

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

Making Production: a case-study of women
in a garment factory in Saint Lucia

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This study has shown that women in this garment factory have not accepted docility and passivity. Instead, they have resisted in varying degrees the controls imposed by management. Theoretically, the aim was to show the inadequacies of traditional industrial sociological theories in accounting for these experiences of industrial female workers.

A multi-method approach was used in an attempt to obtain a broad understanding of 'subjective' experiences. Direct observation, lasting six months with some interruptions, was the main method used. It was corroborated with a survey of thirty-one workers randomly selected by occupational strata and administered in the privacy of their homes. Semi-structured interviews with plant and non-plant officials were conducted throughout the course of the field work.

The findings revealed that the feminists' methodological approach was more appropriate than the traditional social science research methods when dealing with women's experiences. The female workers perceived that the researcher was sharing part of her life and experiences with them, they were more willing to share their work and domestic experiences. This included sensitive issues with regard to their resistance towards management and their strategies used to gain control over some aspects of their work situation, in spite of the rigidity in their work situation. Female workers in Export-Oriented Industries (EOIs) are not as passive and docile as one is made to believe. Further, the findings revealed that male workers have totally different experiences from those of female workers in terms of their relationship with the manager.