Criticisms of the CCCS

Although highly influential in youth cultural studies, the CCCS' model of subcultural resistance has been criticized on a number of grounds. McRobbie and Garber (1976) highlight the CCCS's failure to provide accounts of girls' involvement in subcultures. Although perhaps a male dominated phenomenon, it is argued, subcultures were by no means exclusively male. Reluctance among male sociologists to engage with the sphere of family and domestic relations, it is suggested, also played its part in ensuring the absence of girls from the subcultural worlds depicted by the CCCS. Thus, as McRobbie (1980) observes, while the sociologies of deviance and youth were blooming in the early seventies the sociology of the family was everybody's least favourite option' (p. 68). According to McRobbie and Garber, however, the domestic sphere of the family home provided a resource for vibrant forms of subcultural activity among teenage girls. In their study "Girls and Subcultures' (1976), McRobbie and Garber identify a strong 'Teeny Bopper culture among pre-teenage girls. The Teeny Bopper culture centred around the creative use of domestic space by teenage girls – the decorating of bedroom walls with posters of pop idols, and the use of the sitting room to play records, read teen magazines and watch TV programmes such as 'Top of the Pops'. According to McRobbie and Garber (1976), Teeny Bopper

culture 'can be viewed as a meaningful reaction against the selective and authoritarian structures which control girls lives' (p. 220),

A further problem identified with the CCCS' work on youth is its unqualified equation of post-war patterns of youth consumerism with notions of working class resistance. As Muggleton (2000) notes, such a premise rests on the essentialist notion that members of subcultures were indeed exclusively, or even predominantly, working-class, this being theoretical conjecture rather than proven fact. Moreover, even if we are to accept that post-war youth consumerism was driven initially by working-class youth, it is still difficult to accept the CCCS's argument that consumer goods were used uniformly in strategies of resistance. As Bennett (1999a) observes:

Such a contention rests on the rather tentative notion that, having gained an element of freedom to pick and choose between an increasing range of consumer items, working class youth were somehow driven back to the fact of class as a way of articulating their attachment to such commodities. It could rather be argued that postwar consumerism offered young people the opportunity to break away from their traditional class-based identities, the increased spending power of the young facilitating and

encouraging experimentation with new, self-constructed forms of identity (p. 602