman' problem that he had, with reference to his wife.

In another incident I comment elsewhere on a rowdy group of Australian drinkers who were in one Friday night and who worried me sufficiently for me to call the manager in from elsewhere. They were a group who came in fairly regularly and generally proved difficult.

This bunch were rowdy and a problem for much of the night. They got quite obstreperous, disrupting the other customers. There was also contact between the Greek clique and the Aussies. It was that kind of friendly contact which could turn into hostility or fighting. Just prior to this, one of the Greek customers had been sending them up and laughed at the way in which they were having a real Aussies' night-out. It became worrying as the evening moved on. They were beginning to get seriously drunk, falling over their chairs, with their orders at the bar becoming more and more slurred. At the same time, it was getting busier, with other customers being disrupted. They became increasingly noisy with some swearing. It was hard to decipher what they were yelling about; it impressed as 'elemental male', with a degree of associated hugging and 'falling about', as in the general behaviour of a bunch of rowdy drunks. At this point I called on the manager for the second time and he managed to get rid of them all except one who became offended and who took longer to leave than his companions.

Another style of group customers was a group of dart players who visited regularly mostly at lunchtime, sometimes of an early evening, but always as a group. They consisted of about half a dozen white-collar workers in their thirties. They were a source of annoyance to myself and other female bar workers for their arrogant style of ordering — a complaint which was not limited to this group. Greek cliques were a target for the same kind of complaint by the female bar staff. One of the dart players' annoying tendencies was to bang on the table to attract attention. They were 'ocker equalitarians' and said, 'Yes, love', and so on, but they asked that you take the menu down to them, instead of looking at it on the wall as most customers did. One of the female bar staff lectured

them about their ordering habits on one occasion and was bought a beer.

A contrasting type of customer were those who came in on their own. One of these was an older customer, who admitted to being lonely and had been in Adelaide three years and did not like it, coming originally from Western Australia. He showed me a group photograph of himself in the army and asked me to pick him out from the group. I managed this in three goes. He refused to take the change for his drinks.

Other lone customers were less sociable as I note in the following record relating to my work experience at Hotel I:

There were a few lone drinkers in the bar in the morning who I felt wanted to be left alone. I could tell this by the way they made no eye contact and no attempt at conversation; they just sit there and stare into space over their drinks. Sometimes it seems inappropriate to be too bright or cheerful, but sometimes I wonder if I should talk to them more, and make more of an effort to be cheery with them.

With reference to the use of hotels by men on their own, one ex-publican commented on the importance of 'personalities' among bartending staff. He said, and I quote him,

How many times have you gone into a pub and you sit there and you count the bottles and then you count cigarette packets and then you go back and count the bottles again. If you've got a 'personality' there, they'll say 'How are you', and give you a beer and have a bit of a chat.

Hotel II: One of the women who worked in Hotel II volunteered an account of an alcoholic customer: one she described as 'autistic'. 'He sits there drinking one after another, avoiding all contact, except

to say "Another one", "I'll have another one", without looking at me.' She said that sometimes she forced him to make contact. Either she gave him a glass in such a way that she forced him to look at her, or else she would not go and automatically refill his glass, but instead made him ask. She thought it important for this customer to have some sort of contact. This point came up in talking about the style of companionship available to men in hotels. They could come in and get a drink and companionship in the bar, and even if they appeared lonely or depressed, at least there was a potential for some human contact unavailable in the same form for women.

I round off my discussion of the ethnography in this section with two instances which suggest the kind of interactional barriers and consequences which women encounter when they enter public bars.

Hotel II: When I went to visit one of the women bar workers (L) in the public bar of Hotel II, I was catcalled by male customers. There was a woman working behind the bar I did not know, a blonde, attractive and in her thirties. It turned out she was German and had some trouble in understanding me. As I walked in there were a couple of catcalls, nothing outstanding, so I ignored them. I caught sight of one or two customers from Hotel I, where I was working at the time. Fairly quickly the ribbing died down as I moved with purpose to the bar and asked the woman bar worker, having to repeat myself several times, for the woman I had come in to visit. Two customers (they were all male customers at the time) said with reference to this woman, 'she's gone, she's finished for the day'. They told me this directly, so I left the bar immediately without any further demonstration from the men. I felt that the cessation

of the catcalls which had been followed by no further ribbing of me, had something to do with the fact that I had established some kind of link with the woman worker. My guess was that the 'barmaid's' friend gets accorded some respect. The 'respect' I had in mind was that the male customers did not follow up their greetings with offers of a drink. In virtue of my link with the bar worker, I was able to present myself as being there for a specific purpose.

On another occasion of an unescorted entrance into the public bar of another hotel (VII) early in the evening, I was greeted by an overture similar in style, only more elaborate than the one just described. It was of the 'hey, look at this' style. It was a communication clearly intended with the bar as a whole as an audience. A milder variant of this form of greeting is that of becoming the pivot of eye attention on entering.

Hotel I: My view about the special licence which friends of bar workers may be accorded on entering bars, was put to the test in the next incident. This took place in Hotel I, in the club bar, not in the public bar. The visit occurred after I had left the job there. When I went into the club bar, H was behind the bar.* I had hardly been there a few seconds, and H had come over to say 'hello' and serve me when an old Greek fellow whom I had seen before (maybe at Hotel III), came up and said 'hello'. There was an accompanying hand on my shoulder or hip. He could have been a bit drunk; he was being friendly and I was not initially put out by his kind of approach. He asked me what book I was

*I use initials to refer to women bar workers which are linked to the code and biographies included elsewhere.

reading. I made the mistake of indicating the book and I turned it over — it was a book about hotels lent to me by the manager of the hotel. What I had not noticed before was that the cover of the book had a picture of a large nude on it. Once he saw this he was much taken by it and made admiring noises, touching me again and generally responding in an off-putting manner. This was nothing serious, but I quickly tried to cover up the nude. H returned about this time. She made a comment something like: 'Leave the lady alone, she came in here to talk to me'. He did not take much notice of this and bought two drinks and put one in front of me. I said 'I don't want it, thanks, I'm not drinking', and H again took a hand here and said 'No, she's not drinking'. H then took the drink and gave it to one of his friends, or mates, further up the bar. After some further resistance, the man rejoined his friends.

Finally, a brief comment on the level of the physical nature of bar settings: the basic style of furnishings and absence or poor quality of lavatory facilities for women are a factor of a different kind to the optional decoration which may adorn public bar settings. In public bars, I have seen plaques with the printed message 'Women welcome but not permitted to speak'; or 'cheesecake'-style calendars, although they were not present in any of the hotel bars in this street.

Analysis

The starting point of my interest in women as bar workers is their presence in settings popularly conceived of as male domains, settings in which different sets of conditions and cognitive interpretations apply to the entry and use by women and men customers. To explore

this I lined up cultural conceptions of hotels as male domains against ethnographic instances of gender-differentiated patronage of hotels.

Some conclusions which emerge are that:

(1) Cultural constructs of hotels tend to focus on their use by men and not by women. They tend to present the public bar as a generalised symbol of hotels.

(2) Women's patronage of hotels is culturally condoned or recognised to the degree that it is circumscribed, either by confinement to particular spaces of a hotel, usually both more comfortable and more expensive, or by the company of a male escort. This circumscription marks women off from men patrons, and is consistent with a cultural configuration which associates women with the domestic sphere. In cultural conceptions of women's assignment to the domestic sphere, women are associated with men (either husbands, or fathers), and are associated with a constitutional inclination for comfort and security provided by, and in contrast to, men. This cultural association of women with the domestic sphere is reflected in the culturally condoned or recognised patterns of women's hotel patronage.

(3) Where women's patronage of hotels parallels that of men, as when women enter hotels unescorted or patronise public bars, perceptions of this style of patronage are underpinned by processes of selection or negative labelling. Women who regularly patronise hotels in this way must either define themselves in terms which are consistent with these perceptions, or acquiesce in a definition of themselves by others in these terms. When women use hotels in ways which are similar to men, cultural identification of such women with the domestic sphere is impeded.

(4) There are a variety of social mechanisms which operate both inside and outside of hotels which maintain a circumscribed or controlled patronage by women. I have explored only some of these. Cultural constructs of hotels as male domains, which partake of the general nature of popular images in being selective of reality, are themselves a mechanism which operates to exclude or limit the use of hotels by women patrons.

(5) For men who are customers of hotels, the perception of women's patronage is likely to fall into one or the other of the categories outlined. Either women's patronage of hotels confirms their association with the domestic, or it is seen in opposition or indifferent to, and so outside, the domestic sphere. Processes of negative labelling or selective perception attach to that style of women's patronage which either opposes or is indifferent to the domestic sphere.

(6) For men as customers, hotel bars provide a potential for a supra-domestic sociability with other males, and to a lesser extent with females. This potential is not available to women in the same form or under the same conditions. The presence of a woman as a customer in a bar has an entirely different set of meanings than does the presence of a man as a customer.

(7) Finally, some degree of male solidarity among customers may stem from the controlled presence of women in hotels, rather than the more common interpretation that a sense of 'maleness' or 'mateship' depends on the rigid exclusion of women. Additionally, the perception of women customers as cut away from their association with the domestic sphere provides for the emergence of an unambiguous sense of transcendence or ascendancy on the part of male customers over women who are present.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE STRUCTURE OF BAR WORK

As a prelude to exploring the gender-differentiated aspects of bar work, in this chapter I examine the institutional features of bar work in its economic, legal and social aspects to identify general core-characteristics which are entailed in the work. I downplay differentiations between hotel managers and wage-earners, and men and women, in order to locate general constraints which operate on all those who engage in the serving of drinks in hotel bars, either on a regular or irregular basis.

The description of the economic and legal aspects of bar work provides a background to the discussion of its social aspects, where I identify the general core-characteristics of bar work. I identify three main core-components that define the nature of bar work. These are more readily separated out analytically than they are in actual behaviour, where they may overlap. I distinguish them as (1) relations of service; (2) relations of sociability; and (3) relations of social control and regulation. I identify an economic or contractual constraint in bar work, that is, a contract underlies exchanges across the bar, and the work is engaged in either for profit or for a wage.* This economic element is muted in an atmosphere of sociability, by the second constraint that bar work occurs in a public arena and entails sociable involvement with customers. Simultaneously, bar staff regulate customer behaviour, as far as possible without disrupting the routine activity of the setting, which constitutes the third constraint.

*For the concept of contract, I have drawn on Radcliffe-Brown's notion of 'contractual relations' as specific jural relations in which 'either party has definite positive obligations toward the other, and failure to carry out the obligations is subject to a legal sanction' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:103).

I identify two other constraining factors. First, there is the need for work relations with other staff, both managers and co-workers, from which flows a variety of tensions, manifest in the physical and spatial conditions of the work. Second, there are the evaluations placed on bar workers by people both inside and outside the setting. I refer here to the point that bar work is classified as unskilled and its general complexity, especially in the areas of flexibility and discretion, goes unrecognised. As well, serving customers entails some tasks which are analogous to those of a domestic setting. Moreover, the work occurs in a context which is subject to dubious moral evaluations by the wider community. The core-characteristics and constraints identified in this chapter form the framework for the discussion of bar work as it is performed by women and men, and the analysis of gender-contrasts which follows in later chapters.

While my arguments have some relevance for hotels in general, I do not claim that they apply across the board to all types of hotels. They apply to those hotels which were the basis for my observations and should apply also to other hotels similar in style. My comments apply primarily to public bars, and to some extent to other styles of bar, especially the closely related saloon bar.

I use the term 'bar staff' when I refer to all those who engage in bar work, regardless of economic position or gender. I use the term 'employee' or 'worker' to differentiate wage-earners from managerial staff. Although not strictly equivalent, I use the terms 'manager' and 'licensee' interchangeably. One distinction relates to whether the management is salaried instead of having access to a percentage of the

profits. My remarks in this section apply only to those hotel managers or licensees who engage in the everyday routine of serving behind the bar. Bar work is typically done by wage-earning workers, with variable involvement on the part of licensees in the routine aspects of the work. This involvement, I will argue, takes a form which marks licensees off from wage-earning workers.

Economic aspects of bar work

There are 599 hotels in South Australia: 257 in Adelaide, 342 outside of Adelaide. Of these, the brewery-owned proportion is 22 percent (or 131), the proportion of freehold hotels is 34 percent (or 203), and the highest proportion — 41 percent (or 247) — is leased from independent owners (A.H.A. 1973). I have been unable to detect any implication different ownership structures might have for wage-earning personnel. The relevance of brewery ownership here is as a reminder of a basic economic function of hotels, that is, they operate as a retail outlet for brewery products.

The licensee of a hotel is the person who, as legally required by the Licensing Act, holds the licence for the hotel, and has corporate responsibility for its maintenance according to regulations set down by that Act. The licensee is often also the manager of the premises, the main exception occurring when a hotel is run by a salaried manager. Typically, the licensee takes that percentage of the profits which is not outlaid in leasing arrangements.

Over half of the 599 hotels in South Australia have less than ten employees and 75 percent of hotels have less than eighteen employees.

The numbers employed in hotels varies from two to two hundred (A.H.A. report 1973). These figures suggest that apart from the work input of the licensee, hotels typically utilise some form of wage-labour. The hiring and firing of employees is laid down by conditions in the union award (F.L.A.I.U. 1973-75). The union award does not apply to the parent, spouse, son or daughter of a licensee, which helps explain the frequency of family-run hotels, as noted earlier. However, the range of employees in hotels suggests that all hotels, even the smallest, employ some wage-earning labour, and that none depend on family labour alone. The employment of wage-labour has a number of socially significant consequences, which include the freeing of licensees from regular involvement in mundane tasks for, among other things, socialising with customers, a role which mutes the economic interests of licensees.

As shown in Table I, between 1973 and 1978, the hotel industry in South Australia employed a total workforce which fell between approximately 6,000 and 10,000 people. These figures include all forms of hotel work, not only bar employees (F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978; A.H.A. Report 1973).* Of 10,200 employed in all hotel occupations, the A.H.A. total for 1973, 5,400 were women, 'predominantly casual', and 4,800 were men,

*The A.H.A. figure (1973) of 10,200 employed in all hotel occupations is inflated over the union survey figure of 6,500 for 1978. Both sets of figures are based on approximately the same number of hotels; the A.H.A. estimate refers to 599 hotels; the union obtained returns from over 600 hotels from a total of 800 circulated. The cause of the difference in the two figures is not clear. While both are based on questionnaires sent to all hotels, the A.H.A. report refers to an 'estimated' 10,200 as the total figure employed in the industry. While not specified, this presumably does not include management or licensees, referred to elsewhere in the report (A.H.A. Report 1973:6, 4). It may be that the number of people employed in the industry has declined; if so, the number of hotels has not lessened significantly, at least according to these figures.

'predominantly full-time' (A.H.A. Report 1973:6). The union figure for 1978 of 6,416 for all hotel employees, breaks down into 3,583 females and 2,833 males (see Table I).

Table I
Summary of employee numbers for approximately 600 hotels

	<u>Number employed</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Total workforce in all occupational categories employed by hotels (A.H.A. Report 1973)	10,200	4,800	5,400
Total workforce in all occupational categories employed by hotels (F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1973)	6,416	2,833	3,583
Bar staff employed in South Australian hotels	3,273 ¹ 4,100 ¹	2,264 ²	1,009 ²

¹Based on the combined estimates of the F.L.A.I.U. Survey (1978) and the A.H.A. Report (1973) respectively.

²Based on F.L.A.I.U. Survey (1978).

The figures so far quoted refer to the hotel industry as a whole. Bar staff constitute only one category of those employed in the industry. According to the A.H.A. estimate, bar staff make up 40 percent, the largest proportion of the 10,200 estimate (A.H.A. Report 1973). Figures for the hotel numbers of bar staff employed in South Australia's hotels range from approximately 3,000 or 4,000 (respectively F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978 and A.H.A. Report 1973).

Only the union figures provide a gender breakdown of bar employees. As shown in Table I, out of a total of 3,283 bar employees, about 1,000 are women, and about 2,000 are men (F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978).

Table II shows the generally heavy reliance of the hotel trade on casual and part-time workers, who are predominantly women in all areas, with the exception of the category of bar employees. This reflects the now well-documented general trend for women to take on part-time work, commented on further in the following chapter.

One point to note about the figures of Table II is that when the bar work category is separated out, men outnumber women in all except the part-time category. For full-time bar work, men outnumber women in the proportion of 3.3 : 1 (870 to 261). Women bar workers outnumber men as part-timers by 1.9 : 1 (81 to 42); again men outnumber women by about half of all casual bar workers (1,352 to 667). With reference to the 870 full-time male bar staff, it should be noted that this category includes not only barmen, but also bottle department attendants and cellarmen. Nevertheless, these figures reflect a higher proportion of men engaged in bar work than women. The overall extent to which men outnumber women in bar work, with about 2,000 men against about 1,000 women stands out in contrast to the figures for 'back-of-house' or non-bar-working employees of over 2,500 females to 569 males. I comment further on these figures after an examination of rates of pay.

According to a source from the A.H.A., equal pay for men and women was phased in over a period from 1973 to 1975. Rates of pay operative in 1976 are shown in Table III(a) and (b). This shows up different

categories of bar workers according to the type of bar worked in (e.g. public, saloon, lounge, etc.) and allows a comparison to be made with other forms of hotel work.

Table II
Survey of employee numbers and categories

CATEGORIES	No. of employees (including juniors) during week of Monday 13th-Sunday 19th February 1978							
	FULL-TIME		REGULAR PART-TIME		CASUAL		TOTAL	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
BAR STAFF								
1. all 'bar' staff	870	261	42	81	1352	667	2264	1009
HOUSE STAFF								
2. cook	159	104	8	82	20	179	187	365
3. kitchen staff	24	87	5	99	20	396	49	582
4. waiter/waitress	27	97	3	142	69	650	99	889
5. houseman/ maid	16	94	7	120	30	240	53	454
6. all other 'house' staff	79	40	8	39	94	205	181	284
All 'house' staff	305	422	31	482	233	1670	569	2574
TOTAL	1175	683	73	563	1585	2337	2833	3583

Notes:

1. This includes all categories of barmen/barmaids, bottle department attendants, cellarmen and all other 'bar' staff.
2. This category means cooks or chefs however described.
3. This category means kitchen, pantry and scullery employees.
4. This includes head waiter or waitress, waiter/waitress - food or drink waiter/waitress dispensing from bar, in fact, all categories of waiter/waitress.
5. As stated.
6. This means all categories of 'house' staff not covered by 2,3,4 and 5. It includes, for example, grill or snack bar attendants, porters, boots, cleaners, laundry employees.

Source: F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978.

Table IIIa
Hotels, clubs, etc. award — union rates of pay

Operative throughout South Australia from beginning of first pay period commencing on or after 22/11/76.

Bar section	Weekly rate \$	Wage rates per hour			
		Ordinary time \$	Time and a half \$	Double time \$	Casual rate \$
ADULTS (MALES AND FEMALES)					
GROUP A — Barman and barmaid (public and saloon bar); assistant cellarman	119.80	3.00	4.49	5.99	
GROUP B — Barman and barmaid (general; bottle department attendant including drive-in)	120.50	3.01	4.52	6.03	4.51875
GROUP C — Barman and barmaid (lounge; but see Award)	122.20	3.06	4.58	6.11	
GROUP D — Cellarman	123.80	3.10	4.64	6.19	
SPECIALIST BARMAN OR BARMAID					
Less than one year's experience	121.40	3.04	4.55	6.07	
Experienced	125.20	3.13	4.70	6.26	
JUNIORS (MALES AND FEMALES)					
Improvers (18 and under 21 years)	119.80	3.00	4.49	5.99	
SUPERVISORS					
GROUP A (\$119.80 + \$5.20) (except assistant cellarman)	125.00	3.13	4.69	6.25	
GROUP B (\$120.50 + \$5.20)	125.70	3.14	4.71	6.29	

Casual rate: All classifications \$4.52

Table IIIb

Bar section	Weekly rate \$	Wage rates per hour			
		Ordinary time \$	Time and a half \$	Double time \$	Casual rate \$
ADULTS					
Cooks					
Where 4 or more are employed — first	138.70	3.47	5.20	6.94	5.20125
— second	126.50	3.16	4.74	6.33	4.74375
— others	119.80	3.00	4.49	5.99	4.4925
Where 3 cooks are employed — first	136.90	3.42	5.13	6.85	5.13375
— second	125.10	3.13	4.69	6.26	4.6912
— other	119.80	3.00	4.49	5.99	4.4925
Where 2 cooks are employed — first	132.10	3.30	4.95	6.61	4.9537
— other	119.80	3.00	4.49	5.99	4.4925
Where 1 cook is employed	120.50	3.01	4.52	6.03	4.5187
Housekeeper	133.50	3.34	5.01	6.68	5.00625
Head waiter/waitress					
Qualified waiter/waitress }	129.50	3.24	4.86	6.48	4.85625
Waiter/waitress dispensing own drinks	118.70	2.97	4.45	5.94	4.4512
Waiter/waitress	117.30	2.93	4.40	5.87	4.3987
Grill or snack bar attendant	116.30	2.91	4.36	5.82	4.3612
Head porter					
Head housemaid }	120.50	3.01	4.52	6.03	4.5187
Kitchen, pantry or scullery employee					
Houseman/housemaid					
Night or other porter					
Boots and/or yardman	115.60	2.89	4.34	5.78	4.335
Laundry employee					
Cleaner and/or useful employee					
Person not otherwise provided for					

Source: Adapted from F.L.A.I.U. - S.A. (1973-1975).

Interesting features from Table III, when combined with information from Table II, are that in the category of casual workers, women outnumber men in all hotel occupations except bar work. Yet in the full-time category men outnumber women, not only in bar work, but also as full-time cooking staff. Otherwise, women outnumber men as full-time waitresses, housemaids and kitchen assistants. This may reflect a tendency for women to cluster in domestically-oriented jobs.* However, this argument does not hold for the domestically-oriented work of cooking, where men outnumber women by 159 to 104 in the full-time category. This may reflect a tendency for men to cluster in the more lucrative areas. For cooking it is possible to earn up to \$10 or so per week above the wages paid to bar staff, and there is some, though limited, potential for career advancement and supervisory capacity.†

After cooking, the work of cellarmen and bartenders are the next highest paid category of hotel employees. Bar workers have the opportunity to earn per week, from \$119.80 in the public bar, to \$125.70 as head or supervisory bar workers. The predominantly female full-time work of table-waiting follows, with an opportunity for some higher earnings for head or 'qualified' waiting personnel (from \$117.30 to \$129.50). After this follows the other predominantly female full-time area of housemaid and kitchen staff who, in 1973, earned \$115.60 per

*The notion of domestic orientation in work is explored in the next chapter, primarily with reference to Corich's discussion of female and male occupations (Corich 1978).

†This recalls Ortner's point that men may subsume the higher level skill of the domestic domain, as mentioned earlier (Ortner 1974).

week, along with the categories of porter, yardman, laundry and cleaning employees.

I want to pause briefly here to draw out some general arguments from a combination of Tables II and III. The figures which require some special comment are the ratios of women and men bar workers. It is not surprising that men outnumber women as full-time bar employees. This reflects a similar trend to that noted for cooking; men tend to cluster in the more highly paid and full-time areas of hotel work. It is consistent with this argument that full-time women workers outnumber men in the lower-paid and domestically-oriented areas of waitressing, cleaning and housemaiding. What requires some comment is that the clear tendency for women to outnumber men in all casual categories of back-of-house work (including cooking), is not matched by the figures for bar work. In other words, in bar work men outnumber women not only in the predictable category of full-time work, but also in those categories which, on the strength of the other figures, it would be expected that women outnumber men, namely as casuals.

There are two possible explanations for this pattern which I explore briefly before suggesting a third explanation. Firstly, it might be argued that women's work in hotels clusters in domestically-oriented back-of-house areas, and that bar work does not fall into this category. There are two problems here; firstly, women do not always outnumber men in the obviously 'domestic' areas of hotel work, as can be seen from the ratios for full-time cooks, already mentioned. In any case, the suggestion that bar work does not entail elements of domesticity does not hold up, as I explore elsewhere.

Secondly, if casual bar work were paid at a higher rate than back-of-house work, this would help explain the predominance of men in it. But as Table III shows, the casual rate for bar work is the same as the casual rate for cooking where one cook only is employed.

Since neither of these possibilities hold, the main factor explaining the predominance of men in bar work may be the law which operated in South Australia until 1967, which aimed at preventing women from being employed in public bars. I discuss this regulation further in the following section on law. Beyond this specific historical feature, bar work entails some heavy work and this has been suggested as an explanation for hiring policies which favour men over women, as explored more fully later. The special needs of trouble-prone hotels have also been advanced by some of those engaged in the industry as one of the reasons for hiring men rather than women.

The general ratios for South Australia also need to be placed against the patterns which emerge from the ethnography. In Chapter Two I described the details of employees for each hotel, including the numbers of women to men engaged in bar work. I have used these details as the basis for Table IIIc which shows that women bar workers outnumber men. In the five hotels there was an approximate total of 23 men and 39 women employed in bar work.

The extent to which women outnumber men in the ethnographic setting stands against the general patterns noted for South Australia as a whole. This could be due to policy preferences in favour of hiring women on the part of the publicans in the hotels in question. However, only one publican stated a definite policy of hiring women (Hotel II).

Table IIIc

Ethnographic setting: women and men employed in bar work¹

	No. of bar workers	Men	Full-time	Casual or part-time	Women	Full-time	Casual or part-time
Hotel I	33 ²	14	6	8	19	4	15
Hotel II	4				4	2	2
Hotel III	5	1	1		4		4
Hotel IV	14 ³	5			9		
Hotel V	6	3	1	2	3	1	2
		23			39		

1. These are approximate figures only and are based either on my own or management estimates, made at a particular point of time; they are intended to reflect the trend of employment in the hotels, and are not a precise or reliable statistical measure.
2. This figure is inflated by a large number of staff hired to work in the discotheque which I did not include in my study.
3. I do not have the precise details on full-time or part-time categories. One or two of the barmen and at least three of the barwomen were full-time and there were several part-time or casual older women employees.

One point to note is that the location of these hotels in a busy city street meant that none of the hotels have drive-in bottle departments, which are a common feature especially of suburban hotels. This helps explain the discrepancy with the general patterns of the union survey, which as noted previously included bottle department attendants in the category of bar workers. Since drive-in attendants are usually men, this

also helps explain the higher proportion of men over women noted in the union figures (Table II), as against the ethnographic pattern (Table IIIc).

Table IV
Staff turnover in hotels¹

<u>No. of hotels</u> ²	<u>Staff turnover %</u>
total of 599 hotels	average 45%
$\frac{1}{4}$ of 599 hotels (approx. 149) ³	below 16%
$\frac{1}{4}$ of 599 hotels (approx. 149) ³	above 70%

1. Cf. union estimates (F.L.A.I.U. 1978): out of a total of 1,858 full-time employees in all hotel occupations, 1,013 left in the previous year. The union survey asked 'How many full-time "bar" and "house" employees left your employ (for any reason) during the year ended 19.2.1978?' The response was 1,013 employees.
2. According to the A.H.A. Report, larger hotels tend to have bigger staff turnover but this is not uniform (A.H.A. 1973).
3. The precise figures were not specified in the report.

Source: A.H.A. Report 1973:6.

Two other economic features of the industry require comments, those relating to staff turnover and to opportunities for permanent or casual employment. The description of bar work as an 'itinerant' industry given by a union official is supported by Table V which shows that over a half of all full-time bar staff have been employed for a period of three years or less. It is only since January 1972 that a long-service leave provision awarded thirteen weeks leave for ten years service. The award states that where termination of work is made by the worker or employer,

for any cause other than wilful serious misconduct, after seven but within ten years service, the worker is entitled to pro-rata payment (F.L.A.I.U. 1973-75). As discussed in Chapter Two, staff turnover is generally reputed to be relatively high although it was seen that some hotels had more problems than others in retaining staff.

Table V
Length of service for all hotel employees¹

Length of service (in years)	No. of full-time employees ²		
	Bar staff	House staff	Total
Up to 1 year	479	299	778
2 years	196	127	323
3 years	142	83	255
4 years	76	42	118
5 years	92	69	161
6-9 years	57	51	108
10-15 years	59	39	98
15-19 years	14	13	27
20 years and over	16	4	20
Totals	1131	727	1858

1. These results were obtained from the question: 'Please indicate the length of service of your full-time "bar" and "house" staff as at 19th February 1978' (F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978).
2. The survey did not specify a breakdown in terms of women and men.

Source: F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978.

A comparison of the two sets of figures for casual workers (see Table VI) shows there was an increase of 43 percent in 1973 to 62 percent in 1978 of casual workers in all categories of hotel work. This gives

support to the union belief that the industry is becoming increasingly dependent on casual labour. Certainly in recent years the wage rates for casuals have become increasingly attractive (around \$4.52 an hour in 1977).^{*} According to one union official, the impetus to casual work came with the introduction of ten o'clock closing in 1967, which in South Australia came about around the time that stipulations relating to the employment of women in bars were repealed. Prior to that, according to the same source, there was a relatively 'solid' permanent staff, with numerous casuals coming in for the heavy business hours between 4.00 and 6.00 p.m. With the extension of opening hours, permanent employees were unable to cover the extra time, since 'permanents' must, according to union conditions, work eight hours in a 9.5 hour spread.

Table VI
Proportions of casual workers in hotels
 (all hotel employees)

	Total all jobs	Casual	Full-time	Part-time
1973 ¹	10200	43% 4400	45% 4500	12% 1300
1978 ²	6416	62% 3922	1858	636

1. A.H.A. Report 1973:6.
2. F.L.A.I.U. Survey 1978.

^{*}A casual employee is defined as one who is neither engaged for 40 hours, nor is a regular part-time employee. The latter are regularly engaged for 20-35 hours. Casuals are paid 50 percent more than the appropriate hourly rate (F.L.A.I.U. 1973-75).

The advantage of casuals to employers seems to stem from their being relatively unprotected by union regulations. They can be sent home in a short time in the event of business slackening off instead of being retained for a full shift. There are a number of contradictions evident in the split between a casual and full-time labour force. *The Hotel Gazette*, the A.H.A. monthly review, reflected this with an editorial exhortation to publicans not to cut 'tried and trusted permanent staff'. It warned 'false economics are foolish' (A.H.A., May 1978:1). Elsewhere in the same edition under the heading 'Five ways to save money', the suggestion was made to employ casual workers, the advantage being that in slack times, they can be sent home (*ibid.*:19).

There is a problem with the unionisation of casual labour. About casuals, a union official comments:

They don't owe allegiance to the industry, to the Union or to the boss.

All they are after is the dollars.

They are not dependent, it's not their livelihood.

Casuals don't have the skills, and the service that should be there is not there.

Some problems facing the union, apart from those which stem from a high percentage of casuals in the labour force, are indicated by the following comments made by one union official: 'We've opposed plenty of stuff but it's still gone through even though we've opposed it'. This included opposition to ten o'clock closing, legislative changes to do with women bar workers in 1967, and more recently discount liquor retail sales.* The union lists common infringements by publicans as working

*According to a union official, the lifting of legislation restricting the work of women in hotel bars was opposed by the union on the grounds of protecting the jobs of bar men. Union opposition abated when unequal pay provisions were altered to bring women's wages in line with those of bar men, as part of a package relating to the 1967 changes.

employees over the spread of hours without pay (i.e. uncompensated split shifts), not providing a meal break, not providing a time loading after 7.00 p.m., and engaging casuals and sending them home without the minimum payment of one hour's engagement.*

One final comment on wages and wage-labour: wage costs were a continual source of complaint from managers and licensees. However, the complaints tended to overlook the advantages accruing from the employment of wage-earning bar workers. Bar workers play an intermediary role between licensees and customers in a number of ways. For instance, blame can be located with bar workers for the day-to-day contingencies associated with maintaining the services of hotel bars. In addition, their employment enables managers and licensees to engage more freely in socialising with customers since they have to attend less closely to routine tasks of service which mutes the economic functions of hotels, as I have noted elsewhere. Finally, the presence of bar workers can be utilised by managers and licensees as a mechanism for underlining their status, so that they themselves are not mistaken by customers to be wage-earning bar workers.

Legal aspects of bar work

The legal characteristics of hotels in general were explored in an earlier chapter, and some of what is said in that section is relevant here also. As before, I make some reference to the differentiations

*The working conditions evident in the ethnographic setting were referred to in Chapter Two in the description of the five hotels.

which operate among bar staff but in general I downplay these in this section. The law relating to women bar workers is referred to at the end of this section and elaborated in the following chapter.

In the following discussion, I explore legal regulations operative on bar staff with reference to customers, the issue of legal responsibility for social regulation in hotels, and the extent of dependence on formal law, on the police, of bar staff in regulating the behaviour of customers in hotel bars. I argue that dependence on formal law is limited not only by the practicalities involved, but by other factors to do with the relationship between bar staff and customers. I round off this section by noting regulations about who can work in bars.

Much of the Licensing Act deals with matters only indirectly, if at all, relevant to the everyday work of bar staff, as with administrative matters relating to applications and transfers of licences and licensing fees. The Licensing Court's jurisdiction is primarily concerned with major matters which concern the State Treasury, rather than with minor infringements of the Act by publicans. In the words of one publican, 'alcohol is a very intrinsic part of the system of financing the Government'. Other matters, referred to in the Licensing Act, relate primarily to the licensee of the premises, as in sections restricting a share in profits to licensed persons (South Australian Government 1967-72).

Those sections of the Act which affect bar staff more directly lay down conditions for hours of trade, for standards of conduct, for the premises and for those who frequent them. For instance, it is an offence for prostitutes, thieves, or 'any person in a state of intoxication' to be found on the premises. In such an event, the Act

states that the licensee shall be guilty of an offence' (*ibid.* 1967-72: 99). Similarly, licensees are held responsible for the conduct on their premises, as is clear from the section of the Licensing Act which states that

if any person holding a licence permits drunkenness, or any indecent, violent, quarrelsome, or riotous conduct to take place on his licensed premises...he shall be guilty of an offence (*ibid.* 1967-72:102).

It is not necessary to move beyond this point to show that hotels constantly infringe these regulations. One Licensing Officer lists the most common causes of prosecutions of publicans as selling liquor during prohibited hours, selling liquor to minors and allowing unlawful gaming on the premises. Also listed as common were publicans being found intoxicated on the premises and the employment of a minor.

Bar workers as well as licensees are defined as legally responsible for certain offences as shown by the following section of the Act referring to drunkenness:

Where any person is charged under this section with permitting drunkenness on his licensed premises... and it is proved that any person was drunk on such premises...it shall lie on the person so charged to prove that he and the persons employed by him took all reasonable steps to prevent that drunkenness (*ibid.*).

To provide liquor under these circumstances is an offence. The Act reads:

Any licensed person or any person in his employ who supplies, or permits to be supplied, any liquor to any person in a state of intoxication shall be guilty of an offence (*ibid.*:114; my emphasis).*

Two areas of the Licensing Act which are common knowledge among bar staff are the law against serving minors, and the law against serving

*As noted in Chapter Two, 'Every member of the police force shall, on demand of the holder of the licence, or his agent or servant, expel or assist in expelling' the drunk, disorderly, etc. (South Australian Government 1967-72:102; my emphasis).

liquor out of trading hours. More critical for my purposes than knowledge of the law is what bar staff do or are permitted to do in dealing with troublesome customers.

The union award documents a cautionary anecdote for hotel bar employees on the issue of ejecting troublesome customers. The account is informative on the issue of responsibility for physical injury. It concerned a casual employee, male, who ejected a man for starting a fight. According to the account, in the course of ejecting him, the customer fell and broke his ankle. Subsequently, the account continues, the customer sued, the hotelkeeper refused to accept liability and the employee contacted the union too late for effective action. The lesson drawn from the incident is that the employee was wrong for putting his hands on the customer: 'The lesson is obvious...under no circumstances put your hands on any customer (apart from a helping hand to some unfortunate...)' (F.L.A.I.U. 1973-75:95). The account suggests that working in a hotel even as a bouncer does not entail any right to 'manhandle' customers. The union advice is that if some person causes trouble, 'the licensee or manager should be notified and the police immediately called...the responsibility is on the licensee to maintain order in his hotel...let him use the law to do so' (*ibid.*). The article warns that if injured in such a fracas, in such circumstances, any compensation claim may be in jeopardy.

The advice given by the union to bar employees in this account, to call on either the licensee or the police, may not be a feasible course of action. Apart from the practicalities of the issue, as to whether the police, on being called, are likely to be on the scene quickly

enough, there are other constraints on bar staff, both employees and management, in coping with troublesome customers. A troublesome customer may also be a regular customer who, even if drunk, on being ejected may take offence, with the possible consequence of loss of custom. The problem takes on a different dimension if there is more than one difficult customer. In addition, given the public nature of the setting, there is a thin line between the risks entailed by permitting the disruption a troublesome customer may cause to other drinkers, and the disruption which may result from the calling and arrival of police; events which significantly disrupt the on-going activity of the bar may also disrupt business. Furthermore, the move to call in police may be an unpopular one with customers who witness the events. They themselves may lessen the problems of bar staff in regulating the bar, if kept on side. In short, calling the police is likely to be a last resort on the part of bar staff in dealing with trouble.

Moreover, not all difficulties experienced by bar staff stemming from customer behaviour fall into the category of serious trouble. Difficult customer behaviour, drunken or otherwise, may range from the potentially violent to the merely irritating. Social regulation in the bar cannot be equated with resort to the law. In this way, bar work presents some peculiar, even unique problems. Bar staff operate within a framework subject to a number of constraints, apart from the legal regulations which apply to hotels. Included among these constraints, is the point that hotels are settings where a degree of informal sociability is appropriate, yet at the same time, there is potential for considerable trouble from those who may also be valued customers. Under these

circumstances, resort to the law in dealing with trouble, as in calling the police, may be neither practical nor desirable. Bar staff vary in their capacities and skills for dealing with trouble and the more routine difficulties customers may present. Professional or skilled bar staff exhibit a range of skills bordering on the diplomatic, for dealing with a variety of difficult behaviour as part of their everyday work.

I explore later the skills of bar workers in coping with trouble especially the differences evident between women and men, together with the tensions generated when attempts by bar staff to cope with trouble are executed clumsily. Management-worker tensions may be generated in this area, especially when staff are inexperienced in this aspect of bar operations.

A final point which helps explain why methods of coping with trouble, other than resort to the law, are common in bars, is that to call the police, to eject or sanction a customer, is to lay bare the contractual and, hence, impersonal basis which underlies the bar setting and which remains muted for much of the time. This point heralds an argument which I develop shortly.

The problems of bar staff in the area of social control may be minimised or increased also according to the spatial and physical features of the hotel. The physical character and design of a hotel has both technical and social implications.* Technically, if bars and nearby spaces are badly designed this can add to the work load of bar staff, and the spatial character of hotels may facilitate or hinder the social control or regulatory aspects of bar work. Relevant here in the physical and symbolic significance of the bar which demarcates bar staff from customers. In addition, the style and location of the bar, and the

*Cf. Sommer (1968).

customers who frequent it, will entail different kinds of problems for social regulation.

I round off this discussion about the law-related aspects of bar work with some comment about the legal stipulations of the Licensing Act restricting the employment of bar workers. It is illegal for those under the age of eighteen to work in bars, which, as mentioned earlier, is one cause of infringement of the Licensing Act by licensees. Beyond this, two regulations worth noting are those relating to the good character of bar staff and a regulation, repealed in 1967, which aimed at limiting the employment of women wage-earners in hotel bars. Both these regulations can be taken to reflect the point that hotels, historically and today, have a disreputable image with some sections of the community. I develop later the historical and ideological implications that this image and these regulations have had for the presence of women in hotels, both as customers and workers. Here I want to comment briefly on some features of the law relating to women workers.

The implications of this law seem to have been that prior to 1967, women were able to work in other sections of hotels in lounge and saloon bars, but not in public bars. Also there is the suggestion that they could work as drink dispensers (basically as drink waitresses) and engage in the serving of drinks, but that it was not legal for them to work behind the bar and, in the act of doing so, to pour drinks.* The female relatives of the licensee were exempt from this stipulation. This law was repealed around the time that trading hours were extended from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., in 1967. Laws restricting the employment of women in hotels were introduced prior to World War I, in or by 1908 (South Australian Government 1908:Section 149).

*These views summarise the statements of informants about the legal restriction relating to women workers, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five.

The comment of the longest-working woman bar worker interviewed is relevant to the issue of the employment of women workers prior to the repeal of the law. In the industry nearly thirty years, she commented that the employment of women in public bars was not legal when she began work in the 1940's, but that in fact it occurred. This was supported with reference to her work experience, and that of her friends.

What consequences for this study stem from this law? It may account for the limited workspan of some of the women interviewed which was, on the whole, not more than five years.* However, this needs to be placed against the generally high turnover in the industry. Certainly few women had the number of years in the industry for which women bar workers in states other than South Australia, and especially in New South Wales, are renowned. Because of the importance of this law I discuss it in further detail in the next chapter.

Social aspects of bar work

In discussing the social aspects of bar work I identify general core-characteristics of bar work which I summarise in terms of servicing, sociability and social regulation. I identify general constraints operative on all bar staff regardless of economic or gender differentiation. These consist of an economic constraint, including the self-evident point that bar staff are there to earn a living, either from gaining a profit or earning a wage, and that a contract underlies the serving of alcohol

*For the twenty or so women whose work patterns were clear or predictable, about half had remained in bar work for five years or more. For the rest, a shorter-term work pattern was indicated. Given the smaller number of male informants, contrasts can only be crude indicators; more women than men seemed to stay in the job for short periods only; one of the hotel managers cited a turnover of 'fifteen girls in one month' (Hotel I). However, it was women who provided the longest job histories, of thirty and nine years, in contrast to the longest work patterns of two barmen of seven and five years, respectively.

which is the primary material exchange which occurs across the bar. This element of contract is muted by the second constraint, that bar work proceeds in a public arena, and entails sociable involvement with customers. A third constraint stems from the social regulation that bar staff exercise towards customers. Emerging from evaluations of the status of bar work, both inside and outside the bar, is a fourth constraint, that at the level of routine tasks, the job involves a relatively unskilled servicing element in a setting subject to dubious evaluations. Finally, all this operates within certain physical and spatial constraints, as well as those which derive from relationships with other bar staff.

The work of management or licensees requires some special comment. Not all hotelkeepers engage in the everyday routine of bar work, and some do so more than others. The size of a hotel typically influences the extent of management involvement in day-to-day operations. In small hotels, hotelkeepers and their families may cut wage costs by doing the bulk of routine work themselves, with a minimum of wage-earning assistance. In larger hotels the ownership, licensee-ship, management and wage-earning functions may be separated out and located in the hands of different individuals. In large hotels, management may operate in a primarily supervisory or administrative capacity, in which case the comments made here have less relevance.

The routine tasks of bar work basically involve the serving of alcohol for consumption on the premises and the maintenance of the premises in a state of cleanliness. Routine tasks include glass-washing and the clearing, wiping-down and cleaning of bars and tables. Attention to bottle sales and food may also be involved, and bar staff are variously involved in the tasks of checking the till, stock-ordering and stock-replenishing. Bar staff must know about the measures, glasses and prices appropriate to different varieties of alcohol.

As an occupation, bar work has several unusual features, which include the continual performance of the work with the public as audience. This links to an equally significant point, that the individual who engages in bar work, is locked into some degree of sociability as part of the job. One publican comments, in response to a question about the qualities required in bar work, that:

I think it applies to both people, male and female really, they must be a fairly bright type of person, interested in their customers, interested in their job, give good service, and be able to make a person feel welcome...I think the main thing is to show an interest in your customer.

I move on without comment to a more bluntly stated point of view put forward by another publican, who comments in response to a question about the qualities required in a publican: 'I think it just takes capital', and adds that, 'Most people think the pub game is really a money game'.

I have quoted these points of view because they suggest two models of hotels which superficially, at least, are in conflict. One presents an image which stresses informal sociability, the other stresses profit. Both are relevant to a consideration of hotels, viewed as work places, and operate simultaneously within them as a source of contradiction and tension in social and work relationships. While popular images of hotels as centres for sociability may have a romantic or ideological element relating to increasing the profits of the business, customer expectations relating to sociability in bar settings must be dealt with by bar staff. Insofar as good service is friendly service, both are good for business. On entering a hotel a customer may expect a degree of sociability from bar staff, but the drink must be paid for, hence an element of contract

is present. Yet all this operates within a setting which de-emphasises contract, or assimilates contract into a context which highlights informality, leisure and sociability.

While friendly service and sociability may be part of the expectations placed on bar staff, there are a number of constraints on the extent to which sociable or personal ties can develop between customers and bar staff. As already mentioned, one source of these constraints derives from the contractual nature of the bar setting, that is, there are profits to be made, a job to be done and kept and the calls of other customers. Secondly, the customer's view of the status of bar staff may restrain the development of personal ties, as discussed shortly. The third point is that bar staff are engaged in the regulation of customer behaviour, as discussed earlier.

To turn to the question of the status of those employed in bars, relevant points stem from the unskilled nature of the work, the element of service which it entails, the moral evaluations made in the wider community on the nature of hotels and the evaluations operative within the bar settings themselves.* These points about status provide the

*The concept of 'status' that I have used follows one of two accepted usages in anthropology. I use it in the sense which refers to evaluations and prestige in the Weberian sense (Wild 1979), rather than in the sense of 'status' which sees it as an aspect of social structure, following Linton's definition, of status as a collection of rights and duties (Cicourel 1973). Wild refers to 'status' as 'the standards and criteria of evaluation which are socially defined' (Wild 1978:69). He sees class and status as conceptually separate. While adopting this sense of 'status', I see status evaluations along lines similar to those discussed elsewhere for the concept of 'ideology', i.e. status evaluations enter into interaction in complex and situationally relevant ways. They may conflict or compete with one another or with other components of the social process. In this way, status evaluations are limited as determinatives in social interaction. Suggestive of the nature of these limitations is Cicourel's comments that a notion like 'status' provides us with an ideal normative label for understanding initial impressions based on appearances, which establish a preliminary basis for (continued)

basis for identifying further constraints operative on bar staff. There are several senses in which 'status' is used or implied in my discussion. I use 'status' with reference to evaluations of bar work and those who engage in it, which are related to its unskilled, servicing character. Another dimension in these evaluations stems from the moral evaluations made about hotels. Both of these dimensions are evident in the evaluations of bar work by those who engage in it, either as bar workers or managers, as I explore in the ethnographic description.

I begin with the question of the evaluation of hotels in the community. Turning to history, Freeland and others document a number of ways in which hotels, both as work places and as centres of leisure have been viewed historically as morally suspect (Freeland 1977). The A.H.A. makes reference to these attitudes when it comments that much restrictive legislation grew from a compromise of past generations between large sections wanting the amenities provided by hotels and a large minority totally opposed to them (A.H.A. Report 1973). From a different perspective, the union echoes a similar point. One official commented on the failure of the young to be attracted to bar work; that it seems some sort of stigma attaches to it. He commented that most people think they can handle a job at a club or a hotel, a comment which highlights the unskilled nature of the work. In this light an interesting recent development is the growth in the number of training schools for both bar employees and management. Whatever the reason for this development, in the style of

(continued from previous page) mutual evaluation (Cicourel 1973:25). Finally, I refer to class in the sense of socio-economic differentiations evident, for instance, in the economic position of publican and bar worker, and following Wild again, as conceptually separate from 'status'.

hotel on which this study was based, bar work remained a type of work for which training was rarely obtained.

In most of the comments made about the requirements and demands of bar work there are few references made to one of its basic qualities. That is, those engaged in bar work, whether women or men, management or wage-earner, are engaged in providing a service to those on the other side of the bar.* The perception of the bar staff as a servant may enter into a customer's evaluation, most obviously into their evaluation of wage-earning bar workers rather than managers, whose authority over and differentiation from bar workers can make itself apparent in a number of ways before customers so as to circumvent their own identification as a bar worker. At a later point I develop contrasts between women and men wage-earning employees with reference to the service element entailed.

In the foregoing discussion I have identified a number of constraints which operate on bar staff. To re-state, firstly, there is the self-evident point that bar staff are there to make a living, either from gaining a profit or from earning a wage. This point provides the basis for an interpretation of hotel bars as characterised and limited by a sociability that ultimately has an economic or contractual basis. The economic aspect of bar exchanges is muted in an atmosphere which offers sociability as a feature of service. At the same time customers are subject to regulation by bar staff. Regulation needs to be achieved as far as possible without disruption to the on-going routine, money-making and social activities of the bar. Aspects of the status of bar work as an unskilled service, which occurs in a setting varyingly evaluated by the wider community, constitutes a further constraint. In addition, bar staff

*Cf. Whyte (1948) for a discussion of servicing with reference to restaurants, especially Chapters 8 and 9.

need to cooperate in some form with other staff, either co-workers or managers.

The significance of this combination of constraints is that bar work entails a complicated and largely undefined range of requirements, not suggested by the largely unskilled routine tasks associated with the work. The work styles utilised by bar staff may entail elements of discretion, disguise or subtlety, as is evident in styles of bar service which highlight joking or jovial behaviour. In addition, there is a need for a high degree of flexibility by bar staff with reference to customer expectations of sociable involvement. At one point in time a customer may look for sociable involvement with bar staff, at another time sociability with bar staff will be suspended and directed towards other customers. In a short space of time, interactions with the same customer may undergo complex transformations through the various components of bar work, or may entail complex combinations of these components in any one interaction.*

Finally, this discussion provides the basis for concluding that the core-characteristics of bar work, regardless of differentiations among bar staff, entail service, sociability and social regulation. These components, with the added dimensions of relations with co-workers and managers, and skill and status in the work, provide the basic framework for exploring the work experiences of women bar workers contrasted against those of men in bar work, in later chapters.

*I owe this point to discussions with Roy Fitzhenry, and to seminars in the Department of Anthropology, University of Adelaide. In general, Goffman's work stresses the complexity and flexibility of social life, see especially his concept of a 'situation' defined as 'an environment of communication possibilities' (Goffman 1963:195) and the notion of 'traffic regulations' guiding behaviour (*ibid.*:194-5).

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN AT WORK IN AUSTRALIA: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WOMEN AT WORK IN HOTEL BARS

Before moving into an exploration of bar work as performed by women and men, I examine some of the recent literature which deals with issues of women's work in Australia. I use the literature to extend the questions raised earlier about bar work.

Recent scholarship, mostly stemming from feminists, explores and highlights the segregation of women and men in the labour market as elaborated below. Bar work makes an interesting case study with reference to this issue. Putting the case at its strongest, in South Australia, both women and men are employed on a wage-earning basis to serve drinks in hotel bars. In recent years, various legal changes have reduced the extent of sex-segregation in the work. As I have noted, in 1967 legal restrictions applying to the employment of women in hotel bars were lifted. Both women and men working in hotel bars now perform a similar range of routine tasks. Economically the phasing in of equal pay received for equal work has removed another barrier between women and men in bar work. Because the division of labour in bar work is not markedly based on a segregation of tasks according to the gender of the worker, bars are suitable settings to observe and analyse how gender is played out in the various components of the work, and the significance of gender-specific components. Bar work raises a number of specific questions about the arguments presented in the literature on women and work, which I now consider.

Women at work: a general overview of the literature

There has been a steady flow of recent Australian writing on the theme of women in the work force. I review some of this literature in the following discussion, as a prelude to a discussion on the nature of bar work, with particular reference to women workers and the ethnographic setting. My primary focus is on studies which deal specifically with women in the paid work force, leaving aside more general considerations of the position on women in Australia, such as the arguments of Summers (1975) and Dixon (1976), and accounts of women's work in the home or unpaid work force, such as Cass (1978).

Curthoys has written a succinct overview of issues in feminist labour history and I draw heavily from her account (Curthoys *et al.* 1975), and from that of Corich on South Australia (1978). Curthoys views the sexual division of labour as inherently linked with capitalist production, as entailing a different and unequal involvement on the part of women and men in the paid work force, while child-care and housework are set apart as the prime responsibility of women. This sexual division of labour is seen as historically specific to the phase of modern industrial capitalism. It does not deny the use of women as a reserve labour force.*

Curthoys' article consists primarily of a review of recent literature in the field. She touches on Eve Pownall's account of

*This discussion is limited to the Australian context and therefore does not draw on the increasing range of sources which take a historical perspective on women's work in other contexts and at other times where Curthoys' description is less applicable (cf. Oakley 1974). These suggest different and more active patterns of women's involvement in production in earlier times and suggest also the historical specificity of our current concepts of 'home' and 'work' and women's role with reference to them.

Australian Pioneer Women, first published in 1959, which documents the involvement of women in both the domestic and non-domestic economy in early stages of Australian history, including their work in dairies and farmyards, and as shepherds and agricultural producers. Curthoys (1975) sees this as an instance of the use of women as a reserve labour force.

A more recent publication discussed by Curthoys is Kingston's *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Maryann: Women and Work in Australia* (1974). Among other things, Kingston documents changes in the domestic and public orientations of women in the 1920's in Australia. As long as domestic servants were readily available, well-to-do, married middle-class women were able to play a public role in charitable, that is, unpaid humanitarian or suffragette activities. With the decline of domestic service in the early twentieth century, these women were forced into the home to do the bulk of housework, as well as the child-care tasks they had customarily attended to. Different trends emerge out of the different class situations of women. For the less well-off woman, prior to the reduction in the early twentieth century of heavy domestic labour with the introduction of gas, electricity and plumbing, women had a life of greater drudgery, bearing the brunt of housework without domestic servants.*

In the nineteenth century, domestic service was readily available as a form of paid labour for unmarried girls and women, and by 1901

*Women's place, housework and technology is subject to some debate, cf. Women and Labour Conference (Macquarie University 1978). However, I am not dwelling on the debates and inconsistencies evident in some of the interpretations of the historical data; rather my aim is to review the literature and draw out its relevance for bar work.

remained the occupation of almost half the paid female labour force. The decline in domestic service which was apparent in the 1870's, was accelerated by World War I, the Depression and World War II. Single women preferred factory work, for its shorter hours, better pay and less restrictive social life. This trend toward the entry of women into factory work increased as factories multiplied in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This peaked in 1911, when 28.42 percent of the industrial work force were women, and declined in the 1920's and 1930's, to return to its 1911 level with World War II (Kingston as quoted in Curthoys *et al.* 1975:91). The decline of women in factory work between the wars was matched by the movement of women into health, education and commerce areas.

According to Kingston, with the easier domestic burdens brought about by the technological developments of the 1920's, and facilitated also by the trend toward smaller families, the idea that married women could work outside the home gained some currency. Most women workers in paid employment until this time had been single. The employment of married women increased in the 1930's in predominantly female industries, such as clothing, textiles, food and drink manufacture. Until then, women's paid work was regarded as a temporary measure, preceding marriage. These factors relating to the employment of single women were, in Kingston's view, responsible for the low rate of unionisation and also provided the rationale for the lower pay of women, on the grounds that they were not breadwinners and had no dependents to support. Curthoys raises the question why it was that by 1930 labour-saving devices had not freed women for 'full entry into the life of the society' (Curthoys *et al.* 1975:93). Kingston's reply is because of the mythologies

about women's power and women's place; Curthoys suggests that technology freed women only from heavy household labour, but did not alter the isolated character of child-care (*ibid.*).

Turning to Curthoys' overview of Ryan and Conlon's book *Gentle Invaders* (1975), following the interests of the authors, attention is focused mainly on the historical background of women's wages. They begin with the British background showing that industrialisation led to increasing segregation of women's and men's work, breaking down the family-based rural work pattern. As with Kingston's account, they show how in Australia, up until 1860, most women in the paid work force were domestic servants, after 1860 they increasingly engaged in factory work, especially in the clothing industry. Despite low pay, women's participation in the work force increased steadily from 1900; according to the authors, women were less hard-hit by the depression than men and began working in increasing numbers during World War II. Employers and unions both ensured that women were kept out of men's work and confined to predominantly female industries and to the lowest grades of work within an industry.

Women's wages throughout were conditioned by the fact that it was assumed that men were the breadwinners and that paid working women had no dependents. In Australia, government intervention in wage-fixing was based on this principle. The struggle for equal pay, beginning in the 1930's in the recovery from the depression and culminating in its acceptance in 1974, is also documented by Curthoys, as recounted by Ryan and Conlon (Curthoys *et al.* 1975).

In 1912 an Australian Court judgement stated that equal pay could only be granted in men's industries to protect male workers from cheap female labour, and should not be granted in women's industries. By 1918 the Court agreed to a female minimum of 50 percent of the male minimum. From 1942-1945, the Wartime Emergency Women's Employment Board set women's wage rates on the basis of a new concept — not need (the 'living wage', based on a concept of the family wage of the Harvester judgement of 1907*) nor capacity of the industry to pay (the depression concept), but the efficiency and productivity of women versus men. Women were still paid lower than men but it was higher than previously, being up to 75-100 percent of the male rate. In 1945, the government legislated that women could not be paid less than the male rate. These war gains were not wholly lost. In 1949 the Commonwealth Arbitration Court reverted to the 'breadwinner' concept and awarded women 75 percent of the male rate. Since that time until 1974 equal pay for women was gradually achieved through a series of steps (cf. Curthoys *et al.* 1975: 93-94).

Curthoys summarises Margaret Power's article on sex work-segregation in Australia for the post-1911 period.[†] Power demonstrates that industrialisation, the increase of women in the work force, and increased education for women have not reduced sex segregation at work. According to Power, female occupations are still those in which the work relationships between women and men are analogous to the subservient

*This assumed a non-working wife.

[†]M. Power, 'The Making of a Woman's Occupation', *Hecate* 1:2, July 1975, pp. 25-33.

position of women in the household and in society at large. This point is particularly relevant to the data on bar work as I elaborate later in this section, and in the following chapters.

Curthoys comments that Ryan and Conlon's book is a valuable examination of how women came to be paid low wages for so long and how sex segregation in the work force ensured that wages were generally lower than men's. Curthoys' criticism is that the book reinforces the notion that it is paid work that is real and valuable, as against child-care and housework in the Australian productive economy. Further, both Ryan and Conlon and Kingston miss the centrality of the role of child-bearing to women's situation in the work force. Curthoys argues that the concept of the man as 'breadwinner' is not adequately interpreted as a fiction, one which simply overlooks the existence of many women as breadwinners with their receipt of low wages reducing them to the poverty line, as Ryan and Conlon argue. Curthoys comments that while these exceptions were important, the fact remains that most men were breadwinners and most women were not. What is critical about the concept is that it defines women's proper place as in the home. Curthoys concludes:

Future work in Australian women's labour history will have to take into account...the economic and social value of women's unpaid labour and the central role of that labour in women's total social labour (Curthoys *et al.* 1975:95).

The interests which underlie my research are not specifically those which are suggested by Curthoys to be important. These have been developed recently by Cass (1978). However, the points that I draw out in my conclusion about the linkages and points of separation between women at work and women at home are relevant to Curthoys' comment as quoted above.

Data on gender and the work force

In a study of women at work in South Australia, Corich explores the phenomenon of sex segregation in the labour market. She argues that the labour market has male and female divisions, and that the extent and persistence of sex segregation in the work force is not commonly recognised. What noticeably distinguishes 'men's work' from 'women's work' in Corich's view is, first, the difference in prestige, and, second, the difference in pay. 'Jobs habitually performed by women are not only poorer paid than those usually chosen by men, but are also worth less in terms of social recognition' (Corich 1978:94).

Before elaborating on Corich's views on the nature of women's and men's work, I will present some figures which express various trends in the work force. Here I draw heavily from Corich's study on women in the work force, and from figures and material prepared by various South Australian state government departments. The South Australian pattern is markedly similar to the general Australian figures in labour force participation, occupational distribution and the character of part-time work (Department of Productivity 1978). Of the percentage of women in the labour force, general figures for South Australia show an increase from 31 percent in 1971 to 36 percent in 1977, an expansion due to the increasing numbers of married women in the work force (*ibid.*). In South Australia, in 1966, half the women employed were married; this proportion had increased to 64 percent in 1977 (*ibid.*). A similar increase in married women in the work force occurs in the wider Australian setting, as seen in Corich's Figures I and II.*

*In the summary of the biographies of women workers in the next chapter, I note that, for the women for whom there was some indication, about fifteen of them were single, while a further ten were or had been married, or living *de facto*; I identify only two of them as living with a bread-winning husband; consequently a number of them were supporting children.

Part-time workers were predominantly women and in South Australia women made up 81.6 percent of the part-time work force in 1977. Married women constituted 67 percent of the part-time work force. In contrast, 4.6 percent of men worked part-time (*ibid.*). Corich points out that opportunities for superannuation, sick and holiday pay, and promotion have traditionally been limited or non-existent in most part-time areas, and that part-time employment is most widespread in occupational areas which have a high proportion of women workers, such as nursing, teaching, entertainment, service, sales and clerical positions (Corich 1978).*

Despite the overall increase in the proportion of women in the South Australian work force, women remain concentrated in a narrow band of occupations. In 1977, 63 percent of women were in clerical, sales and service, sport and recreation occupations (e.g. sales assistants, typists, bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, cleaners, waitresses and housekeepers). In 1971 the analogous proportion was 59 percent (Department of Productivity 1978). The proportions of women and men engaged in service, sport and recreation are shown in Figures III and IV of Corich's study. Men constitute 5.2 percent of this category, as against 17.3 percent of women (Corich 1978:11-12).

Of the total work force, 71.7 percent have no qualifications. In this category, 67.6 percent of men have no qualifications, and 80.7 percent of women workers have no qualifications (*ibid.*:17). Women are under-represented in administrative, executive and managerial occupations — in 1977, 1.3 percent of women compared to 6.7 percent of men in the work force (Department of Productivity 1978).

*Of 39 known job patterns of women in bar work, a much higher proportion of these (23) worked on a part-time or casual basis. Of 18 known patterns for barmen, 8 worked full-time, and 10 part-time or casual. However, any interpretations given these figures should take account of the point that in bar work, casual work is relatively lucrative and sought after, while part-time work fits Corich's characterisation.

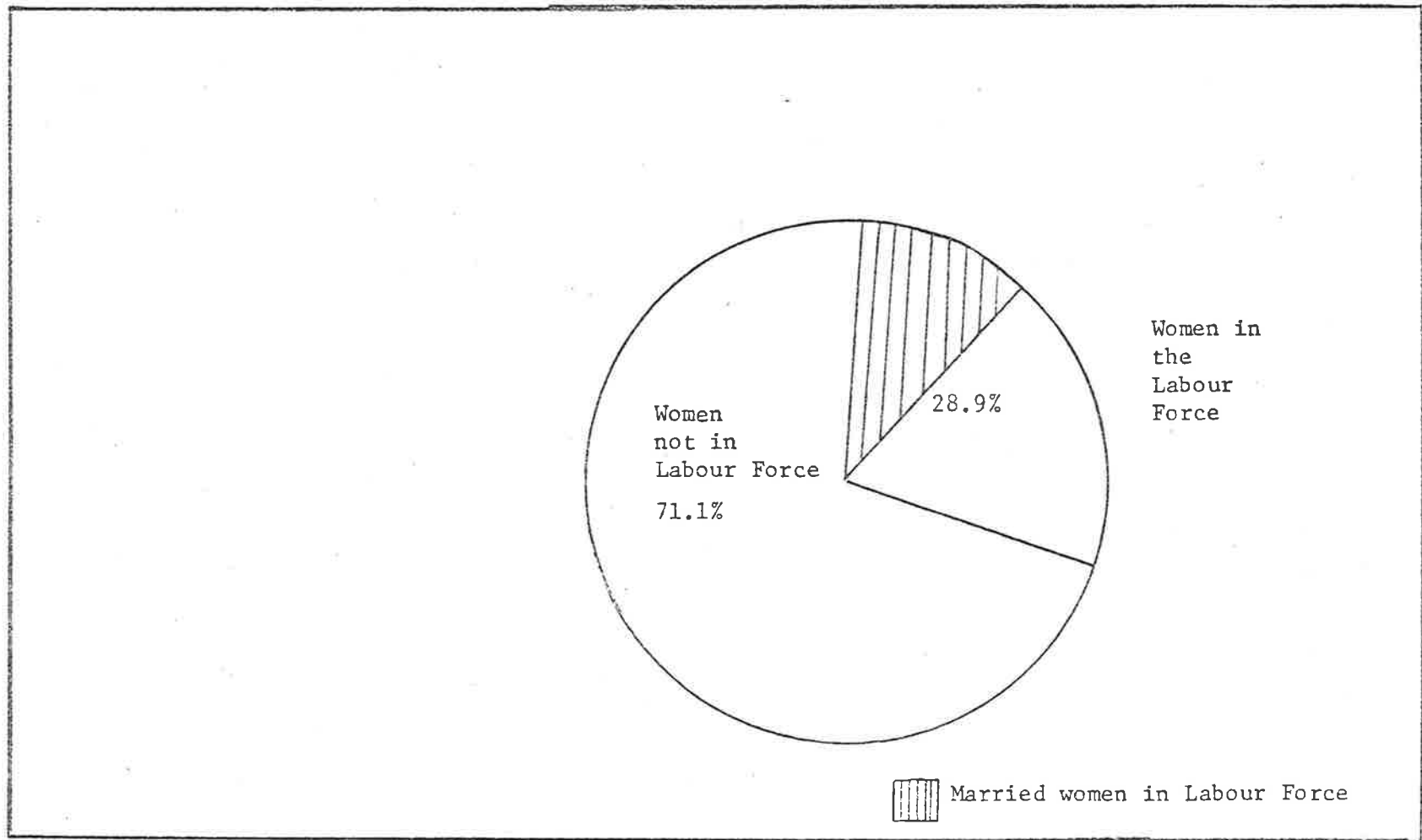
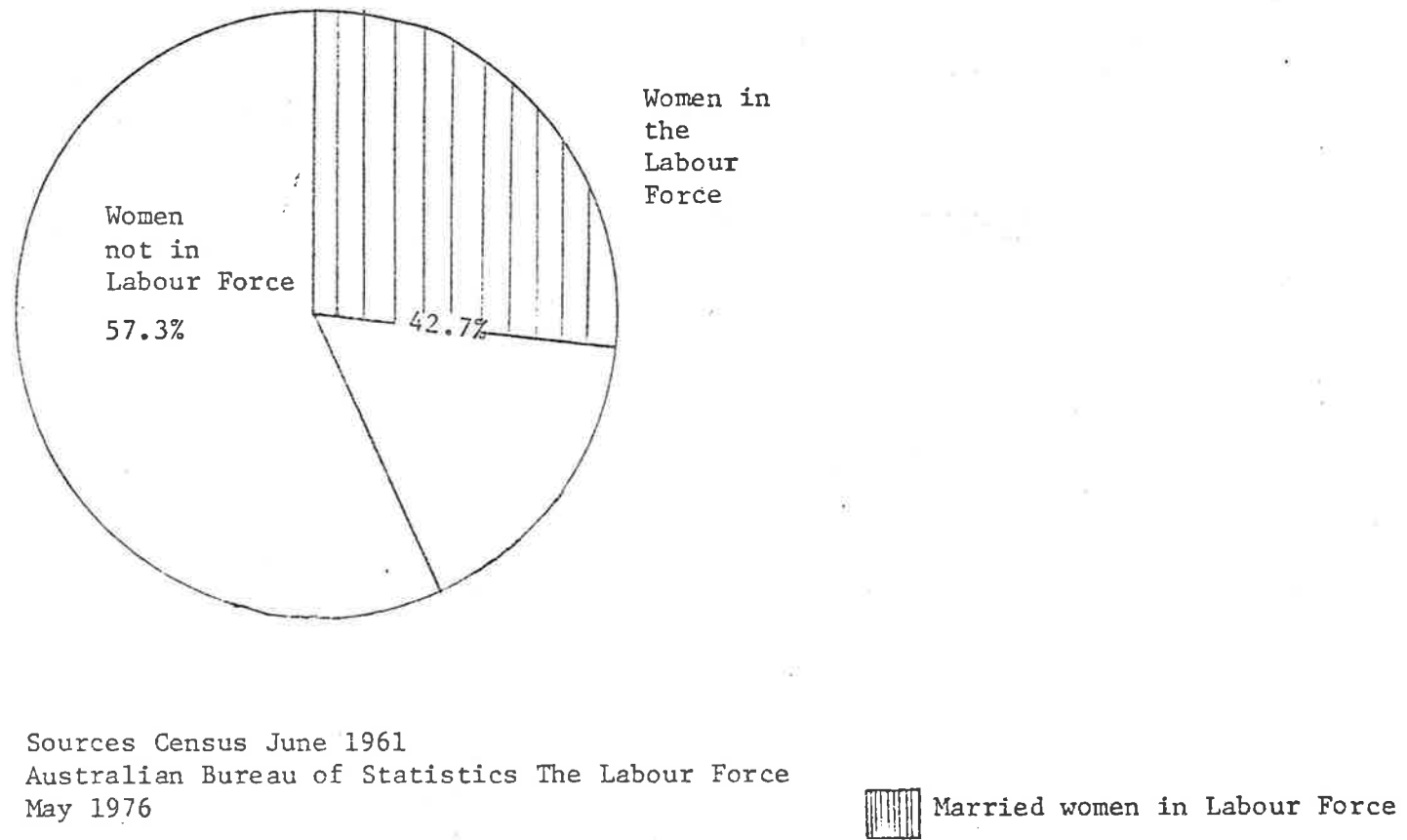


Figure I. Labour force participation rates of women aged 15 years and over 1961

Source: Census 1961 (cited by Corich 1978:7)

1976



Sources Census June 1961
Australian Bureau of Statistics The Labour Force
May 1976

 Married women in Labour Force

Figure II. Labour force participation rates of women aged 15 years and over: 1976

Source: from Corich (1978:8)

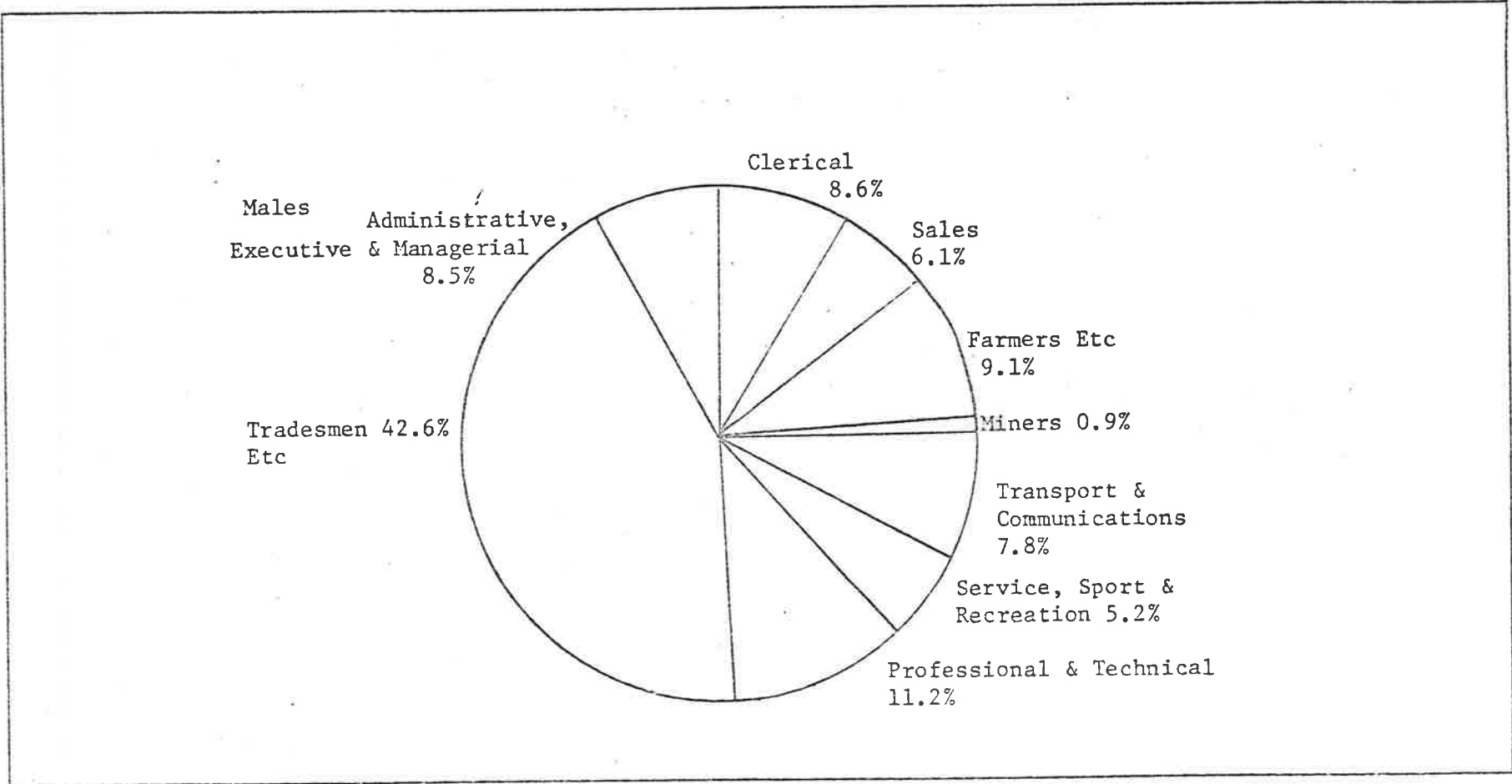
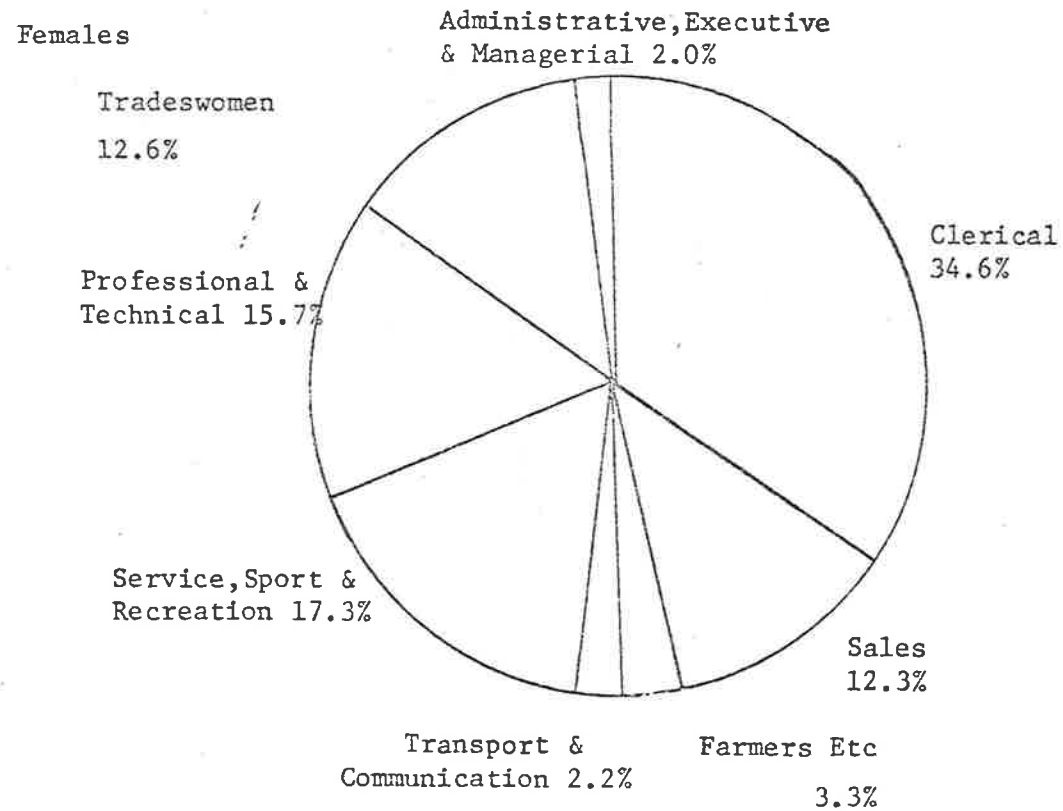


Figure III. Employed persons by occupational groups - February 1976

Source: from Corich (1978:11)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, The Labour Force, Feb. 1976

Figure IV. Occupational categories of women

Source: from Corich (1978:12)

From 1972 to 1976, average weekly earnings of South Australian adult women rose from 70 percent to 85 percent of the comparable adult male average weekly earning, demonstrating that 'implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal value has therefore not completely removed adult and female differentials' (*ibid.*:56). Corich also comments that despite legislation for equal pay, the gap in earnings remains and in some cases has increased, and attributes this to the fact that a disproportionately large number of women occupy the less skilled jobs and a disproportionately small number the higher paid, higher status positions (Corich 1978).

Finally, the figures show that females have a lower rate of trade union membership. In 1975, 41 percent of the female labour force were members of trade unions compared to 66 percent of the male labour force (Department of Productivity 1978).

Explanation of current patterns of gender and the work force

In a society where the house is seen as the appropriate place for women, the data on the proportion of women in the work force are striking.

Corich comments that the effect of two world wars, with their accompanying relaxations of role restrictions, technological changes in the work force, the prosperity and high employment levels of the 1960's, and sophisticated methods of birth control, have influenced women's participation in the work force (Corich 1978:4). The most significant change since the end of World War II has been the accelerated rate of

participation of married women. Relevant here are better educational opportunities for women, expansion in the job market, desire for a higher living standard, more labour-saving devices, fewer years of child-rearing and so forth (*ibid.*). In addition, despite the prejudices voiced about women in the work force, in contrast to the young, adults in general and women in particular are seen as more stable employees, generally requiring less training and cost (*ibid.*:100).

On the question of what household technology has done for women, Thompson sounds a note of caution with the comment that the relationship between improvements in household technology and the ability of women to work outside the home is not a clear one. Whether married or single, women's work outside the home may have more to do with the type of labour available and the needs of industry and the financial requirements of the family than the introduction of household technology or even modern methods of birth control. 'During the times when women are being discouraged from working outside the house, household technology is presented as something which can make a woman into a better housewife' (Thompson 1978).

The percentage of women working today may superficially suggest a process of significant social change which reflects an increasing equality on the part of women. However, this interpretation must be treated cautiously, and take into account the following:

(1) the reserve army theory which argues that women have always been drawn into the work force at times of need, and returned to the home when the need passes;

(2) the argument that women as a segment of the work force have always been a regular and critical part of the work force in low-status, poorly-paid work;

(3) Corich's argument that women still tend to be clustered in low-status, poorly-paid work (Corich 1978).

Corich comments that

women are still evaluated in terms of their familial roles. Socialization directs girls into narrowly-defined role areas; and deviation from the marital/maternal goal is widely viewed with emotions ranging from curiosity to contempt. Girls are generally still not being socialized towards expecting any major self-definition through work despite the accelerating participation of women in the work force. For nearly all women then, the family relationship is critical to their maintenance of 'self'. Women who renounce the marital/maternal goal are seen as somehow betraying the feminine ideal or as unfeminine. Women who combine the marital/maternal goal and try to achieve additional or alternative self-realization through work, are often criticized as being selfish and inadequate wives/mothers, and can become beset by anxiety over the maintenance of two areas of responsibility...Women who move outside their pre-ordained spheres of activity almost always encounter 'role-prejudice' which has been aptly described as 'a product of a false social learning process by which certain biological or genetic characteristics of individuals come to be associated with certain roles' (Corich 1978:36).

Corich quotes two studies which suggest that the concept of worker still has the cultural connotation of the masculine gender. A survey conducted for the YWCA explored the possibility that the concepts of leisure upon which government and private planning are based may be inappropriate for women, on the grounds that they do not recognise female life-styles and aspirations. 'It is reasonable to suggest that any concept of leisure derived from the present concept of work will be

of doubtful relevance to women' (*ibid.*:88). Another study cited by Corich notes that the term 'worker' is implicitly male, that the notion that work is principally a male responsibility was an accompaniment of the industrial revolution, and that the belief today that work is incidental and temporary for women is widespread but illusory.

'Coupled with the myth of work for women being incidental and temporary is the parallel problem of sexual divisions in the labour force' (*ibid.*:93). Corich expands on the concepts of female and male occupations as follows:

Women's occupations are defined as occupations where at least half the workers are women. Feminine occupations are described as ones where the majority of workers are women and where in addition, there is the associated normative expectation that this is as it should be (*ibid.*:96).

Corich further summarises sex differentiation in occupations as follows:

'Female' occupations

- usually require men to be in authority over women
- are frequently derivative of housework; that is, associated with food, clothing, cleaning, caring for the young and sick
- have a small range of occupational choice (i.e. in 1971 more than one-third of women worked in just three occupations — clerk, sales person, stenotypist, and half of all women worked in only nine occupations, suggesting that segregation of women into 'female' occupations has not changed). At the beginning of this century women were segregated in domestic service and clothing factories; they are now segregated in sales and clerical jobs
- in which segregation diminishes, this will usually proceed to the detriment of women (e.g. men are increasingly taking high-status positions in nursing, social work, libraries)

- have been useful for the economy; the female work force has been expanded and contracted in order to modify the effects of cyclical changes
- on becoming increasingly 'feminized' with an increasing number and finally a preponderance of women, undergo a decline in working conditions, pay and status of the occupation
- such as secretarial and nursing work, are the least well-paid female occupations, relative to male occupations with comparable training
- generally have low rates of pay and limited opportunities for on-the-job training and promotion (Corich 1978:96).

'Male' occupations

- usually require men to be in authority over men
- are usually effectively unionized, with adequate pay and good working conditions
- have a very wide range of occupations (i.e. in 1971, one-third of all male workers employed in sixteen occupations and half the male labour force employed in forty-one occupations)
- generally show up a reluctance on the part of men to work under the supervision of women or to cooperate with them as colleagues, and therefore, there is a high level of resistance to female penetration of 'male' occupations
- into which women move tend to tolerate a token representation of women, i.e. up to 10% (Corich 1978:97).

Finally, Corich comments on the contradictions evident in the attitudes of employers to women. She says that employers' attitudes to women workers often reflect a number of assumptions about gender. It is often assumed that women are less efficient, less committed, more often absent, less capable of responsible and/or creative work activity. These assumptions are not generally borne out by statistics and findings which indicate that absenteeism and turnover are functions of the job rather than the sex of the worker (*ibid.*). Corich notes that there is

contradiction in the often stated employers' preference for adults, particularly women, who are seen as more stable employees generally requiring less training and cost; and the claims of some employers' representatives that 'married women are taking the jobs that one time would have gone to juniors' (*ibid.*:100).

Questions raised by the literature with reference to bar work

Given the attention of recent analyses of women and work to the segregation of women and men in the labour market, a detailed study of bar work should make a different contribution. At least in recent years bar work superficially entails similar work for women and men. At one level it appears that men and women are hired to do much the same range of routine tasks, and since 1974, equal pay has become a legal reality. Therefore bar work raises a number of specific questions explored with reference to the ethnography in the following chapters, about the arguments just presented in the overview of literature on women and work. Firstly, if the elements of service in bar work enact aspects of domestic work associated with women, then what consequences flow from the performance of this domestically-oriented work by male bar workers? Given the superficially similar nature of routine tasks for women and men, are there ways which are not readily visible by which workers are marked off in terms of gender? For instance, are there differences in prestige and pay despite an apparently equal situation, as Corich and others assert; do bar men exercise *de facto* authority over women workers? Secondly, if women's work is generally viewed as more dull and repetitious than men's,

how, if at all, is this reflected in the performance of bar work? Are there informal or implicit sexual divisions of labour despite equality before the law in pay and duties?

Finally, if women are viewed as attached to the home, with a small range of occupational choice which reflects their domestic identification, then to what extent does bar work conform to the areas of work identified as typically female? How appropriate is bar work for women? To what extent is it analogous to the situation of women in the household?

For the period in which the research was conducted, bar work did not appear to conform to views about work that sex segregation in the labour market operates with the result that women work in and take on types of jobs which are different to those done by men. However, until recent times, as I now explore, bar work in South Australia was legally and economically differentiated on a gender basis.

I round off this chapter by exploring the implications of the law relating to women's work in hotel bars for my research. Bar work provides an arena for the exploration of the significance of formal, legal and economic change and my conclusions suggest informal social processes which operate to perpetuate gender differentiations in work situations in the face of formal changes aimed at diminishing them.

An historical sketch of women at work in hotel bars

In this section I present some historical data which suggest women's pattern of involvement in bar work in Australia generally. I then examine the South Australian situation, which historically departs

from the national picture, with the law which operated in this state preventing women working in hotel bars as wage earners, repealed in 1967.

The figure on the industrial distribution of the female work force for 1966 shows that in that year, out of the total female work force in Australia, 11.8 percent of women worked in the areas of amusements, hotels, cafes and personal service. For the same year, the largest proportion of women workers was concentrated in the area of manufacturing (22.5 percent), with the number of women located in community and business services (22 percent) running a close second (Department of Labour and National Service 1970:19).

It appears that throughout most of Australia, it has been historically customary for women to work in hotels. This is suggested by Kingston's comment that while the number of women in personal and private domestic service declined during the period 1901-1911, the proportion of women in domestic occupations remained fairly high due to the constant number working in hotels, boarding houses, etc. (Kingston 1975).

Other historical items which suggest the involvement of women in bar work come from Summers' comment on a strike by a Sydney barmaids' union in the 1890's (Summers 1975:310). Summers also refers to wages and conditions of barmaids in the early period of Australian history. In the 1880's, barmaids earned between £40 and £70 per annum; while women who worked as nurse maids or in 'similarly esteemed jobs' earned from £18 to £25 per annum (Summers 1975:313). The fact of higher pay for barmaids is confirmed in the autobiographical *Caddie: A Sydney Barmaid* (1966). Caddie contrasts bar work with the conditions for waitressing in Sydney in the 1920's and 1930's. For working an eleven-hour day, a waitress was paid £1.10.0 a week. In her first job as a barmaid, Caddie received

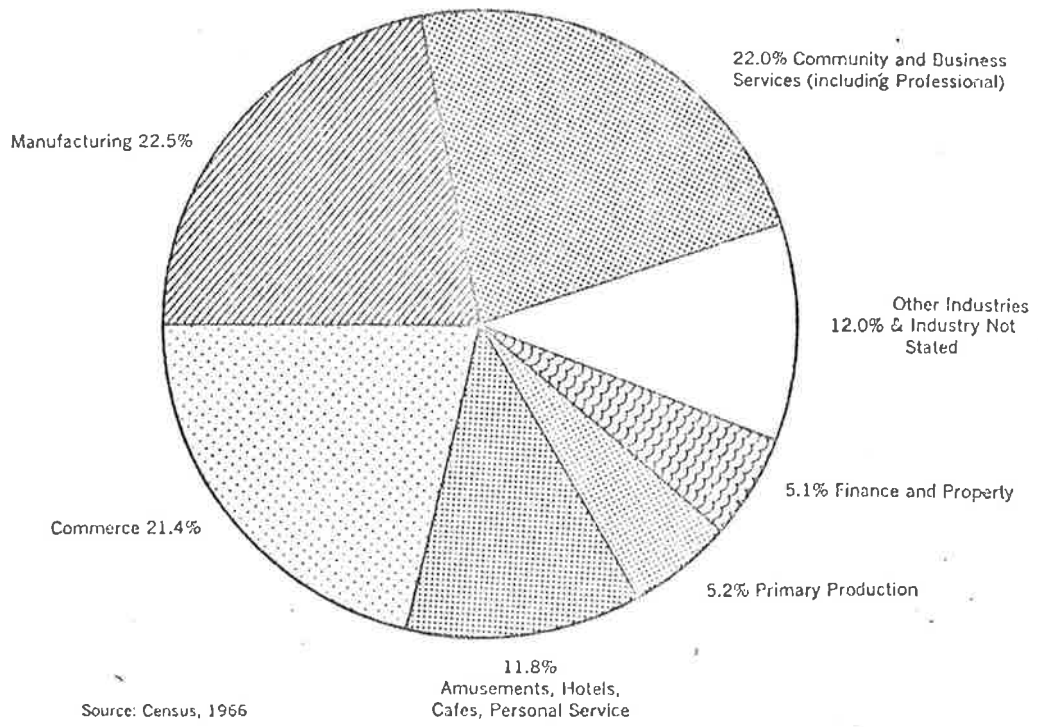
£2.10.s. per week, to be raised 10/- with experience; she started at 8.30 a.m. and presumably finished at 6.00 p.m. when the hotels closed, and was given one afternoon off a week (Anonymous 1966:59-60).

With reference to the work conditions of barmaids in the 1880's, Summers comments that since women did not use hotels there were no lavatories provided, not even for employees. Around that time, a Victorian Royal Commission heard evidence that one barmaid had died of constipation because of long hours at the bar (Summers 1975:356).*

These historical items suggest that, while the employment of women in hotel bars was a controversial issue, women continued to be employed in them throughout much of Australia. South Australia departs from this pattern with the law which limited women's work in hotel bars which was repealed in 1967. The law was introduced by World War I. Pressure from the Temperance Movement and parliamentarians contributed to the law. In the 1890's the Upper House retained barmaids in the face of pressure spearheaded by one Adelaide politician, King O'Malley. By 1909 barmaids had to be licensed, and by 1916 many had disappeared from hotels, a move which coincided with the introduction of 6 o'clock closing (WEA lecture, Newnham 1978).†

*Kingston throws some light on the early problems facing union efforts to organise domestic servants which were applicable not only to hotel workers at that time but remain relevant today to explain a relatively un-unionised work force. Kingston comments that it was only in hospitals and other institutions where domestic workers could be organised according to 'the classic principles of the union movement, that any form of organisation or regulation succeeded' (Kingston 1975:54).

†Similar legal restrictions operated against the employ of women in some United States bars (Cavan 1966:34-35).



Industrial Distribution of Female Work Force, 1966

Figure V.

Source: from Department of Labour and National Service (1970:19)

The implications of this law for my arguments are discussed in more detail shortly. Meanwhile three points can be made:

(1) while women were not permitted by law to serve drinks from behind the bars, according to one informant, they were able to work in hotels as waitresses and drink dispensers, i.e. carry trays from the bar.

(2) The same informant, with almost thirty years' experience of hotel work in South Australia, says that she did in fact work as a barmaid pulling beers behind the bar, during the period it was illegal to do so, as did some of her friends. Her explanation was that the bar was out of sight of the main drinking area, and that in any case she had worked at the hotel in question so long it was possible she was thought to be the licensee's wife.

(3) Flowing from this point, the female relatives of licensees were exempt from the law. According to one official of the A.H.A. it was quite common for the wives or other relatives of the licensee to help out in the bar.

It follows from the presence of women in hotels as waitresses, drink dispensers, and as the wives of licensees, that the presence of a woman at work in a hotel bar was not an unusual one in South Australia, despite the operation of this law.

One question of interest is whether the law reflected a community attitude that the public bars of hotels were unsuitable places for women, either as workers or customers. The historical background of hotel bars, referred to by Freeland (1977) and Summers (1975) brings out the point that hotels have commonly been associated with women of 'loose' character (Freeland 1977:115-116).

In 1901-1916, in South Australia there was, as already mentioned, a registrar of barmaids operative in the state. This suggests that at that time it was not so much a question of illegality but of registration 'for an unspecified reason' (Daniels *et al.* 1977:149). Earlier, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) was making efforts towards the abolition of the employment of barmaids. The report of the 1896 convention of the W.C.T.U. (S.A.) comments: 'the fine edge of her womanly delicacy and modesty is almost inevitably blunted by the vile talk of drunken men, and the descent from the path of virtue often follows all too quickly' (Daniels *et al.* 1977:177). In Sydney, as in Adelaide, the Temperance Movement decried the use of women as barmaids because it would 'degrade, debase and lower the standard of womanhood' (Kingston 1975:27).

Summers comments on temperance objections to the use of barmaids which claimed women were employed 'solely as sexual objects to attract drinking customers' (Summers 1975:356). Temperance reformers saw hotels as unsuitable places for women, in which they were exposed to swearing, gambling and other forms of 'moral danger' (*ibid.*). However it seems that in South Australia, more so than elsewhere, the Temperance Movement and other pressure groups were successful in having their fears about the consequences of women working in hotels transformed into law.

Whether institutionalised by law or not, the dubious standing of hotels is beyond question. The disreputable image which hotels have held historically in the Australian community is documented by Freeland (1977) in his history of the Australian pub. Freeland notes that New South Wales legislation in the 1860's which extended trading hours led to a rash of

'get-rich-quick pubs'. While 'conceived with the best of intentions in the minds of the legislators, the combination of compulsory accommodation and long trading hours produced in fact, no more than a tavern with a brothel above' (Freeland 1977:115). Freeland also comments that during this period in the development of hotels from the 1870's-1880's, redundant accommodation was used for upstairs or private bars, 'conducted by 2/3 gay ladies' which were 'the happy playgrounds of respectable Victorian fathers' (*ibid.*:116). These quotes from Freeland are representative of stereotypes of hotels to be found in the Australian community which have implications for the presence of women in such settings.

Freeland suggests further avenues by which women were associated with hotels, and something of the dubious reputation which stemmed from such an association when he says that in the years following the 1820's 'magistrates, from legal requirements and their own inclinations, tightened up the issuing of licences by refusing licences to people of poor character, widows' (*ibid.*). Apparently, at this time, numbers of pubs bore the name of a man 'dead and buried for many years', meanwhile run by a widow long after she had remarried 'a dubious character' who had earlier been refused a licence (*ibid.*).

The historical basis for the dubious nature of hotels shows up in the Licensing Act in several places. Objections to an applicant for a licence may be filed on the grounds of the 'bad fame or character' of the applicant, if the applicant is of 'drunken or dissolute habits', or in other ways is not 'a fit and proper person to be licensed', as in keeping 'a brothel or house of ill-fame' (South Australian Government 1967-1972:44). Again, sections of the Act in several ways make it an

offence for the premises to be 'of a disorderly character' or to be 'frequented by prostitutes, thieves or persons of bad character' (*ibid.*: 45).

The dubious nature of hotels as perceived by sections of the community is reflected also in the status of bar work as a means of earning a living for women. This status is communicated by Summers' comment on the work of barmaids as a 'disreputable occupation' (Summers 1975:313). This evaluation of the work is echoed in the jibe hurled at Caddie by a one-time landlady: 'Why, y'er only a bloody barmaid' (Anonymous 1966:71). These items suggest that the status of barmaiding was on a par with the work of convict women as prostitutes and domestic servants, as presented in Pownall's description and cited by Curthoys (*et al.* 1975:89).

The question whether there has been a shift in community attitudes is considered in an Australian Hotels Association publication where the dubious nature of hotels is commented upon as a thing of the past. In the words of the report, hotels have shifted from a rough style of 'working men's clubs', and this is held to be due to the rising expectations of today's patrons for amenities in line with rising standards of living (A.H.A. 1973:7). In an article on leisure a similar view is put forward about the changes that have come about in hotels with the development of club life: 'Drinking in New South Wales has certainly become much more civilized and self-disciplined...and the presence of large numbers of women have operated to discourage heavy drinking' (Caldwell in Davies *et al.* 1977:425). However, as I suggest later on the basis of the ethnographic detail, the status of women working in the hotel bars studied

seems to have undergone little change from the heavily negative evaluations cited above.

The setting in which this study takes place is relevant to considerations about wider moral evaluations of hotels and the related question of the evaluations of bar work as a means for a woman to earn a living. As already mentioned, the street in which the hotels are located has a reputation which has a number of implications for the presence of women. Casual comments, mostly from women other than those that work in the street, present the street as a difficult place for an unescorted female pedestrian, especially in the past, and even today. This is in part due to the presence of prostitutes who work the street and some of the bars, and the 'cruising' behaviour of the men who frequent the street for this and other purposes. One woman had worked for a period behind the bar in one hotel, and on leaving subsequently earned her living as a prostitute, and prostitutes formed part of the custom in several of the bars, which were also used as a work place by them.

Several questions are raised by these comments about the moral evaluation of hotels and their implications for the women who work in them.

Firstly, are the male/female ratios examined in the previous chapter related to the operation of the law against women bar workers? It appears likely that the fact that men bar workers outnumber women bar workers in the proportion of about two to one, may be explained by this law. The law may also account for the limited work span of most of the women interviewed; on the whole, less than five years. However, this needs to be placed against the generally high turnover in the industry as mentioned earlier.

Secondly, and theoretically more significant, is the question whether the change in the law accounts for my later arguments about the attitudes of customers to women workers. I argue against this on the grounds that even though the law was repealed only recently, this did not mean that prior to the repeal of the law, it was rare for women to work in hotel bars. None of the women who had worked in hotels outside the setting and outside South Australia commented on the uniqueness of customer attitudes and interactions in South Australia.

Thirdly, I argue against the point that the setting in which the hotels are located accounts for aspects of customer-women bar worker interaction which are critical for later arguments, on the grounds that these interactions are a feature of bar work in hotels outside the street in which the main observations were centred.*

Finally, the point that the moral evaluations of hotels rub off on those who work in them and are expressed in and account for customer-bar worker behaviour, is not necessarily contrary to arguments that I develop later. It may even be that what we see in the bar ethnography is the grounding of this relationship; even so, the arguments I present are of a different dimension.

*It may be that the setting in which this study is located exaggerates the sexual code as a component of the interactions between women workers and customers. However, I would argue that regardless of the style of hotel, the components of bar work identified earlier are generally present in the work. Their relative weighting may vary, depending on a number of factors.

CHAPTER SIX

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF WOMEN AT WORK IN HOTEL BARS

My primary intention in this and the following chapter on women at work in hotel bars is to set out the ethnographic details which led to my interpretations about the significance of gender in the performance of work in hotel bars. The specific differences which became apparent in bar worker-customer interaction depending on the gender of the worker are summarised in the next chapter following the discussion of women in bar work. Following these contrasts I draw my conclusions about women and men in bar work in relation to an ideology of gender pervasive in this society. It is important that this and the following chapter be seen as related parts leading to my analysis and conclusion.

In both chapters I adopt the framework set out in Chapter Four which identified the core-characteristics of bar work as servicing, sociability and social regulation. These core-characteristics of bar work operate in a complex interplay of relationships between staff and customers within the overarching constraint of contract, as discussed earlier.

Some preliminary comments on social structure and social organisation

The detail on women bar workers includes descriptions of their interactions with customers and other staff, based both on my own and their observations. Where possible I have separated out observed behaviour from perceptions about experiences and expectations, and the

context should make clear the source of the data. However, in the ethnographic description, while I specify the source and kind of data utilised, I regard both observations of interactions, on the one hand, and perceptions and evaluations of interactions and social relationships on the other, as significant data, including both my own and those of others involved in the enquiry. I have indicated where I have made analytical interpretations by way of comment on the descriptive detail which follows.

The experiences of women working in different kinds of bars are to some extent generalisable across different classes of bars. However, where a difference in the type of bar seemed significant I have specified this in the text.

As a preliminary to the discussion of the gender-differentiated aspects of bar work, some recapitulation and further specification of the social structure and organisation of hotel bars is necessary. Insofar as bars are informal settings committed to the provisioning of leisure, then both formal patterns of behaviour and formal and explicit constraints are underplayed, or as suggested in Chapter Two, frequent applications of formal, explicit constraints will be costly or impractical. Nevertheless, those concerned with the operation of hotel bars must ensure that they conform to certain external social regulations about the maintenance of order. Drunken or troublesome behaviour is a constant potential in a bar, yet the aim of maintaining profit and custom will not be achieved if bar workers readily resort at every sign of difficult behaviour to the formal sanctions available to them which underlie the surface informality of hotel bars. On the other hand, a bar

which is too loosely regulated may lead to loss of custom. The bar worker is caught in a paradox between these aims.

These points raise the question of the acceptable limits of customer behaviour from the perspective of bar workers. It is not possible to identify a definite set of rules or concrete norms in a setting where, due to the potential for drunken behaviour, definitions of what constitutes acceptable behaviour will of necessity be elastic and variable. My point is that a normative code of behaviour which is ill-defined, broad and shifting may be essential for the continuing operation of bar settings. From the perspective of the bar worker, their definitions about what constitutes acceptable behaviour must necessarily be shifting and elastic, due to the informality and potential drunkenness of behaviour in the setting. In addition, for the bar worker, bar interaction may consist of a highly flexible, speedy and unstable set of shifts through and between various combinations of the core-characteristics of bar work — service, sociability and social regulation — as when a customer switches from abusive to courteous behaviour, or a bar worker from operating within the servicing to the sociability component.*

The biographical background of women bar workers

As a background to ensuing discussion in terms of the various components of bar work, I summarise here the biographical detail of the women bar workers with whom I came into contact in the course of research. The quality and quantity of these contacts were variable. I worked with a total of nine women, with six of them relatively frequently, and

*I owe these points to the combined influence of Goffman (1963, 1967), and Roy Fitzhenry, my supervisor in the first stage of this study, who also influenced my discussion of flexibility and skill in bar work, discussed later in this chapter.

subsequently interviewed three of these, one of them over an extended period. I interviewed four women intensively with whom I never worked but discussions with these were supplemented by on-the-job observations made in the course of visiting them. I had one or more interview or questionnaire sessions with a further twelve women, in some cases supplemented by observation at work. For a further four women the only source of information I had were observations and contacts made while they were at work. Out of this total of twenty-nine women workers I judged my contact with about half of them to move beyond the level of superficial communication and observation.

My presentation in this section is schematic. The data in the appendix provides a more extended presentation than is given here.

Current work and job conditions. The general picture did not reveal a primarily part-time involvement of women in terms of hours. A majority of the women, about 70 percent, worked hours which represented a full-time commitment. A handful of those women who worked full-time hours were not paid wages on a full-time basis, but were paid at a lower rate which was represented as a tax dodge in their favour. A number of these women were aware of this but took no action to rectify the situation. One woman working long hours was paid casual rates, a situation of definite financial advantage. When the hotel underwent a management change her hours were cut down, a step which contributed to a decision to seek work elsewhere.

Union membership tended to be restricted to those who worked full-time, most of whom were members of the union, though few seemed

convinced of its value. Few women took an assertive position about their job conditions, the usual tactic was to switch jobs if dissatisfied.

The kind of hotels and bars worked in ranged widely. As discussed earlier, the focus of this study was on one main city street. However, the bar workers, taken cumulatively, had experience of a range of hotels in Adelaide and elsewhere. Despite the location of the hotels in the same street, they vary in type and style, as indicated in Chapter Two. Not a great deal was made in comments of the possibility that hotels in this street might be markedly different from those elsewhere.

The style of bar worked in varied from public to saloon to lounge bars. In four of the five hotels, women worked in the public bar either permanently or semi-permanently, at least for some period during the research.

Variations in the sorts of bars worked in may have different implications for social regulation (for instance, the frequency of fights) and for the internal status of workers vis-à-vis one another. Whether work occurs in a public, lounge or cocktail bar may bear upon the relative status and wage-earning capacity of workers. An additional factor which can bear on the relative status of workers is the number of people who work a bar at any particular point of time. Thirdly, a bar may become associated with the personality of a particular bar worker. This was not a marked feature of the hotels in the street. Of the two instances where this was approximated, one of the personalities was a man (C: Hotel I), the other a woman (D: Hotel V).

Job history. The hotel experience of the women ranged from those without previous experience to those who had long-term experience, either in a few or a number of hotels. The period of time worked in hotels varied widely, from a time-span of one month to thirty years. About eleven women had worked for a time-span of five years or more. Work patterns varied from women workers who tended to stay with the one hotel for a number of years, to those who had done bar work for a number of years but in a variety of hotels, to those who punctuated bar work with some other type of work, usually unskilled, for example, in factories or restaurants.

For those for whom the job represented temporary work, and some of these stated that they may return to it at some point, seven women were transient on a short-term basis, of less than six months, while another four saw themselves as transient but had in fact worked on a longer-term basis, extending to one or two years. Only two commented that bar work was part of a dual pattern of work.

A number of women said they were working in bars as an escape from boring jobs and cited nursing, office and clerical work. Three women specified this as a reason for doing bar work, although a larger number of mostly younger women stressed that the job provided opportunities for meeting people and was a form of work which could be 'fun'. For about six women the work seemed precipitated by a broken or unhappy marriage. In one of these cases, that of a woman born outside of Australia, the ethic of work for work's sake was verbalised in the form of a denial that it was necessary for the family income.

Background, age and marital status. For those for whom the work was full-time and non-transient, in only a few cases was schooling completed, and only one woman worker had completed post-school formal qualifications (in nurse training), although there were four instances of younger women in tertiary fields working during the course of their education. A further three, who saw their job as transient, had some post-schooling training (secretarial, art).

The bulk of women workers were Australian-born, with about six, possibly more, born outside of Australia.

My estimate of the age range of the women was from twenty-one years to over sixty years. About sixteen of the women were, or appeared to be, in their twenties, some of these in their late twenties. I estimated five of the women to be over thirty, three over forty, and two over fifty.

About fifteen of the women workers were single, a further six were either separated or living in *de facto* relationships, while four lived with their husbands and families. Of the ten women I knew to have children, four of these indicated they were the sole means of support for them, and a further four may have been in this situation, while two of them were living with a bread-winning husband.*

Job commitment. For about seven of the twenty-nine women, bar work seemed to constitute a long-term job pattern, in that they expressed

*As far as I knew none of the women married a man met as a consequence of their work, although as I discuss shortly a variety of relationships were formed with customers.

or showed a liking for the work. Another four expressed some reservations about continuing in the work, but were likely to do so. For the rest, the attitude underlying the comment 'I don't want to be a barmaid the rest of my life' was representative. A number of women viewed their work as transient, stating that they were only in it for the money, for convenience, or because it was the only work available.

Life-style and styles of work. Again variation was evident in the number of women for whom the work intertwined with their general life-style. Of my estimate of less than half the number of women workers, in most cases where this occurred it took the form of hotels, either the place of work or others, looming large in general social life, or in providing opportunities and avenues for male company.

About six workers who could be classified as 'strong personalities', as outgoing in their work, tended to express a liking for the job, or saw it as 'fun'. About the same number of women were more low-key but with a personable and friendly style. Long-staying workers emerged out of both these categories. However, there were about six who were quiet, less outgoing women and although they tended to be among those for whom the work was transient, one of them identified with the work as a long-term occupation. About the same number of women again would be identified as striking in looks; these also tended to have a short-term working pattern, again with one exception.

Class background. In the eighteen cases where the parents' occupation was known, about eight women were clearly of middle-class

background, and from six to nine of working class background.* I comment on the attitudes of parents to bar work later in the discussion.

Code for women workers

Hotel I	H, I, J [†] , K ₁ , K ₂ , K ₃ , K ₄
Hotel IA [§]	F, G, G ₁
Hotel II	L, M, N, O, P, Q, Q ₁ , Q ₂ , Q ₃ , Q ₄
Hotel III	R, S, T, T ₁ , T ₂
Hotel IV	A, B, C, A ₁
Hotel V	D, E, E ₁

Women workers and the servicing component of bar work

In the following discussion I describe instances of interaction between women bar workers and customers, or the accounts of women workers about these, which suggest the nature of the servicing component of the work. The instances have been selected to highlight the expectations of service that customers direct to women workers, and their responses to these. I want to draw attention to the points of tension in the servicing component of the work which suggest the limits and boundaries to what customers may expect or demand and conversely the limits and boundaries to what women workers can or must do within the servicing component.

*I am aware of the oversimplification in my comment on class here. I used my own judgement about the class classification of parents' occupation and view it only as an approximate guide only to income level.

†J was one of the managerial staff in Hotel I.

§I use the referent Hotel IA to refer to Hotel I after it had undergone a management change subsequent to the time that I had worked there.

One of the women workers recounted an incident that happened soon after she began her first job as a bar worker (L: Hotel II). It involved two customers she was later to find out were regulars. They were making a general nuisance of themselves by insisting that everything she did was not right. If it happened that she put ice in their drinks then they indicated that they did not want ice; if she gave them Coke in a bottle, they wanted Coke from the siphon and they were continuing this to a point where she felt they were putting her through some sort of test. She said that at first she felt upset by this treatment, then that she coped with it. It happened that one of the men spilt his drink, which she mopped up, and without saying anything replaced it for him without charge. This, she said, reduced him to silence. Later he apologised to her and after that she said they were fine.

As an instance of the servicing component taken from my own work experience in Hotel II, a customer who on previous occasions had been sexually invasive and cheeky but in a joking manner, on this occasion non-courteously ordered a drink. He avoided specifying his order, which for me had the implication that it was his right to place an order in that way, and if I had been unable to recall his regular drink then that would have reflected on my performance of the work. Fortunately I remembered it on that occasion. Again, later, he called, imperiously, and before several mates: 'Sa put some ice in this please', although the ice bucket was readily within his reach, and on other occasions he might well have reached for it; my response was carefully demure.

On more than one occasion, customers reprimanded women workers for gossiping, a reminder of the servicing component of the work, that they are there to attend the customers, not to gossip among themselves. An anecdote from the already mentioned woman worker (L), who stayed in her first bar work experience in the same hotel for about three months, highlights other forms of behaviour seen as inappropriate for bar workers. She recounted how she went through a phase of being bored and so took to reading a newspaper at work. The boss took her to task for this. A woman who did her knitting on the job was cited as another instance of inappropriate work behaviour.

One woman worker commented that customers are often rude, that they are out to 'ride' bar workers (Q: Hotel II). My own experience and those of other women workers support this point.

From my second work experience at Hotel II, I recorded that as time passed, politeness increased, that there seemed to be an increasing percentage of more polite customers. Nevertheless, behaviour which was varyingly courteous continued as a feature of the work. Furthermore, it is important to note that while a degree of abuse and rudeness could be a feature of initiation, even reflecting perhaps a feeling of intrusion by regular customers of a new face, an incident occurred involving the regular barmaid M, which showed that abuse or rudeness was not restricted to myself as a newcomer. It came as a surprise to me since at the time I thought that the regular barmaid, in contrast to myself, would have been immune in that no regular customer would be rude to her. I was hampered in following the incident too closely, partly because of not wanting to embarrass M further by paying attention, partly because

some of the exchange was in Italian, and in addition there were customers to attend to. My records note that the customer who was rude to her was drunk; but he was often drunk, and while on the sullen side he was usually well-meaning. On this occasion he was making a loud fuss; his audience included one of M's admirers. She did not handle the situation smoothly but was visibly put out, with tense expression. She departed temporarily on some business, then returned; there was further loud and angry exchange. The event dragged out some minutes. I was able to pick up that the argument was about money or incorrect change, about a mistake having been made and about who had made it. It tailed off with the customer adopting a forgiving attitude toward M but with her not happy with the idea that it was her mistake. She muttered something to me about it which suggested she resented the implication that the customer had placed on it. It seemed it had been his view of the matter which dominated the dispute as it rounded off.

I turn now to illustrate an incident which shows that an abusive attitude and 'gallantry' may follow in fast sequence. It also occurred in Hotel II, on an occasion when I served a customer who habitually ordered in a sour and brusque style. At first he made no response to my customary request for payment, along the lines of 'that's twenty-six cents, thanks'. Then, with exaggerated slowness, he moved his hand to his pocket to pay. Almost immediately I walked off to do something else, intending to return shortly. I was impatient with what seemed to be an unnecessary game he was playing, and an unfair one since it could hold up the service of other customers. Frequently when delays in service occur the bar worker becomes the target of the customer's annoyance. One of

the managers' wives was nearby and I commented to her, 'The old crank wouldn't pay'. Shortly after this he came up to her, pointing at me and making a loud fuss — I overheard him repeating 'twenty-six cents'. The manager's wife took the money from him. She did not seem put out with me for not having forced the money from him on the spot, although she might have been if I had not mentioned it beforehand. Later in the evening I had to serve him again; I expected trouble but instead he took my hand, his expression eased my anxiety; I expected a handshake, but instead he kissed my hand and left.

The manner of ordering drinks can become a point of tension in the course of work. At one hotel, some women workers felt strongly that arrogant ordering was particularly characteristic of customers from one particular ethnic group, selecting out and labelling their behaviour from equally culpable customers. One account which also shows up some of the routine aspects of service follows: 'They get annoyed if you ask them to specify their drinks, so you have to try and remember them and then they get annoyed if you make a mistake. One really arrogant customer would call out "Hey, girl", or "Excuse me, miss" when I was in the middle of doing something else like ringing up the till. Despite the fact that they got good service — I was always taking away the empty glasses and tidying up and emptying their ash trays' (Hotel I).

With reference to ordering behaviour, one personal anecdote (from O — Hotel II) recounted how one regular customer, well-known for being a difficult orderer, was handled: this particular customer always made a fuss about wanting a fresh glass. The woman who was working in the bar at the time went up to him and, addressing him in a no-nonsense tone, said,

'Now look, Andre, just hold it, just take it easy'. He said, 'OK, OK, OK'.

Some of the limits of the servicing component are indicated by the following instances. On one occasion in Hotel I, a drunk customer had cut his finger and wanted me to put a band-aid on it for him. I refused, without any apparent consequences. In an instance which similarly suggests the limits of the servicing component of the work, a woman worker was asked by a customer to get him a lottery ticket. She was reluctant, saying that she would not be going down that way to the lottery office for a time. The customer tried his luck and pressed again, getting much the same response. There was no heat apparent in the exchange (A: Hotel IV).

I turn now to look at means of dealing with the servicing component of bar work.

In an instance from Hotel I the customers received a lecture from one of the woman workers (H): some dart playing regulars had been in during the day and H had served them with her usual efficiency and determination to outdo them in satisfying their every demand. H had also given them a lecture on manners, on how they were not supposed to bang on the bar. They had been banging on the bar for attention, as was their habit, one which is a cause of much irritation to bar workers, and H had said, 'Look, I must ask you not to do this, there are other customers here. I have to serve them too, you know. I keep an eye on you and you never have to complain about the service, so would you please mind not banging on the bar.' Afterwards one of them wanted to buy her a drink. This was during her lunch hour and she sat and had it with him.

In a similar instance, in the same hotel, but after several management changes, another woman worker commented that: 'Customers are out to stir, to put you down and make you feel small', and that complaining about the service is one way of doing this. She recounted that her way of dealing with this was to tell such a customer to come and do it himself, and push this line to a point where if he did not, his mates would begin to 'egg him on' and call him a 'piker' (F: Hotel IA).

It was common for women workers to rate cheerfulness and good service as much-needed qualities for the work. While on the job the importance of maintaining a good humour is recognised and it is common to attribute a discontented disposition to being tired. In other words, strain in the job is often explained as due to being tired. I saw this on my first night, in Hotel II, when I observed M's smiling good humour leave for a short time, to be replaced by a worn, tired look. On another occasion, one customer was screaming commands for service. Cries of the woman's name could be heard ringing out persistently, as this customer was panicking about whether or not he was going to be in control of the payment of a round of drinks at that particular moment. I caught sight of M momentarily looking worn; she was flustered but showed it for a brief moment only. On my second night, I recorded that I was impressed by her good humour; with only glimpses of sourness or irritation, usually not directed or apparent to the customer, rather directed at the till or me. On this occasion, she repeated to me, 'When I'm tired, I'm so cranky I hate everybody'. These flashes were usually quickly replaced with a return to good humour.

Critical comments made by this woman of some of her co-workers were suggestive. She recounted how one of the other full-time women workers who was in the job for only a short while, on one occasion said to one of the managers, 'I'm tired, I think I'll sit down for a bit' (Q: Hotel II). This action was not well-received by the manager, nor from the point of view of the person who recounted this, herself a hard worker. One point to note here is that being tired may be used as an excuse for feeling sour or put-out, but it is not a reason for not working hard.

The rating that being 'nice' is important for the work, that being nasty, dull or not smiling, is 'bad' (R: Hotel III), is grounded by instances where if demeanour is outwardly insufficiently good-natured, it may become the cause for comment. This occurred in Hotel II on one occasion when I was working. The wife of one of the managers was behind the bar toward the back, talking to some customers. She called me to serve them with a round of drinks which I did. I returned to the bar area proper when she again called to me 'Hey, they reckon up here (motioning the men I had just served) that you can't smile; you can smile'. I smiled, at a loss, as I was surprised that my mood was showing, or that they would notice.

In keeping with the expectations customers have of pleasant service, an aspect of the work is the maintenance of a good humour (as in 'service with a smile'), although this need not be met by a reciprocal obligation on the part of the customer. However customer expectations are not necessarily always met. The simple withdrawal of the pleasantries accompanying service, such as smiling, can be rich in communication.

This point draws attention to the overlap in the various components of bar work as it relates to both the components of servicing and sociability.

Woman workers and the sociability component

In what follows I describe observed interaction between customers and women bar workers, and their accounts of their work experiences relating to the sociability component. Within the sociability component I identify a sub-set of components which include:

(1) a sexual component — the woman worker is viewed as an object of sexual interest*;

(2) a socialising component — the woman worker is viewed as a companion;

(3) a component of social diplomacy — as a witness to immorality or lax behaviour likely as a consequence of drunken behaviour, the woman worker is required to exercise qualities of discretion toward customers. This raises the issue of trust.

I begin by examining aspects of the sexual component, and as with the servicing component, examine instances which suggest the limits and boundaries to behaviour which fall within the sexual component.

For women working in predominantly male-frequented bars, a major part of their work entails a range of interaction which operates within a sexual code. A variety of sexual references and overtures come from

*I follow Spradley and Mann (1975) in their definition of 'an object' and refer to it in the conclusion.

customers, including joking, obscenities, flirting behaviour and overtures ranging from the blunt, the brief, the unserious to the more persistent and elaborate.

According to one woman worker, the majority of sexual overtures in bars are 'joking or drunken' (L: Hotel II). She commented on the constant stream of sexual banter, complimenting and flirting that went on in the bar, most of it lighthearted. An instance of lighthearted sexual banter in the bar:

Customer: What are your boobs made of?

L: Plastic, a bit of concrete, some bits and pieces of wire.

L commented that a serious overture is embarrassing and could recall few such approaches. She found that most overtures could be responded to jokingly, since according to her the approach was usually not serious. She added that they could become serious if the worker wanted to take a customer up on a proposition. According to L, there was an ethnic differentiation here. She said that Greek customers tended to engage in non-serious sexual exchanges 'as though it was expected of them'. Australians, she commented, seemed to need to get drunk before they engaged in propositions, and often it seemed to be a more serious game with them. She gave an account of an Australian who, when he got very drunk, was arrogantly propositioning her saying, 'Why don't you come home to bed with me?' — just a straightforward bed proposition, she said, with no pretences about taking her out to dinner.

Being stared at is a simple form of attention which falls within the sexual code. There were instances of prolonged staring, where the term 'body-stocktaking' would be appropriate (Anonymous 1966:64). On

one occasion at work in Hotel II I noticed this treatment being given to the regular worker. In this case, the customer was staring openly and appreciatively at her breasts (M: Hotel II). M was dressed as usual in a style which was simultaneously attractive and genteel, downplaying her sexuality. In situations involving staring, my only tactic was to ignore it, but such tactics were not much protection in the more extreme cases of staring as the one instanced here.

Some instances which are intended to partake of flattery:

Worker to customer: Would you like something, K?

Customer: My dear, if you bring it for me I will
drink anything.

Another instance: 'How's the most beautiful barmaid in town?' Or: 'I wish I had a nice girl like you for a wife'.

I quote one instance at length because it highlights a number of points, including the rapidity with which behaviour can transform from one component to another, in this instance from the socialising component to the sexual code. That the customer assumes that the woman worker is open to invitation is also demonstrated from the following incident.

Also worth noting about the encounter is the knowledge of the woman worker's biography pretended by the customer, and the right of access to the personal details of the worker exercised by the customer. This incident happened on the fourth night I worked in Hotel II and concerned K, who used to be a customer when I worked nearby at Hotel I, almost a year before. The occasion I recount here was the first time we had come across one another in this new situation.

I recorded at the time that I said a friendly 'hello' when I first saw the customer in the bar. He was with one or two mates, and looked slightly startled. He located me when I replied to his enquiry: 'No, I used to know you from when I worked at the hotel up the street'. He remembered, recalled my name and asked me whether I was still at 'school' (I presumed he meant 'university' or else he thought I was a teacher). I replied that I was and he wanted to know whether I knew a girl then teaching, and gave a name unfamiliar to me. I told him I did not think I knew her, and he responded by assuring me that I did. He asked me if I still lived in the same place which surprised me because I was certain he never knew. For the next half an hour or so, using my name, he called for my attention, several times, sometimes not for service but to talk. I might have been busy, and said, 'In a moment, K', and felt irritated, wanting to avoid his conversation. At some point earlier, K said, 'Oh, yes, I only went to the Hotel I because of you'. I reacted to try and indicate, 'empty flatterer'. At another point, K said, 'You're getting lovelier with the years'; I replied lightheartedly, 'So are you, K' which raised a laugh from him and his companions. At one point K called me over, saying something about Monday and what would I be doing, and he would be very pleased if I came down..somewhere...with him. I failed to catch the details and the exact nature or seriousness of his suggestion; my capacity to banter with him was depleted. I moved off quickly in pursuit of work, saying something like 'perhaps', attempting to be lighthearted and joking.

Some points worth noting here include, firstly, the question of what the customer was likely to draw out of my being at university. This

was resolved by the query about whether I knew a girl, a teacher. He countered my reply that I thought not, by assuring me that I did. There are several interpretations of this. One clear point is that it was the beginning of a transformation of our link from one which was hotel-specific or work-limited, to something more than this. The conversational development following this is clearer: the question 'Do you still live in the same place?' pretended to a level of knowledge or a social tie which never existed. This encounter is an instance of one where a customer makes mileage out of an exchange initiated by my having said 'hello'. Some of the early part of the encounter took place while the customer was with some companions, and this suggests variable interpretations. The customer, through his comments, may have been engaging in some impression management partly for the sake of his companions, either as a 'macho' man, or he may have been working at preventing that interpretation and attempting to locate the relationship in a non-bar, non-sexual context. The ambiguity of the opening exchanges makes either of these interpretations possible.

The customer traded on knowing my name, and the servicing situation, in an attempt to rope me into talking with him. If I was busy this was irritating, but being busy enabled me to avoid dwelling with him. There was some complimentary display, shifting into joking.

What I usually interpreted as reluctance on my part to hear the precise details of invitations proffered by customers may have been reinforced by the low tones in which they were offered, when companions or other customers are nearby. What I needed at this point was a good joking closure, but I was unable to come up with one. Nevertheless, it is an

important point that I felt I needed to avoid giving offence. As a customer he had a certain right of command even if he was overworking it. Another alternative response to the one I adopted, may have been to 'butter him up', but offending him with a reprimand was not an option I felt I could have taken in this situation.

Some women bar workers commented bluntly about the sexual component of the attitudes of customers toward women who work in bars. A young woman worker commented that customers view them as sex objects and that all hotels are the same in this respect (B: Hotel IV). This woman had worked in a number of hotels in capital cities and provincial rural cities.

Another recounted how a seventy-year-old customer had offered her \$100 for 'half an hour' (P. Hotel II), and a similar account from a neighbouring hotel of a customer who gave the woman worker \$50. She claimed to have torn it up (F: Hotel IA). She added that customers 'see you as a prostitute just because you are behind the bar'. This account came from a hotel where prostitutes were among the regular custom. However, comments by and about women who work in other hotels in the street generally not known for having prostitutes as patrons suggests that this attitude occurs elsewhere also. One Asian girl who worked in a relatively reputable small hotel in the street commented that besides the many invitations she received to go out with customers, she was seen as a prostitute with frequent regularity (S: Hotel III).*

* A woman who was a friend of one of the workers in Hotel IV, an Aboriginal woman who had subsequently departed interstate, commented that she thought the customers saw this woman as a prostitute.

A variation of this theme came from a young woman, a trainee teacher who worked casually in a couple of hotels, one of them outside the street. She commented that problems arose with her boyfriend becoming jealous of 'all the attention I got' (G: Hotel IA).

A rare denial of the sexual component in customer attitudes came from a woman worker who stated that she did not go out with customers and had not received any invitations to do so. However, she added that she had had a couple of 'propositions'. 'She had worked in an interstate hotel for six months or so, and said that this had not happened to her before. She commented that weekend evenings were different, with the implication that customers' attentions to women workers peaked at these times. She added that while she was single, she told customers that she was married (Q: Hotel II). I return to the theme of contacts outside of work between customers and women bar workers, and the significance of boyfriends and of being single or married in bar work shortly.

I turn now to look at some of the ways women workers handled the sexual component of the work. In response to my questioning, one woman indicated that it was not a major bugbear for her to handle the sexual overtures that are part of the work (L: Hotel II). Mostly she said she handled it jokingly, as when she 'cuts customers down' in response to the question 'What time do you finish?' with the answer 'too late for you'. She said that if a customer started to get too serious she could walk away and pretend to be busy. I asked whether she ever offended a customer. She did not think that she had, recalling perhaps a couple, but if she offended them she tended to 'butter them up' next time they came in. She said that she made a point of never showing

awkwardness. But it was not always possible for her to handle situations in an easy, lighthearted or joking manner. She cited as an instance one fellow in the following anecdote which documents also the sexual joking behaviour of customers.

This customer came into the hotel and as L gave him a drink, he grabbed his crotch and cried in mock desperation, 'Oh, oh, it's going stiff, it's getting stiff, oh, oh'. I asked her how she responded and she said she was at first taken aback and thought it was a bit perverted but probably just laughed, since it was fairly obvious it was intended as a joke. She commented that in contrast to the behaviour of some customers she found this instance of sexual joking relatively easy to deal with, citing one customer who was fond of making rude gestures with his hands as an instance of the kind of customer she found 'a real nuisance'.

I have incomplete details of the few instances of serious approaches that L could remember. One was a young man on his own, who had asked her out more than once: 'A nice young man, but quiet: the sort that should have a steady young girlfriend". In this case, the features of the serious overture which made it awkward for her to deal with jokingly were, in her view, that the man was young and alone, being perceived by her as lonely and serious in intent, presumably was not drunk, and asked more than once.

In several incidents from my work experiences, the thin line between an easy and awkward response to customer's attentions showed up. One instance involved a customer who was annoying me, although I tried not to show it. In answer to his enquiry, 'Do you have a boyfriend" I

responded 'It's against the rules to answer questions' which I tried to pass off jokingly without success, and followed up by walking away. He persisted with this line of questioning until after closing time when he said, 'I suppose you've got to go home and cook yourself a meal, or does your husband cook it?' I smiled and shook my head. Then he asked again, 'Are you married?' At this point I could not hide my irritation and I used a variation on the line used earlier, saying 'I don't answer customers' questions after closing time'. He seemed to accept this and left shortly afterwards without any farewell exchange. I was left with a feeling that I had not been sufficiently good humoured, that I should have played up to him more than I had.

A more colourful approach is taken to customer cheek by one experienced woman bar worker, who recounted the following instances of repartee, used by her with the effect of 'putting customers down': 'Look, if you're as big below as you're mouth, I'll come home with you', or 'You couldn't afford me'. She also commented that it is important to joke with customers so as not to cause them offence (T: Hotel III).

One feature of customer interaction in bar settings is the various means whereby customers may attempt to shape the behaviour or demeanour of women workers. One simple instance of this occurred in Hotel II where a young regular repeatedly called to one woman worker in loud tones, 'Hey, why don't you wear a mini-skirt?' and 'When are you going to wear a mini-skirt?' Customers may comment, either favourably or unfavourably, on the clothing of women bar workers.

Attempts at shaping or channelling the behaviour of women bar workers are made on occasions when woman workers are perceived to be

standing-off, or insufficiently receptive to customer expectations about their sexuality. In both the following instances, customers resorted to a process of labelling women so perceived, as lesbians.

One young woman (O), who worked in her first bar job at Hotel II for a month only, recounted how she came to work slightly early one day for a shift due to start in the mid-afternoon. One of the customers invited her to have a drink with him which she did. She commented: 'I guess I might have been pretty rude because I sat next to him and had a drink, but I was talking mainly to N' (her co-worker and friend who was serving at that point). The customer asked whether O had a boyfriend. She replied, 'No, not at the moment'. The customer then said 'What's the matter with you — are you a lesbian?' O said she got up from where she was sitting with the angry retort 'What would you know — I have never in all my life heard such rubbish and bullshit' and stormed off behind the bar. She added that she thinks the customer may have later complained to the manager. This same woman in the near future left her job on hearing rumours that she was to be sacked.

A variant of this kind of channelling behaviour can be seen from a comment by one woman worker about how, during a sexual liaison she was having with the manager, customers (apparently unaware of this development) grumbled, 'What's the matter with her — she's not married — yet she doesn't want to go out'. Yet another variation of this theme was recounted to me by one of the managers of another hotel about one of the women workers who openly declared herself as a lesbian to other workers at the hotel. A customer taunted her with 'You're only a lesbian because you're so ugly'. Her reaction to this, I was told, was to 'turn on the charm by prettying herself up and picking up a fellow'.

This last anecdote raises the question of the limits to the sexual component of bar behaviour. What behaviour, both on the part of customers and women workers, moves beyond or near to the boundaries of what is acceptable within bar settings?

In an extension of an earlier anecdote about nuisances with a bent for obscenity who came into the bar, L commented that the same customer who was given to making rude gestures was inclined to give verbal as well as gesticular details of his sexual exploits with women. L indicated that he was a particularly bad case, that he came in and made a nuisance of himself every couple of weeks and sometimes was banned from the bar for a while (Hotel II).

As another example of a serious, difficult or distasteful case, L told of the customer who recounted that the night before when he was sleeping with his wife, having sex with her, he was thinking, 'dreaming' that it was the barmaid. I have not a clear picture of L's response to this. Her account only suggests that she was extremely taken aback by it, and felt that this came close to what she saw as 'beyond the pale' although she did not indicate that she reprimanded or sanctioned his behaviour.

More than one woman worker commented that customers from various non-Australian ethnic groups use language as a cover for making sexual references to woman workers. One of them made the following comment: 'You should hear them; they say the most obscene things about the girls behind the bar' (O: Hotel II). Another woman worker in the same hotel commented that in general men treat women who work behind bars like 'dirt'. She especially cited one ethnic group, her own, and recounted how one

customer was saying all the things he would like to do to her -- not knowing she spoke the language. She responded by cursing his mother, at which she said he went white, and apologised (P: Hotel II).

Customers do not have a monopoly on obscenity. One woman commented on her use of obscenities in the bar, saying she came down to the 'level' of her customers.

The role of a protective management is brought out in an instance where a customer was swearing abuse at one woman worker, calling her 'a fucking slut' (S: Hotel III). Another customer grabbed at her, at which point the management spoke to them with the reprimand 'We only hire respectable girls here'.

This incident raises two issues of interest. One concerns the extent of physical contact that goes on in hotel bars. The physical contact that can occur between customers and women workers can either be friendly, and more or less reciprocated, as when a departing customer drunkenly puts an arm around a woman worker in the course of an amicable exchange (F: Hotel IA). There are a range of less friendly contacts, as when a customer may pull at a worker's clothing or body either for attention or in the course of being difficult. The physical nature of the bar is relevant here. In general, the standardised bar design separates bar workers from customers, affording a worker some protection from unwanted physical contacts, but some bar designs, as with sections of the bar in Hotel II, may place the bar worker in an enclosed space, facilitating contact.

The other issue concerns the protective attitude reported by some commentators that customers may exhibit toward women workers. For

instance, Summers comments that regular customers have been known to afford protection to barmaids by admonishing strangers who get 'fresh' or swear (Summers 1975:83-84). I have little evidence on this point. It was mentioned by an older and long-experienced worker who commented that a co-worker of hers, also an older woman, was accorded this form of protection by regular customers against the attentions of strangers. She commented that her friend had habitually worked in the public bar of this hotel (Hotel IV), that she was 'very much loved by everybody and there would not be a customer who would dare' (the implication was not filled out, presumably 'misbehave') but 'if a stranger said a word out of place...' Again, the implication is left to the listener to fill out (C: Hotel IV). One implication is that the woman worker becomes a form of 'mascot' of the regular customers to be 'protected from' transient customers.

I comment on two further features of the sexuality component before moving on to explore non-sexual aspects of the sociability component. My point takes off from an earlier cited instance in which a customer enquired as to the boyfriend of the woman bar worker. The points to note are the uses that references to the boyfriends or the marital status of women workers are put to in bar settings.

Firstly, the happily married woman worker, or at least one whose husband was likely to drop by the bar for a drink, was seen by the woman member of the management team of Hotel I, who made this point, as bad for business. Not only would the husband be getting his drinks 'on the house', but he may object to what other customers said about his wife and how they behaved toward her. If so, she continued, he might say something

like 'I won't have you talking to my wife like that'. I was told that one interstate hotel had a ban on boyfriends coming into the bar.

Secondly, a number of women workers commented on the problem of having to deal with customer enquiries about boyfriends and their marital status. More than once, one of them commented on having to say to customers: 'No, no boyfriend, not at the moment' (O: Hotel II). She believed that if you have a boyfriend, as her co-worker (N) had, the customers 'leave you alone'. She added that some of the customers, especially those from a particular ethnic group, had 'left her alone' when she was living at home, but as soon as she left home, they were 'at her', pestering her as to whether she was married or had a boyfriend. She commented disparagingly at this point on the 'level' of customer attitude. Another woman reported that she had made up having a boyfriend to avoid customers wondering what was the matter with her for not taking their offers up (R: Hotel III). The view that women workers were afforded a form of protection by saying they had a boyfriend or by having one apparent was challenged by a woman worker who commented that 'boyfriend or no boyfriend and even if you're married' it did not alter customer attitudes (E: Hotel V).

This use of attachment to men as a device to parry the attentions of male customers is shown from an instance I witnessed on the job on one occasion. I did not hear what the customer, a young 'Casanova' type, whispered to my co-worker, but I overheard her respond 'but I have known you a long time...my husband you know...'. The same woman worker recounted her early days at work in the bar: how men kept trying, how she always said 'No, I love my husband'. In time she had an affair with

one of the customers, and both she and her co-worker, who also went out several times with a customer, suggested that 'things get better' with other customers once a stable relationship with one of the customers in the bar became visible. One of them commented that when it became known that she had been going out with one of the customers on a regular basis, it had the payoff of giving her some kind of 'respect' in the bar as she was then regarded as that fellow's girlfriend.

A different perspective was presented by another woman who commented on the need for caution in going out with customers, or even having a steady boyfriend as she had for a time. This could become awkward if it was broken off as 'he may tell his mates, and they may want to have a go'. She added that 'sleeping around' with customers makes a barmaid unpopular (R: Hotel III).

It is relevant to comment here on the extent to which women workers take up the sexual and social access made available to them by customers. As indicated by the foregoing comments, this was variable. Some women did and some did not, just as some dressed to highlight their sexuality and some did not. The pattern of those women who did take advantage of the social and sexual access afforded by customers varied from establishing relatively stable relationships to those which were less so. Something has already been said about the pressures which operate on women workers in this direction. Most outstanding is the double bind identifiable in the views I have quoted that women workers became unpopular with customers if they slept with them (R: Hotel III), but that customers grumbled if women workers appeared to be 'standing off' in their relationships with them (E: Hotel V). Here I explore

some of the patterns which became apparent in the relationships of women workers with customers which extended outside of work.

A number of women workers expressed the opinion, confirmed by the varied forms which customer overtures and advances took, that many of these were lighthearted or non-serious. One woman commented that many customers, on being taken up on their suggestions, would probably 'fall over'. She said she went out for about a month with one man who was a non-regular where she worked, adding that she would not go out with regular customers (O: Hotel II).

Another woman who had an affair with a customer recounted about her early days at work that, despite the fact that she was happily married, 'after hundreds and hundreds along comes the one who is impossible to refuse. You could go out to lunch, have a few drinks, and hold back, but the one you won't say no to will come along; after all, you're just a woman.' After a period of a few years, this relationship terminated in an unhappy and dramatic resolution, with disputes over sums of money, with the man's involvement with another woman, and with the series of events receiving some public exposure. The woman resigned from the job, largely due to these events, although she had been talking of getting out of the situation for some time because of the emotional and personal difficulties it presented to her, and their implications for her family and life outside the bar. During this time, the by-now ex-lover was cited by the woman as having spread the story around the bar that she was a prostitute.

Another woman worker who worked in her job for a short time of only three months or so, also went out with a customer on a number of

occasions (L: Hotel II). Her co-worker (M) commented at one point that these two were to be married. L presented a different picture, indicating that she later wished she had not got involved, and although it was never her intention to remain in the job for long, her comments suggested that the desire to escape the implications of her involvement may have triggered her decision to leave.

In another instance, from the same hotel, I was told by M about a customer and another woman worker who were going out together and how he used to come in to the bar frequently while his girlfriend worked there. According to M, he was unhappily married with two children. The two of them tried living together for a while but, M said, it seemed he could not make the break. The woman left for interstate 'looking very pale and sick'. M commented 'I think he loved her but he was a Casanova'. According to M, the woman in question had a small child, and was on the run from her husband or family.

Less spectacular and dramatic, and less stable networks are suggested by women workers who commented on having post-work drinks or other outings of a more casual nature with customers. Opportunities for socialising with customers during work-breaks are suggested by one woman's comments that she sometimes joined a customer on the other side of the bar (E: Hotel V). An extended instance of this occurred during my work in Hotel I when a group of women workers who had been talking and drinking throughout the afternoon were joined by some of the regular male customers in the early evening. The conversation punctuated with joking insults, ran over views about women and equality, sex, the barmaids in the hotel and the quality of service. This was an occasion when socialising

occurred without any moves being made to extend the contacts outside the situation, either in a sexual or any other direction.

In bar settings, opportunities for casual sexual liaisons abound. I return to this question in a later discussion relating to the stereotyping of women who work in bars. One of the women interviewed spoke disparagingly of a woman she had worked with elsewhere whom, she said, 'would sleep with everybody and anything' (G: Hotel IA). One of the women who drank regularly in Hotel I, in the public bar, and as a consequence shared the reputation of prostitute given to women who patronised the hotel in this way, had worked formerly in at least one, and possibly two, other hotels in the street (definitely at Hotel II for a period). Apart from this, there is little evidence to suggest that women who worked behind the bars in the street combined this with professional involvement in prostitution.

This discussion of the sexual code identifies a double-bind which operates with reference to women bar workers in the definition of their sexuality. Regardless of whether a woman worker would or would not take customers up on their various offers and invitations, pressures to do so can be clearly identified within the bar setting. Women workers are thus caught in a web of contradiction whereby their failure to conform to assumptions commonly made by customers, that they are sexually open and available, is interpreted in terms of there being 'something wrong with them'. The stereotyping and labelling process in bar settings is such that it cannot allow a woman the luxury of sexual neutrality, that is, the sexuality of women bar workers is potentially always relevant to the social situation.

One constraint that operates on the network patterns of women workers, especially with reference to work within the bar, is that bar staff need to maintain a balance in their relationships with customers. If they appear to give favoured treatment to particular customers this unrolls a set of problems, including likely resentment by other customers and the suspicion or annoyance of management. This relates back to the point that bars are informal settings for contractual sociability.

Women workers and the socialising component of bar work

In this section I isolate out exchanges between customers and women bar workers where the sexual component is less evident, giving way to a merely companionable or socialising component. Some preliminary comment is necessary about the limitations apparent in this section and the framework I have developed to deal with these.

The first point is that the data on the socialising or companionable component impresses as sparse in contrast to those of other components. This could be attributed to a combination of factors. Firstly, two of my work experiences consisted of casual evening work on Friday and Saturday nights. I have already referred to one woman's comments that weekend evenings were 'different' to the rest of the week, presumably reflected in my own preference when I was working full-time for daytime shifts, because the sexual component of the work was easier to manage, although still in evidence and always a potential.

A second factor contributing to my limited experience of interaction with customers which was merely companionable, without either

explicit or implicit sexual connotations may have been the limited time which I spent working, my lack of ease with the sexual component of the work, my age, or my personal and theoretical orientation. However, against these objections and by way of circumventing further discussion of them at this point, I would place the comment of one young woman worker, who had work experience in a number of hotels (B: Hotel IV). She commented 'If you talk to them [i.e. the customers], they end up asking you out, even the fifty-year-olds'.

In the view of one woman worker, having time to listen is a quality which makes for popularity with customers. Leaving aside exchanges which fall into either the servant or sexual components of the work, what is it that customers and women workers talk about? I draw first from some instances selected from my own experiences and those of other women workers as they were either observed or recounted to me, before contrasting this against what women workers said about the content of conversation with customers.

One customer talked to me about his impending holidays and his visits to a neighbouring hotel. We discussed the state of health of the barman who worked there who was known to us both. Another commented on his hangover, another on his illnesses. One older customer showed me a group photograph of himself when he was younger and got me to pick him out from others in the same photograph. Another commented on his family, on the fact that his daughter had married a 'pom'.*

*In Australia, slang for an English-born person: a 'pom' or 'pommie'.

The following instances from the experiences of other women workers are equally bland. One woman worker chatted to a customer about the weather. One older customer addressed a woman behind the bar in nonsense verse. One woman worker talked to a customer about her discontent with a new management. She described the customer as a 'lovely chap'. He worked at the local brewery and told her she could get a job in a brewery pub and to phone him and he would give her a verbal reference.

This selection of topics of conversation needs to be placed against the notion expressed in one woman worker's comment that 'customers talked to and trust barmaids' (E: Hotel V). This concept of women who work in bars having a position of trust in relation to customers is popularly recognised as one characteristic of the work. This shows up in Summers' comment that drinkers will accept chidings and rebukes from barmaids which, coming from their wives, would be unpardonable. 'It is not uncommon for a man to entrust his pay packet to the barmaid, instructing her how much he can afford to spend, and then accepting without argument her notification that his drinking for that night is over' (Summers 1975:83).

This perception is taken even further by one woman worker, of many years' experience and now retired, who commented that the work involves being an 'underpaid psychologist' (C: Hotel IV). The comments of this woman and a number of comments made in the course of reaction to my research by interested outsiders suggest that an element of the work of women in bars draws on the notion of being motherly, of being an unpaid social worker or mother confessor. Some instances from the experiences of longer-term women workers are consistent with this image. One

recounted that a customer talked to her about his two girlfriends, one of whom was a co-worker of this woman, and about his problem of making up his mind about them (*sic.*) (M: Hotel II). In another anecdote from the retired woman worker, she recalled a customer saying to her 'You know, I don't mind you telling me I've had enough and that I'm not going to get any more, but I'm not having these bloody new girls telling me what I can drink or can't'.

In the opinion of a woman who was part of the managerial staff at one hotel, the women workers who conform to this image of barmaids are rare (J: Hotel I). She acknowledged that one older woman worker she knew may do so on the grounds that when this woman was away sick, the customers noticed, and enquired after her whereabouts. Even more pragmatic is the view of a brewery executive who commented bluntly that workers 'don't have enough time to be mother confessors'.

Turning to the comments of women workers about what it is that customers talk about with them, a number of them commented that women and sex are among the list of topics discussed. In the words of one of them, 'customers trust and talk to you — they tell you their family problems, talk about their girlfriends and everything' (P: Hotel II). Another responded that customers talk about politics, personal matters and women, another that topics include the non-serious, non-personal and sex (E: Hotel V).

The point to be drawn from these comments is that customers talk about a variety of topics but that women and sex feature prominently. In themselves these comments throw no direct light on the detailed content of what it is that customers entrust to women bar workers but

they highlight a discretionary component attached to the work. In response to my suggestion that being diplomatic is an important part of the work, one woman commented, 'Well, this is it. Oh, very, very' (C: Hotel IV).

The need for discretion can be most simply seen in an instance when to make a fuss, to stare, seemed a transgression of the situational anonymity which workers must confer on customers as a part of working in a bar. On one occasion one of the manager's wives in Hotel II drew my attention to a customer she identified as a female impersonator, who made a brief visit to the bar. We both paused and stared. By counterpoint, this stresses that there are situations when workers need to pay attention socially and in other ways to customers, when the servicing or sociability components become manifest, yet in other situations anonymity must be conferred on customer behaviour, when workers exhibit a neutrality or discretion toward them. In those hotels frequented by prostitutes, this discretionary response would be directed toward customers when they are socialising or transacting with them, as it would in any situation where customers' socialising is directed away from bar workers to other customers.

A simple form of sociability is manifest in the frequency with which customers know and use the names of bar staff or ask what they are when they do not. On a rare occasion I was introduced for no apparent reason other than sociability to a customer's mates.

A common form of bar behaviour, that of buying the bar worker a drink, may have a range of meanings depending on the context. It may reflect a gesture of appreciation and little more. It may be the means by which customers establish a more personal tie with the bar worker;

and it may be a way in which a customer traps the bar worker into sociability. The customary response is for the bar worker to salute the buyer; and usually have the drink nearby, so the spot becomes one to which she will return after attending to other customers. Thus, the buying of a drink may be located within the sociability component of bar interaction. It presents various problems for bar workers, both in terms of avoiding being locked into sociability with customers one would rather avoid, of avoiding the pressures of customers to do so, and, more pragmatically, in avoiding getting drunk on the job. Drinking with customers has implications for social regulation and I discuss it further in that context.

The customs of tipping and drink-buying which operate between customers and bar workers have implications beyond those I dwell on here. Here I want to make the point that various material exchanges between customers and women workers may take forms which have no apparent or immediate implications, as in the comment 'Have one for yourself' which is an invitation to have a drink which entails no immediate obligation by the recipient, who may prefer, and customarily is free to take the money instead of a drink. In contrast, the more formal enquiry 'Can I buy you a drink' throws out a more definite obligation, including spending some time in the course of consuming the drink with the customer. A critical point which I return to later is that the meaning of buying a drink for a male bar worker is different to the meaning of buying a drink for a woman worker.

I round off this section with a detailed account of a tipping incident since it highlights some of the points I want to make. It was

an experience which occurred at Hotel II where one night an Italian customer I had seen before, but did not class as a regular, gave me a \$2 tip. This was not done in a flamboyant manner, just quietly saying 'This is for you'. I was plummeted into confusion by the size of the tip. I took the money with little reaction, wondering if I had heard correctly. I spent a brief moment at the till, with my back to the customer wondering what to do about it. I could not see how I could refuse the tip, but I did not want to take it, feeling both trapped and suspicious about the motive.* In contrast to some of the other women workers, I rarely got tips, only the leftovers from the change. Up until that point I had barely noticed the customer who had tipped me, so it was not as though I had been serving him regularly. I resolved to pretend that I did not know that it was intended as such, and presented the \$2 (with the other small change) back to the customer. Quietly, without fuss, pleasantly enough, fairly offhand, but firmly, he said 'No, that's for you...' He had been talking for some time fairly earnestly with one other customer. I said 'Thank you', continuing to feel awkward, smiling, wondering if some special reaction was required for such a tip. Subsequently, I tried to avoid the pair of them without being obvious. I was relieved when shortly after (roughly fifteen minutes) he left the bar without saying goodbye. No fuss or special demands had been made. At the time, I concluded that he must have had a windfall of some kind, and without self-interest was sharing it around.

I thought little more about the incident until several hours later when I noticed a man whom I sinkingly recognised as the same tipster.

*The concept I describe later as the 'structure of suspicion' is relevant here.

This time, he was drinking with a free-floating, larger group, and he did not seem to be with anyone in particular as he was earlier, when he was absorbed directly in conversation with a companion. The bar was not very busy which was to be to my disadvantage in the following encounter, since I was hampered in pretending busyness, simply because there were not many customers about. Shortly after I noticed his return to the bar, the customer separated himself from his companions, and standing in front of the bar, attracted my attention. I had to lean over to hear what it was he had said, saying 'What?' Response: 'Do you want to come for a coffee?' I said, attempting to sound matter of fact and straight to the point: 'No, no thanks, I'm really tired; I've been to the beach all day'. He persisted: 'Just a quick coffee?' I repeated 'No', smiling, 'I couldn't really'. I was feeling inadequate in my style of refusal; I kept smiling, feeling rather desperate, thinking I must look pleasant, but keep refusing, hoping that he would accept it and let matters rest. This was combined with moving away, pretending busyness whenever possible. I was really put out by this \$2 tipster, who was nevertheless quite charming. At one point he leant over, saying in louder, harder tones than he had used before: 'You, you, are you refusing me?' Soon after, I attempted to ease the tension with an innocuous question: 'Is that your newspaper?', indicating one nearby. Shortly after he came back with 'Sure you won't change your mind?' All this time I felt in a difficult situation. His next move was: 'Well, at least I can buy you a drink - what will you have?' I said 'Soda water, thanks', and saluted him with a 'cheers', wondering if I had done the wrong thing and whether I should have had a decent drink instead of a soda water and whether I

should have drawn attention to him having bought the drink by saluting him — was this diplomatic before his mates? Soon after, he offered me a chip, and I found I moved into the coquette role; he held the chip up to me, I took the chip out of his fingers into my mouth like clockwork; to have refused would have been unthinkable. Soon after he left solo. He did not say goodbye.

The instance highlights a common bar custom, tipping, rich in implication for analysis, some of which I comment briefly on here. The size of the tip and its rarity alerted me to wonder what special demands may be entailed by it. My attempt to return the tip under the guise of change was circumvented, and the gift was confirmed. There could be no mistake or misunderstanding on this score. As an inexperienced worker, I was concerned whether there were customary reactions that are used in these situations, as there are when customers make a specific point of buying the worker a drink, as already mentioned. I coped by avoiding the customer as far as was possible without being obvious. I was relieved by the departure and dismayed by the re-appearance of the tipping customer. On his return one of my tactics in a difficult situation, that of pretending to be busy, of stressing the service component, was undermined by the quiet phase of the bar at this point. The significance of the customer's socialising pattern with other customers in the bar for facilitating his making an approach to the woman worker was evident also; from his first visit when he seemed to be in the company of one other, perhaps even having come in with him, to his later visit where he was able to detach himself from his companions in order to make his move. In my responses I tried a range of refusals. I was feeling on edge for

most of this time. At first, I tried being 'straight', matter-of-fact and to-the-point. I tried to tone down my initial refusal with smiles, combined with shooting off on mostly pretended work tasks whenever possible.

The customer's hard-toned comment, 'You, are you refusing me?', could be interpreted as reflecting the servicing component of the job, reinforced and given new meaning by the tip I was unable to refuse. I defused this with irrelevancy. Later he returned to press his suit, and it seemed, attempted to restore the balance clearly in his favour with the presentation to me of another gift in the form of a drink. My response reflected both my inexperience and discomfort in the performance of bar work. Throughout this sequence my attitude to the customer was one of ambivalence: while I was put out, and felt out of balance and awkward throughout most of the sequence, I was not irritated by him as much as I had been with other customers. Simultaneously, I was experiencing a trapped feeling, which stemmed from being unable to control or direct the situation or extricate myself from it. This ambivalence may have shaped my reaction in the final sequence which constituted an obedient response to the dictates of playing the coquette. On other occasions I may have refused or extricated myself before events reached this point. On the other hand, my obedient reaction may have been my reciprocation to the customer -- his return on his earlier gifts. When I refer in my description of doing the 'wrong thing', I refer to making the situation worse than it was by my clumsy and awkward behaviour.

This instance adds to those explored earlier which showed up the potential for the sexual component to emerge in customer-woman bar worker exchanges.

Women workers and social regulation

In the discussion of social regulation which follows, I explore some instances of serious trouble in bar settings.

By 'serious trouble' I refer to behaviour which has the potential for disrupting the bar setting as a whole. Troublesome behaviour which becomes the focus of attention of the whole or most of the bar disrupts business, ongoing routine and social activities. In contrast, difficulties which are part of the routine of the work may be apparent only to the worker.

I have referred earlier to a number of constraints which operate to discourage bar workers from imposing formal sanctions on customers. The following incidents suggest the tensions that bar workers operate under in work situations when disguised or more subtle techniques of social regulation become inadequate to deal with the situation at hand. These tensions flow from a setting in which technically bar workers may fall back on legal or other more formal steps to achieve regulation, but where the contingencies of the setting favour disguised means of social control.

These incidents also suggest the tensions which operate for women bar workers in such situations. I have selected three situations drawn from my records of my work experience where drunkenness and/or violence had to be dealt with. They are taken from my first job experience (Hotel I).

The first instance. One morning an old derelict shuffled in, in unkempt dress. I wondered whether I should serve him. It was Saturday morning, and having had some previous experience of serving 'derros', even one drink, I was wary. Often they take a long time over their drink and if they become obstreperous, then one is landed with dealing with them. But since he appeared neither drunk nor difficult, I served him one drink, saying as I did so, 'That's one for the road'. Without fuss, he sat at a table and proceeded to linger over his drink. He produced a writing pad and pencil in which he wrote for a time, had his one drink, and left, without further incident. I was unable to judge whether this was because he had heard what I had said or because he was used to being tossed out. In any case, sometime during the afternoon, he returned to the bar.

As I gave him a drink on this second occasion, his hand was shaking; he was still on his feet, not excessively drunk, but well-primed. He took a long time to get his money out and to get from the bar to the tables. I said, 'Look, the boss has popped in and I can only give you the one drink'. This was not true but a tactic to counteract him making a fuss. He said, 'Thanks, love', and returned to the table. He produced his notebook and paper and set to writing again. I felt bad because he was not causing any trouble and there were only a few people in the bar. So as I passed by his table, I said, 'Look, if the boss doesn't come back in, I'll give you another drink'. When he returned to the bar the next time, he ordered a schooner of beer. Thinking that a shorter drink would not take him quite so long to drink, I said to him, 'It will have to be a butcher', which he accepted without protest. He sat at the table again, drank up his drink and left.

Interpretation. One of the high points of tension, at least for an inexperienced bar worker, is the decision when to refuse a drink, and the execution of a refusal of service, even in the case of a customer who is readily picked as a derelict type. The presence of derelicts in bars is discouraged because of their typically shabby outward appearance and the possibility of their badgering other customers for cigarettes or the price of a drink, and because of their potential for engaging in rambling conversation or self-talk. It is these factors which make up the perception that their presence 'lowers the tone' of the bar and not the law relating to drunkenness which accounts for reluctance or refusal to serve them.* Finally, derelicts usually move alone, and it is much easier to execute a decision to refuse service to a person on his own, derelict or otherwise. The problem of refusing service to a group of drinkers is much greater as is suggested in the next instance.

The second instance. This incident concerned a group of Australian men, bent on having a night out. There were about five or so of them, roughly in their thirties, some of them physically quite big, wearing open-necked white shirts with sleeves rolled up in a nondescript style of dress. They drank heavily for the duration of their visit, at times adopting a style of behaviour which tended to be obsequious.

They took a seat at a table and became noisier as time wore on; swearing was about the only thing that I clearly overheard. They continued for a time in this vein, buying their drinks, swearing more, and seeming

*This point is owed to seminar discussions held in the Department of Anthropology, University of Adelaide.

intent on becoming drunk. A song was playing on the radio and one of them asked could he borrow it. Without thinking, I gave it to him. Immediately, I regretted this, since it was not my radio, but belonged to a co-worker (P). The group turned the radio up loud, which I felt was a betrayal of the obsequious politeness and interest which they had manifested toward me earlier, so readily altered and re-directed. The bar was fairly busy at the time. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, they turned the radio up even louder. I called out to them to turn it down which they did for a while. I decided that ignoring them for the moment was the best thing.

For a time, I was busy serving customers and I had not formulated a plan of what I was going to do. I had to take some action to ensure the return of the radio. The opportunity came on the next occasion that one of the group came to the bar to re-order. I hit upon the tactic of bargaining the service of drinks for the return of the radio. I was able to do this in a way which was appropriately lighthearted, saying, 'Right; first give me the radio back and then you can have some more drinks'. The response was 'Ah, come on, seven middies'. I repeated, 'No -- no more; no radio, no drinks'. He said abruptly 'OK, right', and turned away and returned to the table in a style which suggested that he had no intention of acceding to this blackmail. I moved off without further fuss, down-playing the situation. Next time he returned to the bar he had the radio with him. I took it with a sense of relief and served him his drinks. I was pleased with the tactic and my execution of it.

This group continued to be rowdy and a problem for much of the night, disrupting the other customers. There was some contact between a

clique of Greek regulars and these Australian drinkers. It was that order of friendly contact which could readily turn into hostility or fighting. Prior to this, one of these regulars had been sending the 'Aussies' up a little, laughing at their style of having a night 'on the town'. I began to wonder whether it was likely to develop into a fight, so I went to tell the manager, who was drinking in another bar with some companions. Two of them came down and had a look at these customers, who by this time were quiet. Seeing them in a quiet moment, the manager said, 'They're not too bad, but come and get me if they get worse'. It remained worrying as the evening moved on. Later, they became increasingly drunk, falling over their chairs, with their orders at the bar becoming more slurred. I did not think I could handle asking them to leave the bar. It was getting even busier with other people sitting at the tables being disrupted with their yelling and swearing, hugging and falling about. At this point I went to get the manager again. This time, he must have asked them to leave, which they did, except one who was more difficult to dislodge than the others.

Ironically, earlier that day when I had been having a discussion with the manager, he had said that one of the reasons why women should not be getting equal pay was because they were not able to cope with fights in the bar. My thoughts on this at the time were that this was not necessarily the case, that a man would not necessarily have been able to handle that situation more effectively. I would have been most interested to see what one of my co-workers (a rather ineffectual barman - C₁) would have done. The regular barman (C) would have handled it somehow, but I thought I handled it relatively well under the circumstances.

I did not panic, or rush to the manager when it was not necessary. Despite this, I felt conscious of seeking out his help, especially so shortly after we had discussed the drawbacks of hiring women ([N]: Hotel I).

The main points to be noted about this instance are that this hotel had a 'tough' reputation, but despite this, the use of professional bouncers was concentrated primarily on the discotheque which operated out the back, and was in various ways cut off from the rest of the hotel. Therefore, bar workers could not call on these professionals when faced with difficulties in social control. Nor could these always be resolved by resort to the management. Also, the ejection of a single drinker was a problem of a different order to the ejection of a group of drinkers. Finally, the ejection by the manager of the customers, one of whom became insulted, points to one of the constraints which operate on the regulation of behaviour in the bar. Customers ejected in this way may take serious offence and remove their custom. They may also have links with other customers. Consequently, insofar as it was possible, the approach was to avoid treating customers too summarily, even in the event of them behaving badly.

In situations like this one, it was difficult for me to attend to the ejection tactics used by the manager. He rarely displayed anger or aggression with customers, relying instead on tactics of persuasion and appeals to 'reason'. His physical size and demeanour may have been relevant; he was small in build and his manner was personable and friendly.

The third instance. This incident involved the manifestation of violence and concerned some tough youths, described as 'bikies', who regularly frequented the bar of Hotel I and neighbouring attractions.

The bikies were in the bar most of the day; mostly they kept to themselves and were not too much trouble. However, this was not the case on this occasion.

Toward the end of the bar was a small, plump fellow (P) who liked to talk 'politics' and tended to batten on to people to do so. His general behaviour was of a style likely to invite derision. The first thing I noticed was that one of the bikies started singing a song. I heard this customer (P) say, 'You say you can't do anything, but you could go on radio', in an attempt at a joke. It began to get noisy in the direction of the bikies. Partly because I wanted to avoid fanning trouble by paying too much attention, I failed to catch precisely what was going on. I threw an occasional glance in that direction. After a while, it became apparent that the customer (P) was getting upset by the bikies. At one point he came back down the bar repeating, 'Leave me alone, won't you! Leave me alone!' He then wheeled back, and went in the direction of the lavatory.

Prior to this, a glass had been broken; it was put back on the counter, not badly broken, but enough to make me wonder what was going on. I asked the bikies about the broken glass. Prior to that, I had said, 'Leave him alone, he's harmless enough', in mild tones, as I was worried about doing or saying anything to the bikies in case it made matters worse. About the glass, they replied 'It just fell off'.

One of the bikies followed the customer to the lavatory. This worried me although I felt there was little I could do. To my relief, only one of them followed him in; another customer went in and returned to the bar, so I assumed that everything was alright. The other two were away for a while longer. Finally, the customer, P, came out, looking in one piece, and came back to the bar to order a drink, positioning himself near the bikies when he could have easily gone down to the other end.*

Later, one of the other customers said that one of the bikies had kicked P in the crotch. In any case, at one point P wheeled out of the bar, repeating, only in more strident tones than before, 'Leave me alone, leave me alone'. One of the bikies looked in the direction of P wheeling outside into the street, and went out after him.

I felt totally at a loss to control this incident. I was undecided as to whether I should have gone out and called in the manager. I did not want to fan the incident. Once it had gone outside the hotel, it did not seem to be concerned with me, although it continued as a worry.

There were a number of male customers in the bar during the course of these events, including a regular (KG) who came in on the tail end of them. He and another customer had a discussion about it. KG said that at first he had thought it was just a 'hassle', before it became apparent that it was more serious. He commented that he was looking sharply at one of the bikies with a look which said, 'I'll remember your face in case anything unpleasant happens'. I heard only snatches of their conversation about the problems of the bikies and about the kind of

*That the bar may have been a 'beat' for male homosexuals was never referred to, although it remains a possibility; gossip had it that a nearby bar operated this way.

threat they constituted. KG said something about being safe on the street but that they might 'get you' in the lane.

I told the manager about this incident later in the night. He said, 'Well, come and get me if anything like that happens again'. So it appeared I had made a mistake by failing to call him, but I wanted to avoid turning the bikies against me.

Points of interpretation to note about this incident are that I was intimidated by the bikies, so much so that I sidestepped the course of getting the manager because I did not want to turn them against me. I had to deal with them as regular customers. Whether the course of calling the manager into the bar would have turned out to be the right thing to do under the circumstances is another matter. Taking decisive action in incidents like this can be hampered when the bar is busy. As it was, the incident played itself out while I felt helpless. My careful avoidance of drawing too much attention to the incident, of making a fuss, stemmed partly from the feeling that this might encourage the bikies to a more overt display of aggression.

I move on to explore some ways women workers deal with difficult situations which fall short of serious trouble.

In response to customers, an important element of a woman worker's repertoire is the playing out of the role of the coquette or treating the customer as a child. This style of interaction helps avoid giving offence. Customers, said one woman worker, 'are silly buggers, just like children' (E: Hotel V).

This aspect of the performance of the work shows up in observations I recorded of one of my co-workers (M: Hotel II).

In the first few moments of working, I was stunned by M's faithfulness and reproduction of stereotyped 'womanliness' — her combination of gentleness, coquetry, scolding, joking and of humouring her customers.* The following glimpses provide some instances of her style:

To one customer: 'I'm sorry, honey, you had to wait for your drink', or jokingly and little-girlish to a large, jolly customer: 'Yes, poppa'. I did not overhear what prompted this response, but M laughingly said, 'Naughty boy, I'll have to send you overseas'. Another time, I dropped a glass and M cracked, 'See, you make S'a drop a glass; you have shocked her by saying you lose money' (race talk), followed by much laughter.

In another instance, M scolded a customer, as in 'Look, mister, if you want your drink, you go and be quiet; you go and sit over at the table, and you watch your language, and you be quiet'. She recounted how the younger companion of this man, 'a casanova, that one', laughingly admired her performance at this point, saying 'I love you' as he kissed her hand. In similar vein, M commented that there is only one thing to do if a customer becomes insulting, and that is to say, 'Look, mister, I am here to serve you. I do not have to take from you insults.'

In one anecdote told by the older, long-experienced and retired woman worker, she recounted a troublesome situation where the customer 'took objection but came back and apologised afterwards'. She said:

What had happened was that this chap (F) had got into an argument with another customer who had done something wrong by a woman he knew. F was picking on this other chap who was a great big brawny fellow, and F was

*Simmel says of coquetry: 'In the sociology of sex, we find a play-form: the play-form of eroticism is coquetry...Generally speaking, the erotic question between the sexes is that of offer and refusal. Its objects are, of course, infinitely varied and graduated, and by no means mere either-ors, much less exclusively physiological. The nature of female coquetry is to play up, alternately, allusive promises and allusive withdrawals — to attract the male but always to stop short of a decision, and to reject him but never to deprive him of all hope' (Wolff [ed.] 1950:50).

that full you would just have to hit him, so I said 'Now look, if you've got any brains you'll disappear because he's going to knock you over'. F went to the downstairs bar and said, 'The old bag upstairs threw me out'. So I went down and I abused him. I said, 'Don't you call me an old bag'. He said, 'I didn't say that', but I think he did, he was that full. I said, 'I told you today for your own sake, because you were going to be cleaned up and we don't like brawls in the lounge for a start' (C: Hotel IV).

One worker commented that being a woman helps to throw drunks out, that while you begin by being frightened, as a woman you can coddle them out of the door before they realise. She also suggested it was possible to get a troublemaker's drinking companions 'on side', enlisting their assistance in keeping the more difficult ones quiet (E: Hotel V).

At Hotel I, the women disliked working in the public/saloon bar, largely they claimed because of the rudeness of some of the non-Australian-born customers. Attempts by women workers to apply sanctions in this bar led to frequent blow-ups and complaints to management.* I have already referred to an instance in which one woman worker lectured a group of Australian drinkers for their arrogant ordering, which not only suggests mechanisms of control, but also makes it clear that, despite the workers' perceptions, arrogance was not limited to specific groups of customers.

I asked one woman worker if she had ever tried to make a fool of a customer in front of his mates. She responded, 'No, never'. However this remains a possible means of exerting control over customers, as suggested in earlier instances.

*At least one woman worker was sacked in the aftermath of one of these incidents.

The control and distribution of alcohol has implications for social regulation, in the form of the passing out of free or discounted drinks, of buying customers a drink, or joining them for a drink either on or off the job. It may be useful to give away free drinks after hours, or at other times, to keep in with certain customers. The woman who delivered the lecture to the arrogant orderers and later joined one of them for a drink at his invitation, on another occasion bought a drink for one of the bikies, commenting, 'It's useful to keep in with them' (H: Hotel I). One woman commented that caution is necessary in the handing out of drinks to strangers who may interpret this as an overture on the woman's part (L: Hotel II).

Co-worker relations and women bar workers

When I began work in the public/saloon bar of Hotel I, the barman (C) was very kind about my obvious inexperience and took me under his wing. I was grateful for this. I was to find out later that the management had problems with finding staff to work in this bar, partly because of the reluctance of most of the other women workers to work there due to their perceptions of the customers as exceptionally difficult.

In the course of commenting on the hire of inexperienced workers, myself in this instance, one of the managers of Hotel I commented that this was more than justified if, as in this case, relations between co-workers were easy and co-operative. The reference here was to myself and the barman of seven years standing with whom I regularly worked. The barman had commented that I was slow, but that he thought that I

could handle the work. Since he was happy with me, that, in the view of the manager, 'was 90 percent of the battle'.

Relations with co-workers can be important in the induction process, whereby work tactics are passed on and adopted. In my experience, management tended to give minimal instructions to newcomers. One learnt more from co-workers but one constraint was that resentment could be triggered if co-worker interaction became too instructional.

Opportunities for sociability with co-workers on the job were limited. When busy there was no time; when not busy, customers sometimes made objections to workers talking among themselves. Co-worker conversations did proceed on the job but they were constantly punctuated by the demands of the work.

There were a number of areas where co-operation on the job with co-workers affected efficiency in work. Where a bar is worked primarily by one person, the state of cleanliness and preparation of the bar left for the worker on the next shift is important. Where a bar is worked by more than one worker, and in most of the bars I witnessed no more than two people operated at a time, then co-operation could affect the performance of a range of routine tasks. Relations with co-workers could affect job conditions when, for instance, these were such that workers did not get a lunch-break; then the opportunity to take a break during work could depend on co-operation with other workers.

Pressures of work could be increased if relations with co-workers were not easy. This was manifest in barely visible behaviour, such as clumsiness in maneuvering and moving behind the bar, at the beer taps or in washing-up. A more serious problem was presented if co-workers were

perceived of as lazy. Comments were made about co-workers who 'talked too much to customers', as in the evaluation made about a woman who was classified as a poor worker 'because she talked to who she wanted' (T re R: Hotel III).

Some of the drawbacks of difficult relations between co-workers and their implications for the servicing component showed up in the evaluation made by the regular woman worker at Hotel II, about two of her former co-workers (Q_1 and Q_2), who remained only a short time in the work, Q_2 being sacked.

On Q_1 's second night, M said that at first she thought she would be good; but that she had changed her mind. M talked further about this, joined by one of the manager's wives (D_1). M recounted an incident when her co-worker said to a customer, 'Do it yourself, I'm not going to do that' (the customer having made some request to her). M said disapprovingly: 'That's no way to behave to a customer...the customer knows best'. The manager's wife agreed. She later said to me about the girl who had been sacked: 'Whatever else she was, she did her job -- emptied ashtrays and worked hard'. This discussion spilt over into an exchange with a couple of customers. One of them asked me, 'Where's the new girl tonight?' I replied that she was on the day shift. The manager's wife made a comment to the effect that she was not too satisfactory. The customer defended her, saying 'She's OK, she's nice and friendly'.

Other instances of difficulties between women bar workers were suggested by one woman's comments about her co-workers (R: Hotel III). She said of one of them, 'Everyone likes S, but you should hear the customers talk about her after she's left work', adding, on reflection,

'It's probably the same with me'. This same woman said of another former co-worker (T) who had left her job after a dispute with the manager, 'She is getting old and finding it hard to find boyfriends. She sees me as a threat because she thinks I might go out with the customers like she does'. It seemed that T thought that R took over her job.

A number of women expressed the preference for working with male co-workers, commenting that women were 'too bitchy' or tended to squabble among themselves (B: Hotel IV; R: Hotel III).

On the issue of authority and hierarchy, it should be noted that women workers were typically hired for work at the same level of responsibility as men. An *ad hoc* pecking order may develop, especially where there are a large number of women employed in a hotel. I return to this issue after a discussion of men in bar work.

One woman worker who had retired from bar work was obviously proud of her role as tutor to other women workers over the years which she mentioned several times. However, this role was not given formal recognition in the wages she received.

Relations of managers and women bar workers

One point to note is the extent to which managers became involved in the routine everyday running of the bar and the frequency of work alone behind the bar. This depended largely on the size of the hotel and its workforce. In the larger hotels in the street, management functions were typically concentrated away from working behind the bar, and most notably were directed towards socialising with customers.

Where management were regularly present in the course of work, as is common among the smaller hotels, they usually gave assistance to bar workers during busy periods. However, because they might not be available when needed due to absence, or involvement with other tasks, this meant that the character of their assistance could be erratic, constituting a problem for bar staff. M said she would rather have another co-worker to give assistance on weekend nights than depend on management (Hotel II). In these situations, bar workers are dependent on the management's perception of when assistance was needed, as well as their inclination to provide it once so perceived.

Women workers commonly expressed a low opinion of the capacity of management to perform the routine tasks associated with bar work. Even where assistance was provided, management may mark themselves off from bar workers by leaving certain routine tasks (e.g. glass-washing) untouched.

One of the critical areas for bar workers is the skill that managers have in entering into troublesome situations. This varies from situations where experienced bar workers are capable of being able to make autonomous judgements about the necessary steps to be taken, to bar workers expressing dissatisfaction with the inadequacy and inefficiency of managers in being able to resolve trouble.

I comment further on two issues relating to the sociability component. Firstly, in both small and large hotels one of the most regular tasks of management is socialising with customers. Here again it was common for women workers to comment disparagingly on the role of management. Evaluations that management 'couldn't talk to customers'

(D: Hotel V), and that customers 'did not like' management were made (M: Hotel II). One woman worker commented on the difficulties which face management in socialising with customers, a difficulty which operates to some extent for bar workers also. Regular customers can get resentful if they perceive management spending over-long amounts of time with other customers (E: Hotel V). Yet an attempt to balance out time spent with customers, or any disinclination to do so, may lead to customer resentment of what is perceived as 'favouritism' or 'stand-offish' behaviour.

A second critical point which affects the experience of bar workers and which stems from the sociability component of the work is that customers, in the course of talking with management, may pass on evaluations, complaints and gossip about bar workers. As mentioned, at least one worker identified complaints to management as a cause of the management's rumoured decision to dismiss her. One of the management of Hotel II commented that they had a regular stream of complaints from customers about workers.

A feature of management/worker relations which became evident in two of the hotels was a variety of sexual contacts and liaisons between women bar workers and management. These had two patterns. There was one case of a long-term stable liaison in the course of which the woman worker was given training in management and saw herself as having a quasi-management status. She later left the hotel, married, and remained on friendly terms with her former employer.

The other pattern was that of more casual sexual encounters between management and women workers. In a comment about these, a woman

member of the managerial staff said that difficulties grew out of these encounters, with rivalries occurring between women workers when the object of management attention was switched to another woman worker, or alternatively having the consequence of the worker overstep her role (J: Hotel I). No comment was made on the likely outcome of a woman worker cooling off a relationship with a manager, although some women workers reported instances they had heard of in hotels elsewhere of women being sacked for cool responses toward the overtures of managers.

One point to note here is that regardless of gender, the employment of bar workers by hotel managers and licensees has certain pay-offs. Bar workers can operate as buffers, or brokers between managers/licensees and customers in a number of situations. Firstly, where bar staff are employed, management can mark off their status in the bar from wage-earners by their performance as 'bosses'. Secondly, the use of bar workers separates management from customers so that management are removed from making or appearing to make direct decisions about regulation, evicting, or in other ways highlighting the underlying contractual basis of their relationship with customers. Thirdly, bar workers are useful to blame in the event of things going wrong.

Women workers and skill in bar work

One woman worker listed in the following order the qualities required by women who worked in bars: sex appeal, smiles, conversation, hard work, and good service (E: Hotel V).

In this section I comment on what constitutes skill in bar work. I explore some instances of women workers being sacked and the reasons

that were given for this occurring. As before, I am primarily concerned with the views and experiences of women bar workers. On this issue the views of management are likely to take a different perspective.

In one hotel, a woman worker reported that her friend had been sacked. The reason given by the management was that she gave away too many free drinks to friends; she added 'I don't know about the real reason' (A: Hotel IV).

One woman worker was said to get the sack for being unpunctual, for talking too much with customers and for letting others wait (Q4: Hotel II). Another, at the same hotel, heard rumours that she was to be sacked and left before that happened. She said that this was due to complaints from customers. She lasted one month in the job, attributing this to what she described as 'blow-ups' with customers. As already mentioned, in a serious context and without any joking inference, she abused one customer for talking 'rubbish and bullshit' (O: Hotel II). She agreed with my suggestion that she was insufficiently polite and smiling in response to customers, adding that having arguments with them was the main reason. On another occasion, she recounted that a customer came into the bar and called to the manager, 'Hey, can't we get any service around here'. The manager yelled at her, 'Can't you serve the customers! Come on, hurry up, get a move on, can't you!' She was offended by this incident. It seemed the whole bar knew she was going to get the sack — she herself was told the rumour by one of the customers. She recounted that her former co-worker reported that the customers asked after her after she left and expressed a liking for her.

Flexibility in moving through the various components of the work is an important ingredient of skill in the occupation. Further instances of the style of my co-worker from Hotel II shows this (M). She was very much 'the lady barmaid'; genteel, ladylike, good humoured; when, for instance, she mimicked to a snarly drunkard, as to a child, to indicate unwarranted bad temper; or when she kissed a very old customer, coquettishly saying 'the only one' (meaning the only one she will kiss). In checking out orders she would say, 'Gentlemen, was that three butchers, two schooners', or when a customer requested, 'M, give me an olive', she obliged graciously, this from her own dinner.

This woman worker was capable of operating through the range of components with flexibility and ease, which accounted for her length of more than three years in the work. This contrasted with other styles of bar work — those of women who were more rigid in their performance of the work. Women who exhibited these more rigid styles were unlikely to last long in the job, even though they may have operated highly successfully within one particular component. As instances, two women co-workers of both M and mine were remarkably similar. Both were in their mid-twenties; both were voluptuous and dressed to highlight their sexuality, handling it with confidence and style. This contrasted with the more muted presentation and style of the regular worker. Yet the performance in the servicing component by both these women was judged as inadequate. One was sacked, and the other, her replacement, left shortly after beginning work there (Q₁ and Q₂: Hotel II).

Another instance of inflexibility was my rigid overworking of the servicing component which was more than once subject to critical

comment by customers. On a number of occasions my awkwardness with the sexual component severely hampered my operation within the sociability component. I refer to this particular orientation toward the work as the 'structure of suspicion', which among other things, caused me to restrict my sociability with customers; to avoid being too friendly, fearing that the customers would misread this in terms of sexual encouragement. On the other hand, the comment of one woman worker that 'if you talk to customers they end up asking you out, even the older ones' suggests that this orientation is reinforced by pressures of the work relating to the sexual code.

It is evident from the comments of women workers that a paradox underlies the qualities which make for skilled performance of the work. My co-worker at Hotel II, the regular woman worker, commented, 'They say to me in the bar, "You could be boss", but I don't know; sometimes I wonder; maybe I'm not hard enough' (M). This woman had the qualities associated with the stereotype of the soft-hearted barmaid: she commented on her love for children and that she hated to see lonely men drinking, that she gave equal treatment to everyone, adding that all men when drinking are of the same class. Yet she was teased by customers for having 'ice in her blood'. She commented that what is needed above all in the job, is 'a good outside and a good nature'.

I quote the views of other women workers here to underline the paradox of this statement. One woman commented on women workers who were reduced to tears by the attitudes of customers (F: Hotel IA); another said that from the beginning she avoided showing any sign of awkwardness before customers (L: Hotel II). The manageress of one of

the hotels made a similar statement about bar work being a dreadful job and that workers cannot afford to appear 'weak' in the presence of customers.

The status of women workers

I explore here perceptions that women workers expressed about the work, both their evaluations of it and what they said about how others view it. I also touch on the evaluations of the work which were made by managers.

One woman worker commented that 'customers talk to and trust barmaids, but it is not seen this way by the rest of the world. Most people think "yuk, a barmaid"' (E: Hotel V).

My co-worker in Hotel II, who worked there over three years, commented that it is a 'low-class' job, unsuitable for young girls. When she suggested to the 'missus' (i.e. boss' wife) to get one of her daughters in, the missus had said, 'I would rather shoot myself first'. This co-worker added, 'Most women are in it for men or money' (M: Hotel II). When she first began work at Hotel II she said she had some worries about what people who knew her would think but that she would say to herself, 'What do I care what people think'.

Only one woman firmly indicated that she had no trouble with friends or parents disapproving of the work. Most other comments highlighted some awareness of low evaluations of the work, for instance, the comment made by one woman that her parents did not know that she was working in a bar, but if they did they would be horrified. She remained

only a couple of months in what was her first bar work experience (L: Hotel II). She commented on a cousin of hers who was regarded as the black sheep of the family, who worked in a hotel as 'a real barmaid'. This woman worried that she was easily influenced by the sort of work she did, and lightheartedly commented that 'this job is bad for me' because she found herself 'talking like a barmaid'.

Another young woman commented that her parents knew about her job, but she had stressed the value of the work for picking up the language and culture of overseas countries (O: Hotel II). Another said she had no worries with parental approval but she disagreed with my suggestion, made with reference to the film *Caddie*, that a glamourised reputation attaches to women working in hotel bars. She commented that women, especially the wives of customers, 'really look down on you and think barmaids are nothing but whores' (R: Hotel III).

An extended comment on the status of the work came from a woman who was part of the management at one hotel (J: Hotel I). She commented that 'I could be a barmaid if I wanted to be, but why when you can do something that requires brains'. She saw one woman worker she regarded as too brainy for the work as simply wasting herself. This theme was repeated in the comment by a woman worker that, 'If you've worked you know the ropes but you don't have to be very bright - it doesn't need brains'. She added that 'you need to be easygoing and patient' (G: Hotel IA).

The woman manager referred to above commented that women who worked in bars were either 'desperate for men' or escaping an unhappy marriage; on the whole, most of them were there 'to get a bloke'. This

woman was doubtful that the 'barmaid' stereotype of the warm mother confessor/companion image was reflected in reality, but insofar as it was, that perhaps some older women came closest to conforming to it.

I return to an analysis of these issues after a description of men at work in hotel bars.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF MEN AT WORK IN HOTEL BARS AND AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER CONTRASTS IN BAR WORK

'Australian men seem to think that providing service is demeaning whereas women tend not to think that way so much.'

This statement, made by one of the hotel managers, reflects one underlying theme of the descriptive material on male bar workers which I explore in the early part of this chapter, before turning to a summary and analysis of the significance of gender in bar work. In my analysis of gender contrasts which follows, I make explicit the implications embedded in the descriptive material in this and the earlier chapter for the meanings and consequences of a switch in gender of bar workers. Specific issues which will be addressed in that analysis include the question of whether, in spite of the apparently non-segregated nature of bar work, there are differences which emerge out of a contrast between women and men bar workers. In addition, insofar as bar work is especially suited to women, because it includes a range of tasks which may be seen as 'typically female', then what of its performance by men?

In the discussion of barmen, I adopt the same format as the one used to explore the data of women workers in terms of the core components of service, sociability and social regulation, relations between co-workers and management, and the constituents of skill and status in the work.

Some brief elaboration of the theme suggested in the opening quote locates the issue in a sociological perspective. The concept of Australia as an egalitarian society is one which is evident in both everyday and scholarly discussion. One observer of Australia in the 1880's gives

voice to this image with the comment that Australia is a place 'where young people are brought up with the idea that one man or woman is as good as another' (Richard Twopeny, quoted by Kingston 1975:45). In an interpretation of the effects of this on the reluctance of women to work as domestic servants, Kingston comments that 'the proliferation of egalitarian attitudes in Australia cast domestic service as a most undesirable profession for a lively, self-respecting girl' (*ibid.*:30). This point turns back to the view expressed in the quote which opens this chapter, with its suggestion that men, more so than women, find service a demeaning form of work.*

Within the sociological context of Australia, Oxley has explored the linkage between egalitarianism and stratification. In Oxley's view, it seems that while hotels, in contrast to clubs, may discourage contact between customers from different social strata, through the distinctions between various types of hotel bars, nevertheless, a form of egalitarianism is manifest in social activities where men come together in groups in settings such as hotel bars (Oxley 1974:111). According to Oxley, the status levelling which occurs in these situations is supportive of the stratification which is given expression most particularly in the context of home and family, with women represented as status markers.

An alternative point of view is asserted by Wild, who comments: 'Australian egalitarianism, as a description of social rights and conditions, never existed; as a meaningful ideology about personal relationships, it is virtually dead' (Wild 1978:180).

*A similar point of view is developed in Whyte's study of restaurant organisation in America, in which he comments that, in contrast to waitresses, 'many waiters find it difficult to adjust to the constant subordination to customers that is involved in their work' (Whyte 1948: 95).

Without entering in detail into this debate, it can be partially resolved by further reference to a comment by Simmel on the general nature of sociability. Simmel comments that

Sociability thus calls for the purest, most transparent, and most casually appealing kind of interaction, *that among equals*. Because of its very nature, it must create human beings who give up so much of their objective contents and who so modify their external and internal significance as to become sociable equals (Wolff [ed.] 1950:49).

This comment by Simmel suggests that a form of sociability characterised by egalitarianism is not a phenomenon which is culturally specific to Australia. However, the continuing debate about 'mateship' in the Australian context (Ward 1958; Bell 1973; Oxley 1974; Dixon 1976) suggests that it continues to be significant, at least in cultural definitions of Australian social life.

These interpretations raise a number of questions about the position of male bar workers and their relationship with customers. Critically, insofar as status levelling is a feature of the interaction of customers with one another, at least in terms of cultural definitions of hotels, then in what ways does this structure the social relationship between male customers and male bar workers?

The history of men at work in hotel bars

The limited nature of historical information on women at work in hotels noted in the previous chapter, applies even more so for male bar workers. Two comments can be made at this point. The almost total absence of any historical information is paralleled by the absence of

references in popular and literary sources to male bar workers.*

The limited references in popular and literary sources to male bar workers may reflect the image of the role of men as customers which is stressed in cultural conceptions of hotels as male domains. These conceptions tend not only to overlook the role of men as workers in hotels, but also to downplay the presence in hotels of women, either as customers or workers. Nevertheless, the presence of women workers is given greater recognition in popular sources, as noted earlier, than is the presence of men as workers.

The dearth of references to barmen in popular culture supports the point that given the nature of the routine tasks of bar work, it is more readily perceived as 'typically female' work. This point is further suggested by the linguistic differentiation of the terms 'barmaid' and 'barman'.

The second point draws out a paradox within the point just made. Given the suspect moral status of hotels in general, and the similarly suspect nature of the particular street in which the hotels referred to in this study are located, both of which have been discussed in earlier chapters, this raises the point that the meaning of women workers in these hotels will be different to the meaning of men working in them.

The biographies of male bar workers

Given the smaller number of male bar workers who form the basis for my description, I have presented the biographies of barmen in the

*In 1970, the A.H.A. journal ran a series entitled 'Men behind the bars', which may have been a gesture of support to the employment of men in hotel bars in response to the legislative changes of 1967 which lifted restrictions relating to the employment of women in bars (*Hotel Gazette of South Australia*, April-October 1970).

text.* The description which follows in this chapter is drawn primarily from a total of six male bar workers, three of whom were interviewed supplemented by on-the-job observation, and three for whom I have in-depth material drawing from observation, either as a customer or co-worker. These were supplemented by less systematic observations of barmen in hotels in the street and elsewhere. In addition, observations of, and interviews with male managers were informative, although I have not included details of their biographies.

Barman C (Hotel I). I begin with a description noted in my records in the course of working in Hotel I. I worked here with this barman on a full-time basis in the public/saloon bar for two to three months:

Greek-born, the barman still speaks Australian with a heavy accent. He spends a lot of time speaking to his Greek customers, and is obviously popular and friendly with them. Aged between thirty and forty, he lives upstairs; there is no evidence of a permanent or casual girlfriend, and he spends a fair amount of spare time in the bar. He has worked full-time in the bar for seven years, and takes a lot of competitive pride in it, in contrast to the rest of the bars which he claims are run inefficiently. He is careful to an extreme point about the standards of cleanliness and service in his bar, describing as 'sloppy' most of the relief assistance he obtains from the women workers in the club bar.

*The inclusion of a smaller number of male bar workers is partly due to the development of my research interest, which in the early stages of the study was stated in terms of a study of women at work, rather than in the relational terms contained in the concept of gender which emerged explicitly only in the course of the research.

His social activities include gambling, Greek parties with a stress on food and wine, and strip joints.

At Hotel I, he was known as 'the' barman of the saloon bar, and as indicated, took a proprietorial interest in me when I first began work there. He was not overbearing or directive to work with. He was paid at ordinary barman rates, despite some identification between him and the particular bar he worked in.

His commitment to the work and its link with his life-style showed up in his frequent socialising in the bar as a customer with his friends, and his residence in the hotel. This made him a valuable asset to the hotel, along with his long work pattern, which in Hotel I at least, spanned two management changes before he left, following a third change.

I know only of his subsequent and not previous job history. He left Hotel I sometime in 1975, after a change in management which saw a turnover of much of the hotel staff, including both bar and back-of-house. He told me later that he lost out on his long service pay, but it was not clear whether he was sacked or chose to leave (contrary information here). He took a job in a nearby hotel in the same street,* and worked here about eighteen months before shifting, again within the street, to Hotel II, where I encountered him working in the second half of 1978.

Barman C₁ (Hotel I). Another co-worker of mine for a short period only, I left soon after he commenced. His stay was short-term and

*One which was not included in the primary observations on which this study was based, although I visited him there on a number of occasions.

terminated shortly after I left. It appeared he was hired to replace the regular barman C, who was going on holidays, and myself who was leaving shortly after his return.

He had worked in at least one suburban hotel, and on his own description viewed being a barman as his regular form of work. He worked full-time at Hotel I.

The background information I have is slight; his main interest in the context of this study is that he was an obviously heavy drinker, as documented shortly.

He looked middle-aged, with some of the classical physical symptoms of an alcoholic, being very thin. He was married to a widow with six children, and lived in the suburbs.

His style in the bar tended to be rather subdued and low-key. He was less of a 'joker' than C, but he spent some time out of work hours in the bar drinking with customers.

Barman G (Hotel III). G had worked at Hotel III at least five years, full-time, in the front bar. He was reputed to have worked also at Hotel II (M: Hotel II). At Hotel III, he spanned several management changes.

Italian-born, a one-time miner, he was in his forties, married with adult children. He had returned to Italy in the course of his job, to visit his parents.

His job commitment was less than that of C. He rarely socialised in the bar and appeared to have few friendships based on work, with other bar workers or customers of the hotels in the street.

Given to a certain dourness on the job, punctuated by instances of more jocular moods, he was not enthusiastic about it as a living, but had skills relating to sociability and social regulation.

Barman I (Hotel IV). Australian-born, at Hotel IV for nineteen months, he was employed as a barman-cellarman and, following a management change, was promoted to assistant manager, then shortly after was himself sacked.

He worked in all bars of the hotel, but mainly in the club bar, populated largely by a clientele of businessmen. He complained that the out-going manager had used him in a managerial capacity without giving recognition of this with an appropriate wage. On being promoted to assistant manager he expressed relief that he was not involved in the routine of bar work to the same extent. My observations suggest he took on some, perhaps slight, position of authority over some of the younger women staff, even before his formal promotion.

His job history revealed that he had moved into bar work from a style of work consistent with his managerial aspirations. It also showed up mobility in work and location, with a rather erratic pattern of aspiration. On leaving school at about fifteen, he began work as a railway porter, followed by a salesman job, forklift driver and a job in a retail store. His 'break' came with a hair products firm, he became one of their top salesmen, then resigned, according to his account, on a matter of principle.

His first hotel work was taken up while travelling, following his resignation. He began as a yardsman, which he described as 'very degrading work'. Subsequently, he took an opportunity offered to work

behind the bar, and finding he liked it, stayed for two years. He commented on the roughness of the hotel and problems with blacks. Subsequently, he worked in a highrise city hotel for six months during a trip to New Zealand, commenting that this was a very good bar to work in. He tried to get retail work when he returned to Adelaide, but after a couple of months in odd jobs he took the job at Hotel IV.

Other details of his life-style are not known, although little relation between work and life-style became apparent. He returned to Adelaide because of family illness. He wanted to travel more before marrying, which he was disinclined to do too early.

Barman L (Hotel V). Australian-born; in Adelaide twelve years, he was two years at Hotel V, beginning part-time but later, according to his account, becoming full-time at the request of the manager.

His parents had once run a hotel in the country where he worked when he was younger for about two years. Most of his family also worked there, and he commented that he left because 'of too many bosses'. The family business ceased when his mother took ill, his father returning to his original work of mining.

He had worked in the publicity department of an Adelaide department store, saying 'I left for a break really'. He had also worked in a hotel nearby the one in which he then worked for six months, but was sacked from this job, although still dropped by there for what he calls his 'heart-starter' on the way to work. He remained friends with some of the customers and bar workers, including one woman worker of seven years' standing he described as 'an old friend'.

He lived with his invalid father, freely admitted that he was 'gay' and was a self-confessed alcoholic. He commented that he did not like bar work much, that he got nervous about having to throw customers out, and also referred to customers throwing glasses at him, but he said he was too 'lazy' to change jobs.

About job conditions, he commented on the wear and tear to clothes, and the time spent on preparations like ironing. Wages, he said, were low; he worked forty hours per week, getting 'less than a shop assistant'.

Barman P (Hotel I). At Hotel I, P worked as bouncer-barman in the garden bar for about six months.

I met him at a technical course for hotel management and this was his ambition. He had worked in one other Adelaide hotel and stressed the quasi-managerial status of the work there. He also stressed his employment for 'security' reasons.

He was in his twenties, unmarried, Adelaide-born; his father had a smallfoods business. P also worked there as part of a regular two-job pattern.

His life-style to some extent centred on the work; for a time his girlfriend also worked casually at Hotel IA. They had met beforehand.

Code for male workers and management*

Hotel I, IA	<u>C</u> , <u>C</u> ₁ , <u>P</u> , [N], [O]
Hotel II	[D], (D ₁), (D ₂), [D ₃], <u>C</u>
Hotel III	[E], (F), <u>G</u> , [H ₁], (H)
Hotel IV	<u>I</u> , [J], [K]
Hotel V	<u>L</u> , [M]

Male bar workers and the servicing component of bar work

The style of C has already been referred to, the pride he took in the standards of service and cleanliness in his bar. All bar workers engage in the routine tasks of cleaning and clearing but some men made more of it than others.

In a comment on not being able to work with the casual workers who came in on Friday nights, L (Hotel V) commented that he could not stand watching them read newspapers and eat at the bar when meanwhile 'ashtrays are piling up'. One thing he could not stand, he said, was dirty ashtrays.

Another barman, G of Hotel III, earned the nickname 'Lightning G' for his style of service. The nickname highlights his generally slow, almost dignified movement.

I have witnessed arrogant ordering by customers toward both C and G. It was not uncommon for a customer to bang an empty glass on the table repeatedly to catch the attention of a bar worker. I had spoken to G about how irritating this could be, with its implication that the worker is not doing the job properly, when the worker, usually at some

*Underlined letters indicate a male bar worker; a letter in square brackets, a male manager or licensee; a letter in a circle, a female manager, co-licensee or wife of a manager. I use the notation 'Hotel IA' to refer to Hotel I after it had changed hands subsequent to my working there.

distance from the customer who uses this tactic, is likely to be engaged in serving someone else. My point is that abrupt or irritating ordering behaviour is by no means reserved for women workers, who can be on the receiving end of a similar style of ordering.

On one occasion when I was working with C₁, we were talking together when a customer simultaneously finished off his drink and banged the glass on the table. Similar instances were cited earlier with reference to women workers of customer reactions to them talking on the job.

Problems may arise in the servicing component for barmen who engage in heavy drinking. At one time, I returned from a break and I could smell alcohol on the breath of the barman C₁. He served a customer while drinking in the middle of doing his order. The customer was a regular who usually ordered the same drink but on this occasion placed his order with a different mixer to the usual. The barman failed to pick this up and served the drink as usual. I was nearby and felt it to be an embarrassing situation — we all pretended to ignore his obvious drunkenness and mistake.

The same barman (C₁: Hotel I) had a style of service which varied from the more formal — 'What will you have, Sir?' — to a more casual 'How are ya?', depending on his state of sobriety.

Finally, an informative instance of the use of joking in serving came from G (Hotel III). In reaction to a customer who spilt a small amount of beer on the bar, the barman shook his fist in mock anger, accompanied by a mock grinding of his teeth. On the occasions when I observed this same barman being tipped by customers, he regularly placed the money received into the charity collection box which sat on the bar.*

*Whyte (1948) refers to 'tipping' as a demeaning aspect of service, and one which was especially seen in this light by waiters.

Male bar workers and the socialising component

The transformative nature of customer-women worker interactions, noted earlier, when, for instance, the bar worker may need to shift from servicing to sociability in the course of dealing with a customer, attaches also to customer-barmen interactions.

An instance of the objectification that may be entailed in these interactions occurred with reference to a barman on an occasion when I visited Hotel III as a customer. I was familiar with the management and the public barman G of the hotel.

On this occasion there was an unfamiliar barman behind the bar. Soon after I walked in I questioned the manager, who was in the bar at the time, about the whereabouts of the usual barman. The following exchange took place nearby and within hearing of the replacement barman:

S.G.: You've got a new barman — where's G got to?

M: Yeah, but (tossed in the direction of the barman) he's going to be better than G — aren't you?

The barman responded with what I described in my field notes as a 'smiling shuffle'.

In the socialising component, as with women workers, customers buy, or offer to buy, barmen drinks. The extent to which barmen joined customers on the other side of the bar in out-of-work hours varied. It loomed large in the socialising patterns of some barmen. This showed up in the following instance when I arrived at work on one occasion and the barman, C₁, only recently employed and who was soon to leave, impressed me as being a little drunk because his voice was slurred. He continued to drink in the bar throughout his lunch hour. An older customer bought him several drinks. Later, another customer came in and bought the barman

more drinks. Earlier in the day, there had been a couple of drinkers in the bar, whom the barman said later, had been there all morning; they had leaned over and shook hands with C₁ asking him his name. At one point, I overheard this barman, knocking the hotel to a customer, complaining about technical conditions on the job, about a technical matter to do with the beer lines (C₁: Hotel I).

The regular barman, on holidays at the time, asked me what this barman was like to work with. I said, 'He is nice enough, but he's just not very cheerful or lively'. The regular barman wanted to know did he work hard and I said 'Yes, he cleans the windows'. I wanted to mention that he was a bit of a drinker but refrained.

In another instance highlighting the socialising component, the regular barman of the same hotel dropped in during his holidays. In my records, I note that

The interesting feature of the night was C's appearance. He is obviously popular in the bar and gets bought beers and buys beers. I am pleased to see him. I shake hands with him, and one of the women customers, one of the young prostitutes, puts her arm around him and says, 'How do you like my father?' The presence of the barman in the bar had a pleasant effect. One of the managers passed through (he had to change the kegs) and jokingly hit C on the face, saying to him 'Are you coming back to work next week?' This was followed by an exchange between them about this.

The pattern of socialising and drinking of barmen may extend beyond the hotel where they work to those nearby which may be visited from, or in between, work. A woman worker from a neighbouring hotel commented that C₁ called in for a drink during his breaks (L: Hotel II). Another barman, the self-confessed alcoholic, dropped in for what he called his 'heart-starter' at a hotel in the same street on his way to work (L: Hotel VII).

On one of these occasions around 11 a.m. one morning I met L there in the public bar. He was on first-name terms with a number of the customers, greeting and calling to them in a friendly manner. One of the group of drinkers had just returned from the funeral of one of their 'mates'. This lot, L commented later, were customers of his. He said that they often got drunk at the hotel where he worked, but that they were manageable, that he could control them.

He explained to me a brief laughing exchange with another customer, saying 'You see, L, it's not my real name and that bloke was using it — the point is no one's supposed to know' — he laughed. He also commented to me on this occasion that a customer who had gone interstate had sent him a card.

These instances show up something of the network patterns of barmen, a point I interpret with reference to social regulation in the next section.

I have noted the flat style of the barman who drank excessively. Our exchanges as co-workers had a mundane quality, instanced on one occasion when I arrived at work, he commented on it being a dead night. He was right, but he made it deader by his comments (C₁: Hotel I).

His style can be contrasted with that of the barman who injected mock performances in the course of his routine work as when on his way to the toilet he mock performed as though leaving the bar, as in a person free to come and go, giving a farewell wave as he departed. Or when he had to climb on the bar to turn the television down, up or off (usually at the request of customers), he might take the opportunity to 'ham' it up (G: Hotel III).

Routine instances of the socialising pattern of barmen and customers need to be set against the sexual code which figures prominently in women worker and customer interaction. The sexual code figures in the interaction of male barmen with both women co-workers and regular women customers. The barman of Hotel III (G), where a group of professional women visited on a regular basis one night a week, often put his arms around them as a welcoming gesture, or at other points of the night when pausing briefly on the customers' side of the bar in the course of collecting the glasses.

A more suggestive instance of the readiness with which the sexual code is apparent in cross-gender interaction was revealed on one occasion when, as a customer, I was talking to the barman of Hotel III. One customer (unfamiliar to me) joked with the barman, saying 'I will never speak to you again for not introducing me to your girlfriend'. The barman smilingly put his arm around me, carrying through the joke with a comment about me being his girlfriend 'all right'. The same barman frequently put his arm around women workers who came into the bar, most typically in the course of serving meals, talking and joking with them as he did so. My co-worker, C, the regular barman at Hotel I, also engaged in similarly superficial and affectionate forms of physical contact.

The issue of friendly physical contact in bar interaction between workers, customers and co-workers could fruitfully be given more extended analysis than I give it here, except to suggest that it is likely to have implications for the social regulatory aspects of bar work which I discuss in the next section. That is, physical contact between customers and bar workers is not only a feature of cross-gender relations. It was not uncommon for a barman in the course of talking to a customer to touch

them on the arm or the shoulder. An instance of a customer engaging in physical contact is evident in the second example of social regulation discussed below.

Male bar workers and social regulation

The pattern whereby some barmen drink as customers with other customers where they work may be interpreted variously. It may manifest the drinking propensities of the particular worker, or conversely represent the aim of the customer to turn their relationship with the barman to their advantage. From the point of view of barmen it is likely to assist in their attempts to maintain social regulation in the bar, since customers with whom one interacts situationally as a co-drinker may play a role in dampening potentially troublesome situations.

As an instance of the difficulties barmen encounter in their work, one barman, the self-confessed alcoholic mentioned earlier, commented that he was nervous and did not know how to control customers, and that sometimes when they were drunk they threw glasses at him. For these and other reasons, he said he did not like the work much. He expressed admiration for the style of a woman who worked elsewhere, whom he had seen practically lift a customer out of the bar, in contrast to another woman worker at the same hotel who, after barring a customer, became scared and gave them another drink. He contrasted these instances against his own style, commenting that he was given to blushing before he banned someone. Mostly he found he got on well with people, except, he said, 'the idiots' and even then, he treated them like one expected oneself to be treated. He did not yell at them as some barmen do with 'Get out of here, you fucking so-and-so, no more for you' or 'Fuck off, you drunken pigs'.

Instead he might say something like 'Don't you think you've had enough for today — how about making it the last' which, he said, mostly but not always, worked. I observed the same barman's style in the following interaction:

A young customer came in and the barman greeted him, then queried, 'Schooner?'

Customer: No thanks, scotch and coke.

Barman: Scotch and coke? (and then in teasing, scolding tones) Are you sure you're old enough to drink? Of course, I've only known you for fifty years.

The same barman's drinking pattern and its extension to a neighbouring hotel and the inclusion of current customers in his drinking network has been referred to earlier (L: Hotel V).

A more extended instance of the use of cajoling, joking and mock-scolding occurred at one of the hotels where I worked. On this occasion, about 4.30 p.m. I was visiting the bar (Hotel I). As it was not busy, I went into the public/saloon bar where I used to work, to say hello to C, the Greek barman. I made a point of visiting to keep in touch. My visit coincided with his break; he was being relieved by another barman. After I walked in I sat down and we exchanged greetings. The barman joined me on the customer side for a drink — his buy. It was a very quiet time, with maybe two or three other customers, including one very drunk man. Shortly after we had sat down with our drinks a young 'bikie' who often frequented the bar with his mates walked in on his own.

I had seen the barman adopt this technique before; it consisted of cajoling, scolding, but in a joking manner. He was faced with problems of social control, particularly with reference to the young, tough customers who regularly frequented the nearby fun parlour. I had never seen any open violence but a number of them who came into the pub were

under-age, they tended to mix socially and drank with some of the young prostitutes who patronised the bar; both groups were banned in the neighbouring hotel, at least for a time.

The boy walked in and stood at the bar not far from where we were seated, but separated from us by a drunk customer. The barman called out loudly, addressing both the boy and the bartender, 'That boy, that boy there, he's bad, very bad when drunk; today OK, good boy, not drunk', in a mock scolding manner as one would employ to a child, although he had used this same technique to various people in the bar, regardless of age.

In response to the barman's cajoling, the boy moved to where we were sitting, standing to the back of C, placing a friendly hand on his shoulder. He proceeded to banter with the barman, meantime giving him a joking cuff, saying, 'What are you smoking for, you don't smoke', proffered as a kind of joking taunt. The barman responded with 'Cheeky boy', lightly said. Then followed some brief banter about drinking with the boy referring to the barman getting drunk, in a 'look-to-yourself' tone. The barman denied drunkenness and pretended indignation.

The boy moved to my side, and engaged in conversation with the bartender currently serving, about a game of darts, and some competition that was going on between them. The exchange between him and the off-duty barman drew to an end. I played no part in any of the above, in particular, the boy made no recognition of my presence, nor was I introduced.

The boy who featured in this incident was the same one who the same barman picked out as one for me to keep an eye on, as a potential troublemaker, in the early days of my working in the saloon bar. He said then that this one was likely to turn nasty or difficult when drunk (C: Hotel I).

A similar instance of the use of a cajoling style occurred in Hotel II, when at one point two customers were engaged in a prolonged argument in loud tones. They were speaking in Italian. The barman let the argument run for a time. His first step was taken when he called, in a low and restraining tone, 'Obrero, Obrero', repeating this in slightly louder tones, meanwhile hovering nearby. At some point afterwards the argument came to an end. When I asked the barman what it had been about, he replied 'the races'.

These techniques of cajoling, as with women workers, may go far in avoiding or containing trouble. When they prove ineffective, customers may be banned for varying lengths of time.

In one instance when I was talking to a barman in the hotel where he worked, a customer entered the bar but the barman called to him, saying he was banned for causing a fight earlier, which the customer denied but the barman stood firm (I: Hotel IV). At the time, I was impressed by the clumsiness of the barman's technique in commenting so openly about the customer's misdemeanours. Although it was in the daytime and the customer was sober, a reprimand of this kind may have been backed up with physical prowess, which the barman's demeanour suggested would have been forthcoming, if necessary.

I have seen similarly abrupt communications, sufficient to make customers retrace their steps, executed by another barman who was physically capable of backing this up. The communication may be little more than a physical gesture directed at a customer caught on the point of entering a bar, accompanied by movement in that direction if the customer continues forward (G: Hotel III). However, such tactics will not assist where the trouble or potential trouble threatens from a group of

customers. Nor, as the case of L shows, are all barmen physically adept in situations that threaten violence.

Because of the significance of its implications for gender-differentiation in bar work, I discuss the use of joking in the regulatory problems facing barmen in the section on gender contrasts and bar work.

Male bar workers and relations with co-workers

With reference to the servicing component, the most striking feature of male-female co-worker relations come from the complaints my male co-worker at Hotel I made about the women from other bars who gave assistance from time to time in the saloon/public bar. He described them as 'lazy' and 'untidy'. By contrast I was in favour, perhaps because the servicing component was the main element of the work I felt comfortable with.

The relations between the barmen and women bar workers at this hotel had implications in the number of arguments between customers and women bar workers. Complaints over these were often relayed to management, while the women workers frequently commented on the rudeness of the customers in the bar. The manager commented at one point on the importance of keeping the regular barman happy with whom he worked.

In an instance of co-worker rivalry in the same hotel, one woman worker stated her intention to 'get even with' a casual barman who had tried to 'pull rank with her', and whom she disliked for other reasons referred to elsewhere, by getting him dismissed.

Another barman commented on his experience with a woman co-worker whom he said he hated at first, because he saw her as dominating. He added he was old-fashioned enough not to like being ordered about by a

woman (L: Hotel V). However, this attitude had softened in time, at least sufficiently for him to comment that he could work with her anytime. But some of the casual male staff he refused to work with because of their uncaring and untidy attitude to the work which offended him. He added that casuals are only in the work 'for the dollar'.

Data on male co-workers came from Hotel I, where when I pressed the regular barman as to how he was getting on with my replacement (the drinker), he was unforthcoming, indicating that he found he was able to work with him. This, despite his dismay when I first told him I was leaving. Greater dissatisfaction was expressed by other barmen toward the assistance they received from male managers.

In the sociability component, between women and men bar workers, the sexual code entered into interactions in a variety of ways. There was a degree of affectionate display, of touching, as in hands on shoulders or around the waist. I detected some attempts at shaping my behaviour from my co-workers who used to comment on occasions that I looked especially nice. On other occasions in Hotel I, I felt pressured when what I saw as an easy, comfortable work relationship was threatened for me by invitations for a coffee, or to have drinks with the regular barman on his days off. I could not detect whether he was merely being companionable or whether his suggestions moved beyond this (C: Hotel I).

Male bar workers and management relations

Barmen frequently made disparaging comments about hotel management. The ability of managers to serve, to socialise and to efficiently control the bar were often questioned.

The attitudes expressed by a union official on hotel managers tended to sum up also the views of bar workers:

He seems to think he can be everything in a hotel, he seems to think he can be the head wage clerk, he can pull the beer better than any barman, he can do his stock sheets better than any bloke that does stock sheets, and he can order stuff, and he can cook better than the chef. Well, a chef, what does he do, he does four years apprenticeship, he might have been around more times than you can jump over and he has a bloke that's never cooked a hot meal in his life come down to the kitchen telling him what to do and he gets uptight. You know, all the expertise that should be used in the hotels seems to be centred in the one man, the manager, he seems to think he's all of those and he won't delegate his authority - and he won't involve himself with his staff.

Skill, status and male bar workers

On the question of skill, a case study of the barman who was promoted to assistant manager after a managerial change is instructive. He complained that as a barman-cellarman he was expected by management to take on quasi-management tasks. Leaving aside the reasons for his dismissal, the point is that this barman had ambitions, as was commented on disparagingly by his former boss. (I: Hotel IV).*

Alternative perceptions were that barmen are drunkards: '92.5 percent of bar workers are alcoholics' said one, himself a self-confessed alcoholic. A union official commented that

Everybody reckons they can be a barman, and as soon as there is high unemployment like there is now, all those people who were put off in the car industry, the meatworks or wherever, the first place they front up to for a job is the bar. They reckon 'Oh, I can be a barman'. In fact, most of our people in the industry have come through from other industries, they may have been a shearer and stood off, and they've drifted into bar work.

*When I asked one of his women co-workers why I had been sacked, she was unforthcoming.

One hotel manager commented on 'the classical professional barman, you know, lazy, dishonest, drank too much, and so on'. Another one he had hired was a retired man from one of the airlines 'who was beaut and had his own following, but he was far too slow and outside his own following he didn't really attract anybody else' (Hotel V).

In a comment on one of the barmen working for him, another manager said 'C is a very good barman but he does not belong in this category of bar personalities, people who were spectacularly good in terms of what they offered customers, who would serve as a really positive attraction to customers'.

These evaluations suggest a dual stereotype of barman, on the one hand a drunkard, on the other a personality type — possibly homosexual. I return to this issue in later analysis.

Two final points:

The question of when a bar personality has the skill or charisma to have their own bar has not been dealt with so far in either discussion of women or men bar workers. My impression is that while no bar workers in this study had an association with their bar which was of much renown, there were only two that I know of who approximated this — one man (C of Hotel I) and one woman (D of Hotel V).

One paradox under which barmen operate is suggested by the two following instances.

At Hotel III, I went regularly as a customer once a week, and on one of these occasions I was learning a few words of Italian from the barman. He explained differences in patterns of address for a particular word, depending on whether you addressed someone who was normally at a higher or equal level to the speaker. Bashfully he said, 'That's why I use for you the one that is for a friend' (G: Hotel III).

In another instance in Hotel I where I worked, a customer expressed resentment toward the regular barman (C) as follows:

The customer had been to a party the night before and the barman had also been there. This fellow was concerned to state that it was a party for the manager, that the manager was a good friend of his. My interpretation was that the customer was status conscious; what was also interesting was that after mentioning the barman, it became clear that the customer was saying that the barman thought of himself as a 'big man' and that the customer resented the barman to some extent. The expression of resentment against the barman came out after a period of drinking. There was no admiration in what the customer said about the barman; it was obvious that he thought that the barman over-valued himself and the customer did not agree with that evaluation.

The paradox referred to here relates to the general issue of the performance by men of work which entails as a major component the serving of other men as customers. The paradox emerges out of the cultural loading accorded to egalitarianism in Australian society, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The descriptive instances referred to above point to the different manifestations of this paradox in both a cross-gender and like-gender situation. The bashful expression by the barman, of equality with a woman customer is awkwardly executed because he is a servant on one side of the bar to a woman customer on the other. But because he is a man talking to a woman he is able to draw on the cultural loadings accorded to gender by the wider society to assert equality in the face of the worker-customer relationship. It may also be relevant that the customer-bar worker relationship, in this instance, is a long-standing and friendly one.

The instance documenting the expression of customer hostility towards the barman draws out the contradictions between servicing and egalitarian male-male relations, when these are brought together. My interpretation is that the customer was hostile because he was unable to resolve his perceptions of the barman as a servant and the barman as a fellow-guest at a party. His expressed opinion that the barman was 'big-noting' himself suggests that he perceived the barman as stepping beyond behaviour appropriate to his work. The resolution of some of these paradoxes are referred to below in the section on gender contrasts and social regulation.

Gender stereotypes and women and men bar workers

As a prelude to a summary and analysis of the significance of gender in bar work I examine some of the contrasts between women and men in the performance of bar work which are made by those who hire and work with bar workers, predominantly hotel managers. In Chapter Four, I suggested aspects of the general status of bar work, as a low-status occupation, derived partly from the classification of the work as unskilled. In the chapter on women workers I explored some perceptions of the status of women who work in bars, primarily as seen by women workers, and those who have on-the-job contact with them. In the description in this chapter I noted some corresponding views about the status of male bar workers. Here I draw attention to a range of explicit contrasts made between women and men bar workers.

One hotel manager put forward the view that while Australian men tended to see providing service as demeaning, 'women tend not to think that way so much'. He continued:

Women, by their nature, are more helpful. Because customers may be demanding, you need a lot of patience, and perhaps that is an attribute you find more in women than in men. You do need to be very patient, because the people who drink in bars are generally not terribly thoughtful. You know, they demand service and they will walk out if they don't get service...you need to be very tolerant and courteous and patient behind a bar...

He commented further that

Whilst a hotel is basically a male domain, men like being served by women, and if you have good-looking, personable girls working you get a better result. It is harder to get attractive, personable men who appeal to other men as a rule...

The same source was quoted earlier for his views about the 'classic' barman, as drunken, dishonest, lazy. He commented that the most successful male workers he had employed were 'probably camp because they are more sensitive to people, because they tend to be more fastidious, more inclined to be helpful and so on'. He adds however, that if a hotel was very rough, citing a hotel notorious for its black clientele, 'you would not hire a woman' ([M]: Hotel V).

A different kind of contrast was drawn by one of the officials of the union who commented that not many men chose to take on bar work but that more women do so by choice. The men, he said, normally seemed to drift into it from somewhere else, 'like in depressed times as casuals and find, if they like the industry, they will go with it, but the women select it'.

On the whole, these views tend to present a picture of women having the necessary or positive qualities for bar work, and of men, on the whole, being less well-suited to the tasks associated with the work.

Some managers reversed the evaluations already cited, as did the manager who commented that if he had the choice, he would never again employ young women workers, as was the current policy where he worked. In his view, the problems of hiring young, attractive women, even though they were a drawcard with some customers, included the points against them, that they could not talk to customers, that they could not control a fight nor could they tap kegs ([N]: Hotel I).

Another member of managerial staff from the same hotel, a woman, disagreed with the suggestion that women tend to come and go with a higher turnover than men. In her view, full-time barmen were not necessarily longer-term employees; because of the hours demanded by the work, they did not usually fall into the category described by her as 'stable' family men, and lots of the younger casual male bar workers had a high job turnover.* Despite this, in her view, men presented fewer problems as bar employees than did women. Presumably this view stemmed from the views already quoted that this woman held about women bar workers being mostly in the job for the 'men' they were likely to meet. She drew a contrast between those that sleep with the manager, who cause trouble, and avoided working too hard, and those who were there just to do the job. This category, she suggested, tended to be rude and independent ([J]: Hotel I).

*Given the small number of barmen, contrasts with the pattern of women workers need to be interpreted cautiously. However, the ethnographic pattern supports the managerial viewpoint referred to above. Most of the barmen had a work pattern ranging from two to five years; C's work pattern suggested he would remain in bar work, as he had been in the work nine years or more by the time this study concluded. Similarly, at least a third of the women who worked in hotels in the street had work histories of five years or more; for about the same proportion a short-term pattern of two years or less was indicated.

The suggestion that women workers had special qualities which helped minimise trouble in a bar was denied bluntly by another hotel manager who had some involvement with hotels which were suburban trouble spots ([K]: Hotel IV).

These varying points of view expressed about women and men bar workers may be taken to merely reflect the fact that there are a variety of locations which vary in the seriousness of their regulatory problems, for instance, and a variety of workers, images and styles. My interpretation is that the paradoxes and contradictions evident in the perceptions presented are more than the reflections of varying realities to do with hotels and bar workers. The points of view are spelt out in terms of a set of stereotypic views about women and men which accord, on the whole, with cultural classifications and ideology relating to gender, which I develop further in Chapter Eight.

It is apparent that women bar workers are perceived in terms of being suited to the work because of their supposed attributes of qualities such as patience, which can be read as partaking of a mothering stereotype. Alternatively, women may be seen as sex objects, who have voluntarily placed themselves in this situation, due to the opportunities for male companionship.

A process of categorisation operates also for men — a professional type seen as capable of operating in the companionable and other aspects of the work, attributed in one instance to emerge from the attributes of homosexuality. The other category operative for the male barman is that of drunkard or drifter. Like the category of 'derelict', these categories which are applied to barmen shift away from normative definitions of 'men'.

Gender contrasts and bar work

Before moving into my final analysis and conclusion, I draw out the comparisons embedded in the earlier description of women and men bar workers. The explicit question at issue is the location of gender-specific aspects of the work in contrast to those which operate irrespective of gender. The comparison is made as a background, firstly, for my concluding analysis about the significance of gender in the work that is performed in hotel bars, and, secondly, for the links I identify between what is evident in bar work and gender ideology.

In my comparison I adopt the same descriptive framework as before, exploring the significance of gender in terms of service, sociability and social regulation, co-worker and management relations, skill and status.

Gender contrast in the servicing component

In the servicing component, the routine tasks are much the same for women and for men. Both women and men typically engage in the task areas of serving, clearing and cleaning, and in the work of shifting crates of bottles, although the incidence of heavy work in the job may be advanced as a rationale in favour of the hire of men over women. Conversely, both women and men typically engage in the more domestically-identified tasks, such as glass washing, even when a woman worker and a barman may be sharing a shift.

The notable exception to the non-segregated nature of the tasks performed involves the maintenance and tapping of beer kegs and the cleaning out of the beer lines. Both these tasks tend to be done by men, not by women, and both involve greater technical skill than other routine

work. Keg-tapping is identified as potentially dangerous. At a training school for bar workers, both women and men were shown the rudiments of keg-tapping. However, only a couple of the women workers commented with a degree of pride that they were able to tap kegs. This contrast of the routine tasks supports the general assertions made in Chapter Five about the nature of typically female areas of work, that they have a low range of skills and task complexity. This point is supported also by the tendency for barmen to double as cellarmen, a job which is paid at a higher rate.*

Customers direct at both women and men bar workers a style of ordering behaviour which is perceived by workers as arrogant. However, the descriptive instances on rudeness and abuse toward male bar workers is sparse in contrast to women bar workers. This is an area which calls for further discussion. Several points can be made. Firstly, the relative sparseness of comparative detail on rudeness may reflect the heavier concentration of data on women workers. However, rather than reflecting a weakness in the data, the relative sparseness of this kind of data may itself be significant. With reference to the sociability component, the sexual code imprints itself on a wide area of customer-women worker relations, with corresponding potential for the creation of difficulties in interaction, absent in interactions with males. And in the area of social regulation, rudeness and abuse by customers of bar workers will have different manifestations, meanings and consequences, depending on the gender of the worker. I return to both these points later.

*See Table III, Chapter Four.

Other points to note about gender contrasts in the servicing component are that:

(1) While a good-humoured demeanour is an ideal of service for both women and men, there is a gender differentiation operative here, with different meanings attaching to an unsmiling demeanour, depending on whether it is a woman or a man. There is less pressure or expectation on barmen to present a performance which highlights smiling as a regular feature of demeanour, as was suggested in the ethnographic instance of customers encouraging a woman bar worker to smile. Instead, joking behaviour commonly forms a heavy component of specific interactions between customers and, especially, skilled barmen and is discussed with reference to social regulation. The point I want to draw attention to here is that different meanings will be attached to service executed by a barmen with an unsmiling demeanour than a woman worker who omits to smile in the course of service. Specifically, service which is executed by an unsmiling woman has more serious connotations than an unsmiling man.

(2) The descriptive data suggests that the non-routine demands placed on women workers will vary from those placed on barmen, not only in the sexual code but also with reference to requests by customers for a proportion of the dinner of the women bar workers, or the customer's request to have a bandaid placed on a cut finger. These requests draw on the culturally perceived 'domesticity' of women. Such requests would either be entirely out of place or take a different form if directed at barmen.

(3) The criteria adopted for evaluating skill have some gender-specific implications. For instance, evaluations of women as 'lazy' may be made more readily, or at least the interpretation given to

the demeanour of any woman who adopted a deliberate and slow style would be different to those given to the style of the barman G which are nevertheless tolerated, although joked about by customers.

This leads to a fourth point - to do with the advantages or otherwise of women against men in the servicing component. The steady, seemingly deliberately unrushed movements of this barman can be seen as a means whereby the barman stresses his 'maleness' in the course of performing service.

The appropriateness of women for work which has a high component of service is suggested by the involvement of women, not only in bar work, but related fields, such as waitressing and air hostess work. Men working in these areas must distance themselves from the cultural contradictions of being a servant and a male. There are a range of ways this can be done. One practice commonly found in restaurants, and to a lesser extent in hotels, is the adoption of formal uniform and corresponding demeanour. Formality, as manifested in more impersonal, less friendly service, is more often the mark of male rather than female service. Also significant with reference to cultural classifications of gender, servicing and men, is the point that two of the long-term barmen in the study were non-Australian-born. Other sources indicate that a number of older or retired men engage in bar work (e.g. *Hotel Gazette of South Australia* 1970).

On the point of gender differentiation and servicing, Goffman is suggestive when he comments on the involvement of women in

jobs which sustain the note established for them in households - the garment industry, domestic labor, commercial cleaning, and personal servicing such as teaching, innkeeping, nursing, food handling. In these latter scenes, presumably, it will be easy for us to

fall into treating the server as someone to help us in a semi-mothering way, not someone to subordinate coldly or be subordinated by. In service matters closely associated with the body and the self, we are thus able to play down the harshness that male servers might be thought to bring (Goffman 1977:317).

Gender contrasts and the sociability component

The most notable contrast here is the significance of the sexual code in woman bar worker and customer interactions. Because of its significance in the bar setting, I discuss it in further detail in the analysis which follows this section.

One paradox in the bar setting stems from the limitations on the quality of the personal ties and the extent of personal knowledge that characterise many bar worker-customer relations. Despite the expectations of informal sociability characteristic of the setting, from the bar workers' point of view, the work of service and social regulation is made easier where a degree of social distance separates the customer from the worker. From the customers' point of view, regardless of the nature of any personal ties which may exist, a degree of objectification of bar workers, whether woman or man, is entailed.*

Turning to more concrete manifestations of gender-contrasts in the sociability component, the meaning of a barman having a drink with customers, whether inside or outside of work hours, and a woman worker doing the same, is of a different order. This can be related to a broader difference, one which has been discussed on several earlier occasions. Because of the combined action of gender ideology, and the suspect moral nature asserted in various wider cultural evaluations of

*I elaborate on the concept of 'objectification' in the conclusion.

hotels, the mere presence of a woman in a hotel, whether as customer or worker, has a different meaning than that accorded to the presence of men in hotels. In the course of one evening's work behind a bar, any bar worker is likely to witness a range of drunken, possibly obscene, behaviour. The cultural meaning of a woman worker witnessing this behaviour ('unfit for the eyes of women') once again is entirely different to the witness of such events by barmen. My point is not made here with reference to individual women and men, who may be equally more or less matter-of-fact in their responses to the events witnessed in the course of work.

These wider perceptions of the moral status of hotels are linked to the relative evaluations of women bar workers, which in turn locks them into a double bind or labelling process with reference to their sexuality, as I explore in the analysis.

There are a number of paradoxes which become evident in the sociability component, relating to a contrast of barmen and women workers. In the course of my work, I observed on several occasions the ease of interaction which characterised barmen-customer interaction. I observed this particularly with reference to the barman of Hotel I (C₁) who I evaluated as having a 'flat' style of socialising. Despite this there was an ease in his interactions with customers which contrasted with the often troubled interactions which women workers had with customers in this bar. This point leads to a further observation: that for many customers their interactions with women workers which so commonly drew on the sexual code were characterised by an element of ritual. For many customers, this kind of exchange seemed the only or

major kind they could maintain with women workers. It was as if not to engage in what often amounted to banal sexual innuendos was to run the risk of failing to live up to cultural standards relating to superficial male-female socialising — the notion operative here being that a man must 'impress' a woman, and fails in his 'manhood' if he treats her other than as a sexual object.

More significant in this context however, is the point that women workers offer a more spectacular or lively performance with a minimal amount of effort than is possible for barmen to achieve. That is, while there may be greater ease in the interactions of barmen and customers, and more trouble in those of women workers and customers arising from the sexual code, it is also arguable that there is greater spectator value arising from the same factor. That is, while the sexual code may lead to greater trouble between women workers and customers, it simultaneously offers customers more in terms of observable performances of bar workers. A case in point here is the worker who in the course of her work moved her body about in dancing motion, a performance which appeared designed for her own satisfaction and not that of customers, but which nevertheless provided them with an additional spectator interest.

On another level, and referring back to Goffman's point cited earlier about the 'semi-mothering' element which can be drawn on with reference to women workers, this showed up in a number of instances. The woman bar worker who showed concern for her 'autistic' customer, forcing him into a brand of contact, is a case in point. Similarly, when customers tell women workers about their problems, for instance, about

their illnesses, or about problems with work or with women, the perceived domesticity of women may offer more on this score than the attributes available for men to draw on in the work.

Gender contrasts and social regulation

A number of the problems in this area and a number of the more subtle ways of regulating customers' behaviour are similar for women and men bar workers. For instance, reports of customers throwing glasses come from both women and men, and when bar workers 'mock' scold customers, this is often done in a style which is similar for both sexes. However, abuse by customers of barmen and women workers brings out a gender differentiation. As already noted, the sexual code has a potential for creating frequent occasions when abuse and insult will be directed at women workers. In these situations, joking is an important part of the repertoire of women workers, especially among those who are more skilled at the work.

Significant in the context of social regulation with reference to barmen is their likely reaction to potentially troublesome situations. The cultural perception that men have the potential to take more effective physical action than women or have a lower threshold for insult than women creates regulatory problems for barmen. Women may more effectively short-circuit potential trouble by utilising the subtle range of tactics available to bar workers, pushing them to limits which might prove foolhardy for barmen, for instance, when a woman steps between protagonists to prevent them from coming to blows.

The implications of a scolding reprimand are again different depending on whether it is delivered by a woman or a man. Men may

utilise a subtlety similar to that utilised by women. But the interpretation a customer places on a scolding from a man as against a woman, deriving from wider cultural evaluations, has the consequence for men that they must 'work' at rendering their 'maleness' ineffective in such a situation. Correspondingly placed, a woman is not hampered with the need for this 'extra work'. These points help explain the heavier dependence of male bar workers on joking and drinking with customers as tactics which facilitate social regulation.

With reference to joking behaviour, my suggestion is that, while some talent for engaging in joking activity with customers will characterise the skilled bar worker, whether a woman or man, the joking relationships between barmen and customers are different from those between women bar workers and customers. In the relations of barmen with customers there may be evident a heavier or more obvious joking content than holds for women workers. One assumption here is that the cultural ideal of male solidarity and egalitarianism is to some extent extended across the bar when the bar worker is a man, but this egalitarianism is restricted by the servicing component of the role of the male bar worker. Following Radcliffe-Brown (1952), the joking that occurs between barmen and customers can be seen to express the paradoxical elements of conjunction and disjunction, of attachment and detachment which underlies their relationship. The paradoxes evident in a bar setting where men serve men, which are different from the paradoxes which operate when women serve men, may be resolved by the high joking content evident in men bartender-customer relations.

In contrast to men, the perceived domesticity of women which is an element of their wider cultural categorisation is consistent with the

routine tasks of servicing associated with bar work. The use of joking by women in bar work revolves primarily around the sexual code. In many instances, joking by women workers resolves paradoxes whereby the sexual badinage of customers is countered so as to avoid giving offence, in the words of one woman bar worker, 'the art of the successful knockback'.

An additional point which characterises the joking of women workers and customers is located in the ease with which sexual joking flows into obscenity. With reference to cultural categorisations of gender, the use of obscenity in cross-gender interactions has markedly different implications from those it has in like-gender interactions.

For instance, when a customer asks the woman worker 'What's worse than paper tits?' and the response is 'A cardboard box', the woman worker is placed in a position of either appearing a 'prude' or revealing herself to be in the 'know' about these colloquially expressed sexual referents. To appear a 'prude' is to show oneself up as inappropriate to the work. To reveal herself in the 'know' is to promote a particular definition of herself with reference to cultural classification of women. These interpretations of the significance of joking between women workers and customers locate their primary significance beyond an analysis of joking. Consequently, I reserve further discussion of their implications for my analysis of the sexual code in bar work in Chapter Eight.

Concluding these comments about the manifestations of joking in bar work with reference to anthropological discussions of these themes, there are grounds for arguing that the interactions between barmen and customers in this area approximate 'a joking relationship' along the lines defined by Radcliffe-Brown. That is, when a joking relationship exists, it is a formalised and standardised one in which separateness 'is

not merely recognised but emphasised' (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:95). While the joking between barmen and customers may not partake of the same degree of formalisation or standardization as the instances in Radcliffe-Brown's analysis, they impress as well-marked in their interactions in contrast to those of women workers and customers. Drawing on the perceived domesticity of their cultural categorisation, women may be able to get away with more in the area of social regulation, without the pressure for transforming action into a joking context.

Taking these arguments further, the distinction drawn by Handelman and Kapferer between 'category routinized' and 'setting specific' forms of joking activity can be applied to an analysis of joking in bar work. The authors comment that category-routinized joking behaviour

usually employs a highly regularised set of cues and subsequent general modes of behaviour. It thus contrasts markedly with the situation-specific joking ...where negotiations leading to the joke and the transposition to joking from 'serious' interaction are not routine, but must be worked out anew on each occasion, even if these occasions recur in the same social setting. In a sense, much of the behaviour in routinized customary joking is located in pre-established and accepted categorical cues for the expression of joking and shared enjoyment (Handelman and Kapferer 1972:497).

Furthermore, Handelman and Kapferer add that setting-specific joking is 'highly susceptible to subversion', that is, of reversion to a serious context. However, 'although setting-specific frames could be easily subverted, they could also incorporate new rules or modifications of original ones which allowed the joking activity to be sustained' (*ibid.*:513).

There are two points suggested by this distinction for understanding joking in bar work. The first extends on points already made,

that joking between barmen and customers draws on cultural categorisations and the understandings and conventions which are held to characterise relationships of sociability between men in general. For example, jokes and discussions about sport and women form a readily available repertoire, culturally perceived as appropriate for men, which can be drawn on in these interactions.

The distinction made by Handelman and Kapferer suggests something more: while aspects of category-routinized joking can be readily activated and are difficult to subvert, setting-specific joking activity, which may be seen as more characteristic of women worker-customer joking interaction, is simultaneously more fragile and more flexible. This relates back to the point suggested in Chapter Two. Given the constraints of bar settings, the use of women vis à vis men, or in association with them, makes a critical contribution to maintaining the atmosphere of bars as settings of informal sociability, within the underlying constraint of contract. The argument relates to cultural categorisations of gender which facilitates the manoeuvrability of women in settings which call for informality and flexibility in social interaction. This is not to say that men cannot skillfully contain the contradictions entailed in bar work, but that in order for them to do so more work has to be expended. An instance of this is the joking relationship observable between barmen and customers.

Once again, Simmel comments suggestively with reference to joking that it 'keeps the conversation away from individual intimacy and from all purely personal elements that cannot be adapted to sociable requirements' (Wolff 1950:53). Joking 'not only provides a content in which all can participate alike; it is also a particular individual's gift to the group

— but a gift behind which its giver becomes invisible: the subtlest and best told stories are those from which the narrator's personality has completely vanished (*ibid.*:53).

Gender contrasts and co-worker and management relations

The critical points to be made concern the variables of authority and status. Tensions over authority, over 'pulling rank', are evident in male-female co-working relationships. These take on their significance from the instance of the barman who is recruited by the hotel management into quasi-managerial aspects of the work without this having been given financial recognition. The cultural perception of male authority vis à vis female subordination is operative here. Also notable is the paradox relating to male ambition, which where it is manifest, is in direct contradiction to continuing in the work role of a barman — work which has limited promotion opportunities. The ambitious barman is likely to leave voluntarily, or be sacked for being 'over-ambitious', or perhaps in a rare instance, move upward through promotion.

Finally, given the informal setting of a bar and the unskilled nature of bar work, there are tensions contained in the direction and authority of management over bar workers which are more readily resolved in relation to women workers than men. The handing out of reprimands and direct orders to bar workers by management may reach the point where they contravene the atmosphere of informal sociability which helps attract customers to bars. This point is less likely to be reached when the orders and reprimands of management are executed toward women workers. When executed with reference to male bar workers, more 'work' must be done if public embarrassment or the humiliation of the barman before customers is to be avoided.

Gender contrasts and status

Views quoted earlier suggest that bar work does not rate highly as a means of earning a living for either women or men. This relates to the elements of unskilled service entailed in the work and the nature of the setting. On the other hand, the status of a barman is to some extent redeemable by the relative ease with which he can become a customer in a hotel bar, either where he works or elsewhere.

Once again a number of contradictions become evident with reference to the issue of status. Because of cultural classifications of gender, and because of the servicing element of the work, it may be that it is more demeaning for a man to engage in than a woman. On the other hand, because of the suspect reputation of hotels as social settings, bar work is likely to be viewed as more generally dubious for women than it is for men.

Further contradictions stem from the nature of the controls that bar workers exercise over customers. These impress as greater than those of restaurant workers where the controls that workers exercise over customers seem relatively minimal (cf. Whyte 1948). To some extent, this flows from the legal stipulations which underlie bar work, which make it an offence for bar workers to serve particular categories of people and provide them with the option of resorting to the law in these situations. In addition, bar workers often exercise these controls in spatial settings where the link with the hotel management or the existence of delegated authority may not be evident. There are a number of situations where workers must and do make autonomous decisions about the non-service of customers in the absence of, or without reference to, the manager of the hotel.

The notion that a bar worker is a servant yet exercises autonomous controls over customers relating to the provision or non-provision of service contains a paradox. A contrast of women and men extends this point. The controls which bar workers exercise over customers when considered with reference to women are exercised in a domain which is public and relates to control over a valued resource and an ability to withhold that resource. This shifts the nature of the controls that women exercise in hotel bars beyond those which are associated with women in cultural classifications of gender and which are domestically-based. Not only do the controls exercised by bar workers move beyond those normatively available to women but also, in virtue of working in a public setting such as a bar, women have available a range of opportunities for social and sexual access perceived in gender ideology as normatively inappropriate for women.

I return to this issue in my concluding comments to which I now turn.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Part I:

The significance of the sexual code in bar work

I explore here the significance of definitions of the sexuality of women bar workers for their social and work relationships. My argument is that a range of often non-serious liberties and badinage is engaged in by customers, with reference to the sexuality of women bar workers. The critical point, however, is the meanings or interpretations to be given these interactions which I have described as the sexual code. The significant points centre around my interpretation that male customers commonly define women bar workers as available for and open to a range of sexual references and overtures, summarised in terms of the notion that 'barmaids' are sexually loose or available. Any woman working behind a bar will have this assumption communicated to her in a range of ways. I explore initially the various meanings this communication may have in the internal settings of hotel bars in this section, and in Part II, I discuss the implications it has in the social context outside bars.

The various ways in which women workers are viewed as objects of sexual interest routinely available to customers in bar settings may be seen as a series of communications which carry the evaluation, present in the world outside hotel bars, that this is a dubious form of work for women. The process may be seen as a means of communicating the low status or class position assumed to characterise women who work in hotel bars. This interpretation must be qualified by the point that women bar workers, as noted earlier, come from a variety of social backgrounds.

In addition, there are other points to be drawn out, relating to the presence of women in what is popularly conceived of as a male domain. Popular perceptions of hotels as exclusively or predominantly male domains downplay, among other things, the regular presence of women workers in hotel bars.

The main point in my argument with reference to the internal settings of hotel bars is that the communication that women workers are sexually 'loose' operates to distance women bar workers from a 'god's police' image (Summers 1975). This opens the way for customers to 'misbehave' in their presence in a range of ways, without bothering with the proprieties which would be attached to that behaviour, if it were to occur in the presence of women outside of the bar. Specifically, the assumption that a woman is morally 'loose' enables customers to engage in rapid transformations of behaviour from, say, abuse to flattery, while simultaneously maintaining a servicing relationship throughout these various transformations. Some simple examples: the cultural proscription not to swear in front of women has to be overcome with reference to women bar workers. Another instance: the customer may be socialising and transacting with prostitutes; the barmaid must become a neutral and anonymous observer on such occasions, and on others revert to the sociability component which is a part of the routine of the work. Again, similarly, one night a customer may drunkenly abuse and grab at the barmaid. The next time he visits the bar he may behave without reference to the previous occasion. My point is that the sexual objectification of women workers by customers is a mechanism which permits these transformations in behaviour. In other words, whatever customers may do drunk, it will not matter since it is merely in the presence of a

woman who is perceived, at least situationally, as morally 'loose', this perception being communicated by the assumptions made about her sexual availability.

Spradley and Mann provide the following definition of 'objectification':

When persons become objects we can invade their privacy without hesitation, talk about them in their presence, manipulate their behaviour, and keep them in their assigned places. Whenever some class of human beings are thus transformed into objects, they acquire a kind of social invisibility. In social situations they must remain in the background.

When persons become objects, we need not listen to them, address them, or take them into account as fully responsible and sentient beings. This does not mean that such a creature is not admired or desired, it only means they are less than complete persons and must be kept in their place (Spradley and Mann 1975: 10).*

As support for my argument about the sexual code, I would point to the non-seriousness of many sexual overtures and references made by customers, of the innocuous 'what-time-do-you-finish' variety often tossed at women workers. No doubt, this unserious style may also be a face-saving device which protects customers from the risk of a knock-back before his drinking companions. Also, the sexual badinage which goes on in a bar may be translated into actual sexual encounters, but I suggest there are other possibilities to be drawn out along the lines suggested here for understanding the operation of the sexual code in bars.

Whether viewed with reference to women or men bar workers, their work and social relations are characterised by rapid transformations in

*I have also drawn on Goffman for the concept of 'objectification' elaborated here and referred to elsewhere.

the content of their interactions with customers. Focussing heavily on the sexual content of these interactions, I argue that the definitions relating to the sexuality of women workers are a central mechanism permitting these transformations of behaviour.

My discussion of the sexual code highlights it in terms of customer interactions with women bar workers. This should not suggest a one-way, uni-directional, asymmetrical interpretation in which the women bar workers are passive and helpless recipients of customer-initiated and controlled sexual references and interactions. Some women bar workers dress to highlight their sexuality, some stress it as a part of their bar work performance, while some do not; similarly, some women engage in obscene repartee with customers, while others do not. However, while the operation of the sexual code is not a one-way process, the ethnography showed that the sexual code operates with reference to women bar workers regardless of their style of presentation, and regardless of whether women workers themselves promote the sexual code or co-operate in this definition of themselves. I also suggest that women workers who remain in the work over a long period will be those who feel comfortable with such a definition of themselves. Furthermore, those women who solve the barrage of propositions which flow from customers by entering into a steady relationship with one of them, reinforce the definition of their sexuality which is operative in bar settings. Simultaneously, they are removed as an object of competition among male customers through their attachment to one specific customer. Yet, if and when the relationship breaks up, the sexual code may be used to reclaim a man's honour, with the not-uncommon outcome of the woman worker leaving the job.

For women working in hotel bars, an obligatory element attaches to the sexual code, in the sense that it must be dealt with as part of the job. Women who feel uncomfortable with this component of the work are likely to encounter trouble in a substantial number of their relationships with customers. This may in turn lead to a job history of short duration, either through management decisions resulting in the sack, or through choice.

Insofar as the interactions of customers with barmen are marked by a license relating to joking behaviour which obviates any necessity for negotiation, an analogous situation could be said to operate with reference to the sexual code between customers and women bar workers. As a consequence, women workers are open to the kinds of interactions entailed in the sexual code, regardless of any differences between them in age, experience, ethnic background, style of personal presentation or in other areas. However, differences such as these are likely to be relevant to the variety of ways in which women workers deal with the sexual code as an aspect of their work. Furthermore, the components of bar work — servicing, sociability and social regulation — may receive different weight or emphasis in the work styles of different women, relating to the differences mentioned above. For instance, the sexual component of bar work may be downplayed in the interactions of an experienced woman worker who has worked in the same job for a period, in contrast to an inexperienced worker.

From the point of view of customers, the sexual code is not an obligatory aspect of their relationships with women workers. It is, however, an ever-present potential which permits a variety of forms of sexual dalliance, ranging from the merely vicarious to more or less serious instances.

Furthermore, while the sexual code is situational in operation, that is, it interplays with a variety of other components which characterise customers' interactions with women workers, its significance in these interactions is nevertheless central.

The centrality of the sexual code flows from the points already made. That is, the sexual code permits customers to behave in bars in a range of ways, without engaging in customary proprieties which might, in other situations, be called for in the presence of a woman. Simultaneously and paradoxically, the mere presence of a woman working in a hotel bar adds a range of interests and attractions to the setting, throwing out a richer range of interactional possibilities than those which flow from the presence of a man behind the bar. That is, barmen have to invest more work than women to attain a lively and convivial atmosphere.

The sexual code also operates, along with the servicing component, as the primary point of contact that many customers have with women workers. For those customers who engage in them, interactions which partake of the sexual code may entail validations of their masculinity. These may take a form as minimal as merely engaging in watching women workers, in the course of drinking. On the other hand, these contacts may entail risks for customers seeking validation of their masculinity through the interactional possibilities available in those hotel bars which are worked by women. They may have the consequence of embarrassment in the public setting, if the woman worker chooses to sanction the behaviour of customers in attention-getting ways. However, women workers are restricted in this area by the constraints of the work setting, which favour diplomatic styles of interaction with customers.

An additional point in my interpretations relates to the sense of solidarity and transcendence seen as characteristic of the 'mateship' of hotel settings. Through the sexual code, this is as readily achieved by the controlled presence of a woman or women in the bar, who are readily defined as morally suspect, as it is by the exclusion of women in general. For instance, in those situations when customers may need to 'save face', it is possible for them to activate in a variety of forms, oblique or otherwise, the communication that the woman worker is morally 'loose'. In this way, regardless of the range of behaviour that customers may be a party to, drunken or otherwise, the sexual code ensures them a sense of transcendence vis à vis women workers.

The sexual code mediates the contradictions evident when women work in hotel bars in a variety of ways. A final instance relates to the controls that women workers exercise over customers which I discuss further in my concluding comments about gender attributes and bar work.

Women who work in hotel bars exercise some control over the access of males to a valued resource, namely alcohol, to the point of having the potential to refuse them service or ban them from the bar. I argue that the controls that women workers have over men in hotel bars move well beyond those culturally recognised as appropriate for women and which are normatively associated with the domestic sphere. At the same time, and paradoxically, the means by which women achieve and maintain control in bar settings partake of these same domestic controls culturally perceived as appropriate for women. Critically, communications to bar workers that they are morally suspect separates them from those who exercise these controls in domestic settings, that is, wives and mothers. That is, the controls that women exercise in the bar setting are undercut, defused or masked by perceptions of women bar workers as

morally suspect. These contradictions stem from the gender attributes operative in the wider society which, by way of conclusion, I now discuss.

Part II:

Gender ideology and bar work

The gender attributes which are operative in the wider society must, in the bar setting, be neutralised or distanced with reference to both women and men bar workers. With reference to women bar workers, a neutralisation process takes place whereby they are separated from definitions of women in general. The paradox unique to women workers is that the mechanism which brings about their separation has to do with female sexuality. Definitions of women bar workers in terms of their sexuality invert the attributes of gender ideology, read according to the nature-culture framework. That is, the centrality of motherhood which is asserted in cultural constructs of women is stressed in a context which downplays the sexuality of women workers, except insofar as it is enlisted in the service of motherhood. The paradox lies in the point that women bar workers are distanced from general definitions of women by a mechanism which stresses or exaggerates one of women's central attributes, although one that is downplayed by ideological constructs. The sexual definition of women workers which occurs in hotel bars operates to neutralise or separate them from the dominant image of gender ideology, that of 'mother'.

In this way, within the bar setting, the cultural attributes of 'womanhood' are neutralised at several levels. Thus the potential for woman bar workers to represent 'womanhood' in the sense of that which is 'high' and 'moral' is neutralised so that customer behaviour may proceed

in a variety of directions, transforming through a variety of modes, without reference to the presence of a woman, viewed in terms of ideological constructs. The significance of this point relates back to popular perceptions of hotels as male domains in which the consistent presence of women in hotel bars as workers is largely ignored, as is women's role as customers. Perceptions of hotels as male domains do ideological work in the service of the nature-culture model of women and men because they render women's role as worker and customer invisible, through processes of labelling and selective perception in which the sexuality of women workers plays a central role.

A similar neutralising process operates with reference to male bar workers. Here what must be neutralised is the 'maleness' of the bartender, firstly, to depress the competitive attributes of 'maleness', so facilitating his performance in the servicing and other components of bar work, and, secondly, to distance the bartender from inclusion in the culturally normative status-levelling and socialising activity of customers. These processes are related to the objectification of men in bar work, that is, the distancing and neutralisation of the 'maleness' of barmen permits 'objectification'.*

However, with reference to men, the ideological work of cultural perceptions of hotels as male domains is not done until the invisibility of the male bar worker in these perceptions is accounted for. These perceptions present the role of men in hotels as a customer, not as a worker. Processes of labelling and selective perception are operative here also, as indicated in earlier descriptions. Homosexuals, drifters,

*The processes of objectification which proceed with reference to both women and men bar workers can usefully be distinguished by using the concept of 'sexualisation' to apply to the process with reference to women workers, a point I owe to discussions with Anna Yeatman.

drunkards and old or retired men are the commonly recognised categories in the hotel industry of men who take up bar work. These categories are rich in implication for an analysis of male sexuality which I do not intend to elaborate.

One final point about the categories of males who take up bar work: they are not complete without reference to the 'bouncer' type, i.e. the barman whose physical attributes are stressed, much as a woman's sexuality may be stressed as part of her work style, often the part-time or 'ambitious' barman, whose career intentions will soon take effect either through promotion, the sack or switching jobs. Also significant with reference to distancing mechanisms is the point that two of the barmen interviewed in the course of research, both of whom had long-term experience of bar work, were non-Australian-born.

While for both women and men bar work is a style of work which has a low prestige or status in the wider society, the explanation of why it has a low status has different implications for women and men. For men the inappropriateness of bar work centres around the serving element of the role, and the cultural concepts relating to hotels, which present the culturally proper role for men with reference to them as that of a customer, not a bar worker. While for women the serving role is appropriate, ideologically speaking, but what is culturally inappropriate for women is the context, i.e. to have access to a predominantly male non-domestic domain, which includes the potential for sexual access as well as the exercise of controls over male behaviour which are not of the informal, manipulative kind culturally recognised as normative for women. These could be said to amount to power, even authority, albeit

of a delegated kind, exercised over men's behaviour in a public domain.* If formal power includes the specification that it be operative in the public sphere, and that women are ultimately subordinated where men control extra-domestic activities, then the controls exercised by women bar workers approximate power in this sense, and are rendered invisible, and so consistent with gender ideology through the sexual code.

The argument can be extended in another direction. Few servicing situations which utilise women, e.g. air hostessing, nursing, parallel the bar setting in the extent to which the services are rendered to a predominantly male clientele who are structurally and spatially cut away from their domestic ties.

One of the culturally perceived prerogatives of being male is to have access to public domains where the opportunity of wider access to a contact with the opposite sex presents itself. And it is in areas where the potential for women to parallel male behaviour, as in hotels, or with reference to prostitutes, that cognitively this potential is rendered invisible or as if not to count, through labelling processes which bring about consistency between social practice and gender ideology.

The labelling implications of the sexual code with reference to women in these areas has two distinguishable consequences. One is that women who engage in behaviour which parallels that of males do so at the cost of accepting a particular definition of their sexuality. The other is that the assumption about women's sexuality re-locates the activities of these women firmly back into the service and control of men. Thus,

*Power — the ability to gain compliance; authority — the recognition that such ability is a right (Rogers 1978:140) following Rosaldo. This definition is similar to that of Blau who defines power as the ability to obtain compliance despite resistance either by deterrents or by withholding rewards; authority is defined as legitimate power (*ibid.*).

insofar as women are defined as being in bar work for reasons which relate primarily to opportunities for sexual access, this reduces the forces underlying women's presence in the public domain to a dependence on men, an interdependence which is asserted in gender ideology, and further reflected in the interdependence of the categories of 'nature' and 'culture'.

Labelling along these lines according to a sexual definition is an instance of the reproduction of gender attributes. The gender categories that bar work contradicts in some of its aspects, are reinforced by the definitions of woman's sexuality which operate in hotel bars.

My thesis has explored ways in which cultural classifications of women and men impinge on bar workers. For both women and men engaged in bar work, there is considerable ambiguity evident with reference to these cultural classifications. A cognitive rendering of the patterns evident in bar work occurs so that the inconsistencies evident in these patterns are made consistent with those asserted in gender constructs. Here, following Mitchell's discussion of ethnicity (1974), a distinction can be drawn with reference to gender 'as a construct of perceptual or cognitive phenomena on the one hand', and, on the other, 'as a construct of behavioural phenomena' (Mitchell 1974:1). However, as Mitchell comments, it is not sufficient to note the difference and discrepancy between these two kinds of phenomena. Rather, the relationship between them needs to be explained.

Focussing on the relevance of ideology to bar work, a number of inconsistencies and contradictions become apparent between the gender patterns in bar work and the gender attributes stated in ideology. I make the assumption that where specific social situations exhibit

patterns which contradict or are inconsistent with ideological constructs operative in the wider social context, if these are to be sustained, there are processes whereby contradictions between pattern and ideology are rendered 'not to count'.

The data on bar work shows up the complexity of ideological processes. Ideology is not an omnipresent programme for action but operates in complex interaction with other constituents of social practice. However, following the analysis of a number of feminist-marxists, I see the gender ideology as associated with a particular power structure.* I do not spell out in detail the nature of this power structure and its relationship to gender ideology. Its existence and that relationship is an underlying assumption I make in order to focus on other issues.

The broad outlines of this structure are spelt out in the following description:

In simplest terms, women form a cheap and transient labour force (called into production when 'the economy' needs them) but their main function is that of wives and mothers, i.e. as unpaid workers and consumers in the nuclear family, doing domestic work and childcare. This vital economic group is obscured by capitalist rationality which says that housework and childcare are not really work (they are not paid, they do not produce commodities) but it is in fact love, personal service, etc. Women's unpaid work in the family is actually the precondition for all other work in society, but this is not recognised or mentioned as an economic or political fact (Vort-Ronald in Higgins and Venner 1973:42).

It is only by seeing gender ideology as associated with a particular socio-economic structure that accounts for both its tendency

*The two volumes edited by Barker and Allen (1975) [1 and 2], and Cass in Wheelwright and Buckley (1978) are among those which adopt a similar perspective.

to 'naturalise' itself, and its continuing dominance over other competing and conflicting ideologies and practices. It is a dominant ideology also in the sense suggested by Hannerz (1969), so that apart from being realised in interaction it is actively selected out and supported by the socio-economic power structure with which it is consistent.*

I acknowledge that the social patterns associated with an ideology may have other than ideological implications and functions, that they may come into existence, or become widespread because they are social arrangements which have non-ideological functions; however, it is the ideological aspect of the social arrangements which I stress here with reference to the presence of women in public domains, and specifically their role in the paid workforce.

The ideology of gender presents a normative association of women with the domestic domain rather than the public domain. Perceptions of women who work in bars which attribute their motivations to a desire or need for sexual access impedes recognition of the point that women who work in bars are part of the workforce and also may need to work. Thus perceptions about the sexual motivations of women bar workers are part of complex and wider ideological processes whereby women's role in the workforce is rendered invisible, facilitating their use as a 'reserve army' labour pool, or in the segmented secondary labour force, so masking the recognition that their place in the workforce may be permanent, necessary and of economic importance.

Furthermore, my interpretations of the sexual code suggest how legal and economic changes aimed at promoting change in the direction of

*Viner's recent plea on the occasion of a threatened national strike, to the 'wives of workers' to persuade their husbands to go to work, overlooking as it does, the percentage of women who are themselves workers, is a telling instance.

equality in the workforce for women and men are undercut, maintaining social situations which are resistant to these changes. Relevant here is Ortner's comment that

Effects directed solely at changing the social institutions — through setting quotas on hiring, for example, or through passing equal-pay-for-equal-work laws — cannot have far-reaching effects if cultural language and imagery continue to purvey a relatively devalued view of women (Ortner 1974:87).

One major paradox evident in bar work is that the definition of women workers in sexual terms simultaneously negates or inverts the image of 'mother' central to gender constructs, while it perpetuates a situation in which women continue to be defined in terms of being 'women'. This emphasis remains dominant over any other basis on which women may claim to be in the public domain, for instance, as a worker.*

As Ortner notes:

The domestic unit and hence woman,...is one of culture's crucial agencies for the conversion of nature into culture. [Because of this] culture must maintain control over its (pragmatic and symbolic) mechanisms for the conversion of nature into culture (Ortner 1974:85, 87).

As long as women in the public domain continue to be defined in terms which stress their gender-differentiated attributes, the continuing contribution of the domestic unit to the economic system is ensured.

*Further research is needed into the significance of sexuality and gender attributes in other areas of work which women enter.

APPENDIX I

UNION STIPULATIONS ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF BAR WORK*

Hotels, clubs, etc. award

MEMBERS

Wages

Full-time employees must work 5 days of 8 hours per day or be paid for same.

Regular part-time employees must work or be paid a minimum of:

3.11.75

Bar - 20 hours per week in maximum of 5 days Mon.-Sat.

House - 20 hours per week in maximum of 5 days Mon.-Sat.

House staff in clubs - 20 hours in maximum 5 days Mon.-Sat.

Monday to
Friday

First 8 hours ordinary time.

The next 3 hours at time and a half.

Those hours more than 11 in one day double time.

Saturday

First 8 hours at time and a half.

The next 3 hours at time and three-quarters.

Those hours more than 11 on Saturday, double time.

Sunday

Bar staff - Double time all day (if called on to work overtime).

22.9.75

House staff - Time and three-quarters first 8 hours.

Double time thereafter.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY

If worked - double time and a half.

SPECIAL RATES

22.9.75

Special time rates for ordinary hours worked:

Monday - Friday outside 7.00 a.m.-7.00 p.m. are paid at the rate of 30 cents per hour, with a minimum of 60c. per day.

If *ALL* hours are worked Monday-Friday outside 7.00 a.m.-

7.00 p.m. 35 cents per hour, with a minimum of \$2.80 per day.

DAY OFF

Staff required to work on their day off shall receive time and a half for first 8 hours, time and three-quarters for next 3 hours and double time thereafter. Except in the case of a back of the house employee who is required to work on his/her rostered day off and such day is a Sunday, the rates shall be time and three-quarters for first 8 hours and double time thereafter.

22.9.75

SICK LEAVE

Is paid at the rate of 1.7/13th hours per week or 10 days per year and accumulates indefinitely, operative from 4th January 1973. All previous credit still stands.

*From F.L.A.I.U. (S.A.), 'Hotels, clubs, etc. award', as of 22 November 1976.

NOTICE Two days notice applies to all employees (house and bar). This means 2 clear working days.

ANNUAL LEAVE Annual leave taken on or after 1st December 1976 is 4 weeks at the flat rate + 17.5%. This can be varied by agreement between the worker and the employer to be 3 weeks leave with 4 weeks pay + 17.5%. Pro-rata leave on termination, does not have the loading added.

UNION PICNIC DAY Is the 4th Wednesday in October and is treated as a public holiday.

STAFF MEALS - NON-RESIDENT STAFF Where the employer offers a meal and where the employee accepts, the charge is in accordance with the Award. Should the employer not offer a meal, staff should make their own arrangements.

METHOD OF EMPLOYMENT Your employment is not determined by the number of hours you work, but by the terms of your engagement.

22.9.75 NEW CATEGORIES

Qualified waiter/waitress - (full approved apprenticeship/training course completed).

Qualified cook - Where a junior or adult has served full apprenticeship/training course, his minimum award rate shall be equivalent to 2nd cook in 3 or more cooks category.

Home deliveries - An employee (other than cellarman) shall receive 20c per hour or part hour above his ordinary rate (40c maximum). If more than 2 hours, he shall be paid cellarman's rates and not the 40c. Cellarman on home deliveries 20c per hour (maximum 40c per day).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION Only close references to the Award will explain fully conditions applicable to the Industry, or you may contact the Union officials.

APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHIES OF WOMEN BAR WORKERS: A SELECTION

Bar worker L: Hotel II

Current work - When interviewed in April 1975, L had been working nearly three months at the hotel, and was about to leave. She had been working full-time in the public bar which is the one and only bar operated in the hotel.

Job history - L's style and background suggest bar work was only transient for her. L had done art at a tertiary institution and had travelled overseas. L had done 'all sorts' of part-time work, including some waitressing, some promotion for radio and television, and had done some work as a photographer, mainly part-time, photographing people dining in restaurants.

Background - About 25 years old, single, born in a country town.

Education included secondary boarding school.

Parents' occupations were unknown, but a middle-class background was indicated by, among other things, her comment that her parents did not know she was working in a bar and would disapprove if they knew.

Conditions - In 1975, L was earning \$90.00 per week (incl.), with \$8.00 taken out for meals. (Wages at this hotel were a regular source of complaint by women workers, with the hotel management described by L as 'money-grabbing'.)

The job was gained without experience; it had been advertised

in the newspapers; L happened to be first there and was given the job although she did not cover up about her inexperience.

Job commitment - L was planning to leave shortly, finding after an initial period of enjoyment she was getting sick of it, that it did not pay enough, and anyhow she had plans to travel. However, she said she would cheerfully enough take on bar work again.

Motivations/style - No specific account of why this job was applied for was given (presumably a 'fill-in' to earn money prior to her travel); also her other work involved mixing with people, and she said she enjoyed this kind of work.

L's style was one of attractive personality and looks; she had a friendly and easy manner in and out of work and seemed to cope easily with the job.

During the course of work, she went out with one of the bar customers; this developed into a steady friendship, one of her co-workers commenting that they were going to get married; this did not eventuate.

While not stated, her leaving may also have been to escape further personal involvement; she did express some regret that she became 'involved'.

One observer's comment that L was 'a woman's movement person' was not far off the mark, although she had friends who more aptly fitted the description.

Research - L was enthusiastic about it; at one point she offered to do some photography for it. We had two formal sessions, and met on several other occasions more informally. I also visited her at work several times.

Motivations/style - M would like to go into business, but she feared her inability to find someone trustworthy to go into partnership with. At one point she was curious about the opportunities for kindergarten training, commenting that she likes children and would like to work with them. A number of other women

*Despite continual complaints and awareness about the pay in Hotel II, most workers seemed to accept the situation, except one case I knew of - a female student who challenged the management and was going to take them to the Union; she left shortly afterwards, having decided it was not worth the effort, and in any case, she did not like the work.

Style -

Research

Bar worker P: Hotel II

Current work - At the time of interviews, P had worked here about two years, beginning around the time that M left.

Job history - This was P's first job in a hotel, although she was involved in catering work in the Armed Forces, lasting five years, after working for two years as a secretary. Her first job was clerical.

Background - P was twenty-eight years old at the time of interview.

Born in Yugoslavia; in Adelaide since 1959; her mother was here also. P had one child, was separated from her first husband and subsequently re-married. Her father was a tradesman, her mother now an invalid pensioner, had previously worked in factories. P had gone to school in Adelaide, leaving in the third year of secondary school.

Job conditions - P worked full-time, was a union member but did not think it helped; she worked regular evening shifts from 4.00-11.00 p.m.; wages - \$120 per week (1977/1978); P commented that she was underpaid. She mainly worked alone in the bar, except on Friday and Saturday evenings; also mixed drinks for the restaurant and reception room as well as attending the bar; was allowed to drink on the job, but tended to avoid doing so.

Job commitment - P liked the work and wanted to stay; she had done a hotel and catering course (a two-week private enterprise course; I attended the same course at the end of 1974).

Motivation/style - P had a pleasant, friendly, low-key style of work and matching appearance.

Research - P was co-operative and interested; we had two interview sessions, based around a questionnaire I used in a number of interviews, in the course of which we talked more informally.

Bar worker N: Hotel II

Current work - At interviewing, was on the verge of leaving the work after three months full-time, the second of two short hotel work experiences.

Job history - The job had been the longest job held since leaving school and going to technical college for a typing course. N had worked interstate for one month as a bar worker, and had also done some secretarial, clerical and waitressing work.

Background - Born in 1956; single; grew up in a country town interstate; her father was in a rural-based business ('one of the 3/4 highest'); her mother, a shop assistant.

Job conditions - N was a member of the union; saw job conditions as fair, was paid regular part-time + 10%; found the job physically demanding.

Job commitment/motivation - N enjoyed the informality of the work, and the experience of working in a small bar, of being the main worker. N was travelling and presumably this remained a motivation for the job. N was aiming for a qualification which would allow her to work with children.

Lifestyle - Friends visited her in the bar and N became friendly with another young woman (O), for the duration of the work only it seemed; there was no evidence of outings with customers. Instead she had a regular boy friend who visited her at work, according to one of her co-workers.

Research - N was interested and co-operative; we talked over several sessions, one based on the questionnaire.

Bar worker O: Hotel II

Current work - Another short-term worker, friendly with N for the duration of the job. O worked one month full-time before it was rumoured she was to be sacked, and gave notice before this happened.

Job history - O had been overseas, there learning a language which she was able to put to use in her work in the bar. She had one year at business school after finishing school and worked as a clerk for three years in hospital administration. She wanted to return overseas, and planned to return to clerical work to do so.

Background - Born 1955; single; Adelaide her home. Father was in the electro-plating business, mother a housewife.

Job conditions - O was not a member of the union but felt she should be: 'the trouble is 'they' (bosses) take so long to get the union representatives around'; she did not like 'mundane'

work; talked of learning from life, may take another bar job in the future, despite the difficulties with her first experience. She commented that the job 'keeps you on your feet' and with wrong shoes, she got tired easily. Her style was independent, abrasive, outgoing.

Research - O expressed interest during two sessions, one based on the questionnaire.

Bar worker Q: Hotel II

Worked full-time in Hotel II for six weeks, Q had also worked in one hotel interstate, full-time for six months; had been travelling; formerly held a bookkeeping job in Adelaide six years, and worked in a restaurant as head waitress. Born in 1946; single; was living at the time with her parents; her father was a retired driver, her mother a housewife.

Q preferred to work in a lounge bar rather than a public bar; at one point commenting 'I don't want to be a barmaid all my life'.

Unimpressed by my research, Q agreed to an interview session, but did not volunteer much information.

Bar workers Q₁, Q₂, Q₃: Hotel II

None of these were interviewed, but I worked occasionally with Q₁. Some brief details are that she was Italian, speaking both English and Italian with ease; in her mid-twenties, her dress and style highlighted her sexuality; the same worker, cited earlier, whose reaction to getting tired was to find a stool and sit down, this leading to an evaluation of her by her co-worker (M) as 'lazy'; Q₁ did not last long in her job (a month or so).

Q₂ was a woman similar in style and age; Australian-born, she worked day shifts so I had little work contact with her; she was sacked while I was there and was replaced by Q₁.

Q₃ was a friend of M's, who provided the brief detail that Q₃ had left, was now a teacher in the country, subsequently marrying after she left bar work. M and Q₃ maintain contact.

Bar worker R: Hotel III

Current work - R worked mostly in the saloon-lounge bar, about six months; the hours were long but on casual rates R was happy with the pay; she had been there four months at the time of interview.

Job history - R had worked in other hotels in Adelaide, one suburban one for two years, a country one for two months; others, here and interstate for two periods of six months, one for ten months, and one interstate capital hotel for 3/4 months; mostly full-time.

R had worked as a kitchen-hand, and also done nursing for a year; more recently interspersed bar work with factory work; also worked as a shop assistant (first job). Subsequent work included a brief spell waitressing, during which she became sick, left and was not working for a period, which because of her illness was one of struggle. Later R took a job in a large bistro-style bar.

Background - Born interstate 1950; in Adelaide three years; divorced, lived alone; her father worked as a tradesman with the Electricity Commission, her mother was a housewife ('head of the house'); left school at fourteen.

Job conditions - Union member but blasted it as weak ('lucky to get two pairs of panty hose'); R saw it as mostly interested in collecting dues ('\$35.00 p.a.'). R. saw hotel hours as a disadvantage, working long hours was hard on the feet, and found cleaning tasks also hard; she found it boring when quiet, preferring it busy; usually worked alone behind the bar.

Hours: Monday-Thursday 11.00 a.m.-10.30 p.m. (one and a half hours for lunch), Friday 11.00 a.m.-7.00 p.m. (half an hour for tea).

Paid casual waitressing rates (around \$4.90 per hour versus around \$5.10 for casual bar work rate).

Some opportunity for planning roster with co-worker (S) and time off could be taken if necessary (i.e. if sick).

A specific drawback was sometimes having to look after both bars during breaks of co-workers. R commented that bar

workers were not allowed to drink on the job, even if a customer bought; R either had lemonade or took the money as a tip.

Job commitment - R saw bar work as her regular occupation, taken up originally for travelling, subsequently remaining; found the work fair and the money good. Especially liked to work with people, R would also like to work with children. R ultimately left after a change in management; tending to be critical of management in general, specifically those who whittled down her hours and transferred her from casual to permanent part-time (paid at a lesser rate).

Lifestyle - Friendly, outgoing personality, but shows signs of strain on the job; had some friendships with customers, tending to be spasmodic but in one case more than short-term; had experienced some unhappy friendships, and showed signs of wanting independence outside of a relationship; enjoyed male and female company and sometimes joined women customers (the professional, feminist-oriented group) for drinks in the same hotel where she worked.

Research - R was interested, and we had several sessions, one including the questionnaire; also several informal meetings, with research interests shifting toward friendship. I also observed R at work on the occasions when I visited as a customer.

Bar worker S: Hotel III

S was at Hotel III just over one year; casual work, mainly lunch and dining shifts; doubled as restaurant waitress and bar worker in saloon/lounge; co-worker of R. S left to return home overseas at one point, then returned to Australia, subsequently going interstate to assist her boyfriend in a restaurant venture.

S worked briefly in a large interstate hotel; had travelled overseas with two years secretarial work outside Australia.

Born 1953, Asian background, in Australia three years; separated from her husband; current boyfriend was a cook; had a child about kindergarten age. S finished school; her father also was in the restaurant business.

S cannot get other work, but would prefer receptionist work; she disliked having to 'put up with customers'' insults about race and sexuality; 'the advantage is that you get to meet people'. S got on well with the management; but had some rivalry or difficulty in co-working relationship with R, saw R as 'bossy'; R saw S as the management's favourite.

S was friendly, but neutral about the research. We had one session using the questionnaire.

Bar worker T: Hotel III

Current work - At the time of interview T was not working, but wanted to return to work here, especially following a recent management change.

Job history - 3/4 years at Hotel III, as casual worker toward the end; also worked one year at a hotel notorious for 'camp' patrons; helped her husband run a restaurant for two years ('seven days a week'); wanted to return to hotel work, talked of the possibility and offers of work elsewhere but favoured Hotel III because the customers were known to her.

Background - Born in London, she had arrived in Australia twenty years ago, in her teenage years. Now divorced, had three children, one married, the others younger; had 'maintenance' problems with her husband (one-time house builder); at the time of interview, in her forties.

Commitment/lifestyle - The job was initially a way out of marriage, but T wanted to keep working, and enjoyed it. She was outgoing, at ease with the ribald and highlighted her sexuality; drank as a customer at other hotels, also re-visited Hotel III as a customer with her boyfriend (one-time customer) on several occasions.

Research - Relations with management and co-workers were not easy; initially T left after a disagreement over her right to some time off; management claiming they were left in the lurch in a busy period, T that they would not let her have what she was entitled to (i.e. 'time off was legitimate and management mean'). Of co-workers, T and S got on, but T and R were not easy with one another. Was generally friendly, showed some interest in the research, talking generously, although with some skepticism evident about what the study was about; too pragmatic to be impressed.

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