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# **Pupil Resistance to Their Schooling Experience**

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Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Aston in Birmingham

May 2005

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# **Pupil Resistance to Their Schooling Experience**

A study in Birmingham and Sydney

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## **Summary**

The thesis explores the nature of pupil resistance; it investigates what constitutes it and how it can be explained. Various ethnic and national group, male and female working-class resistance is analysed in two secondary schools in Birmingham (England) and one school in Sydney (Australia). It focuses on the pupils' experience of school. 'Compressed ethnographies' (Walford and Miller, 1991) were conducted in each school to examine pupil resistance. Within the ethnographic format, semi-structured, unstructured and focus group interviews were conducted with pupils and teachers; classroom and break time activities were observed; school documents analysed and questionnaires utilised. A multi-site, multi-method approach, using qualitative and quantitative methodologies provides depth and insight while locating the research within a structural framework. Theory and data analysis worked along side one another simultaneously, each informing the other. The methodology allows for the analysis of macro and micro factors that help shape resistance.

The research found that structural societal state factors, regional, community and formal, informal and physical characteristics of each school, together with the teachers and pupils characteristics and background all influence resistance. The class, gender, ethnic and national identity of each pupil shapes resistance. In all three schools that were involved with the research, girls were more likely to exhibit overt, collective forms of resistance, whereas lads were more likely to operate alone. Islander pupils in Sydney and African-Caribbean kids in Birmingham were more likely to display engaged forms of resistance. Girls tended to show more engaged forms compared to their male counterparts across all ethnic and national cultures.

Resistance is complex and dynamic, the definition alters depending upon context. Dimensions of resistance are developed; including overt, covert; individual, collective; intentional, unintentional; engaged and detached forms. Resistance operates within a structure and agency framework, the pupils can shape their own schooling experience mediated within the structures of their school, community and society. Some pupils manage their resources and the structures better than others; how the pupil manages and operates within the structures influences their resistance response. Resistance is contradictory and can reinforce the status quo. To fully understand resistance, it must be contextualised.

**Keywords:** Pupil resistance; class; gender; ethnicity; nationality.

*For Grandma (1928-2004)*

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# 1. Introduction

My interest in pupil resistance originates from my experiences as a mentor and research associate working on the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Programme (CCVYP) at Second City Second Chance in Birmingham, a cross-age tutoring programme, where disaffected secondary school age students tutor primary school pupils. Both roles led me to question how and why some young people find it difficult to cope in school. Gender and ethnicity helped explain resistance, and evidence indicated that additional understanding at the practical level, within the schools was sought after. People working within these schools in 'real life' situations wanted to understand their pupils' behaviour to help resolve difficulties at school.

These experiences highlighted the importance of understanding the reality and context of the pupil's current lifestyle within the young person's own perspective. There seemed a need to recognise the complexities of the person and their way of life both within and outside of the school environment. Understanding how pupil resistance manifests itself within school and reasons for it are needed at both practical and theoretical levels.

Numerous tales could be told from my experiences as a mentor and research associate working on the CCVYP that highlight the factors outside the school setting that help explain 'deviant' behaviour within school. 'The chair-throwing incident', described below illustrates the need to recognise the complexities of the person and their way of life within and outside the school environment. The account is by the classroom teacher involved in the CCVYP. It represents the teacher's perception of the event.

## **Vignette 1.1**

### The chair-throwing incident

One morning a tall, Black sixteen-year-old male threw a chair at the teacher in a moment of unprovoked outrage. Upon discussion between the teacher and student, what initially appeared to be a clear example of overt resistance, actually turned out to be a cry for help and



support. The student owed a drug dealer money and had no (legal) way in which to find the required cash, this student felt in fear for his safety. The teacher felt that the student believed he had nobody to turn to. In a moment of sheer desperation, the chair was thrown.

(CCVYP Logbook 29/09/99)

To gain a valid understanding of this incident the context of the young male's situation must be understood. He lived in a deprived area of Birmingham; he attended a non-mainstream education centre that catered for males with behavioural problems. Sex, drugs and theft were common elements of his culture, to fit in with his peers he had to be seen to engage in these activities, this was a part of his everyday life, and was a significant and overtly evident part of the majority of the lads' culture within the centre. The lads were judged and formed an identity via such activities. The teacher described the young lad's home environment as 'unsupportive'. Throwing the chair at a teacher may be perceived as an act of insolence, however after delving beneath the surface and finding out the meaning behind the action a different interpretation was reached. The lad threw the chair to vent his upset and ask for help. The teacher assisted the young lad with his problem.

To give teenagers like this lad a voice, this research attempts to better understand resistance via conducting an ethnography investigating different pupils' experiences of school; taken predominantly from the young persons perspective.

Much research focuses on those pupils who have already disengaged from formal schooling (McFadden, 1993). More work needs to concern those who are potentially 'at risk' of dropping out of school; since large numbers of pupils attend school but remain disaffected by formal learning (Watts, 2001). Keeping youths from disengaging from education will enhance all social groups' life chances, while serving the economic interests of society (McFadden, 1995b). Obtaining thorough understandings of 'resistance' is a critical policy and practice issue facing educational practitioners, policy makers and researchers. Education has differential outcomes for different social groups. Resistance is mediated by class (Alpert,

1991); gender (McRobbie, 1991); ethnicity (Mac an Ghail, 1989) and societal and cultural environments (McFadden, 1992). To understand the workings of a school and the behaviour of actors within it, the significance of and interaction between class; gender; ethnic and national identity and location is considered. By refining knowledge of what constitutes pupil resistance and identify explanations for its occurrence we are in a better position to help pupils gain a more positive and fulfilling experience at school, which has positive consequences for their adult lives.

Institutions such as schools are characterised by reproduction and contradiction (Apple, 1982). Schools help reproduce inequalities found in wider societal relations. Inequality is a fact of the English and Australian secondary education system. Schools form an important mechanism in the reproduction of wider societal relations. Power relationships exist where there are unequal relations. Thus there is potential for tension, conflict, struggle and resistance to arise between the dominated and dominators in schools. This set of relations deserves theoretical attention, as well as description.

Schools are distinguishable from other institutions in a variety of ways. Schools hold large numbers of young people who have spent a considerable amount of their life in school. In school there is the 'informal' aspect, involving the pupils' world and culture and the 'formal', representing the official structure of the school. Relations at school are organised around age (like the family) and knowledge (like the media), but it's the combination and interaction of these organising factors that distinguishes schools from other social institutions (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett, 1982). Schools institutionalise a distinction between those who know and those who don't know from an early age, giving some a gateway to better life opportunities while facilitating the closing of prospects for others. It's important to explore pupil responses to their schooling experiences to understand why education has differential outcomes for different social groups. Examining different social groups' responses to formal education systems reveals why and in what ways different groups resist school and how this is related to social inequalities both within and outside of school.



Previous research provides a basis for developing understandings of resistance (Willis, 1977; Alpert, 1991; Furlong, 1991; Davies, 1994; McFadden, 1995b) but much research points to isolated and contradictory explanations (Samuel, 1983; Moran, 1988; McRobbie, 1991). Different investigations emphasise different and often conflicting reasons for resistance. This investigation attempts to clarify the confusion surrounding this area of research by refining understandings of resistance. Research is conducted with males and females, from different ethnic minority groups in two societal settings. Three secondary schools located in two urban, cosmopolitan cities, Birmingham in England and Sydney in Australia are investigated to examine how different social and cultural environments; class, gender, ethnic and national identity influence pupil resistance.

The lack of coherence surrounding the literature that examines different social groups' responses to formal education systems and the evident want for further understanding at the practical level, within the schools themselves led me to ask the following questions concerning the nature of pupil resistance of a particular set of pupils within certain schools located in two different societal settings.

- 1) How does pupil resistance manifest itself?
- 2) How can we explain resistance?
- 3) What is the significance and relationship between class, gender, ethnic and national identity in the construction of resistance?
- 4) How does the culture of resistance compare in two different city societal settings (Birmingham and Sydney)?

The research develops understandings of pupil resistance by examining how it is constituted and offers explanations for it. This is an exploratory investigation that examines 22 pupils from various social groups who were identified as insufficiently coping in the classroom and school.

These exploratory questions have definite theoretical assumptions and implications. To understand 'resistance' within the school setting and wider societal context, one must acknowledge the different theoretical frameworks' explanations of how resistance responses emerge. To gain a deeper understanding of 'resistance' a theoretical framework that accounts for both structure and agency is necessary (McFadden, 1995a). Elements of reproduction theory, resistance theory and structuration theory are utilised. All three theoretical frameworks offer valuable, limited, but complimentary attempts to explain the effects of schooling on individuals and society.

Reproduction, resistance and structuration theory are linked via assumptions that societal relations reproduce themselves. What constitutes 'resistance' is a complex question that requires the utilisation of a dynamic theoretical framework. Resistance theory and structuration theory compliment each other; both have a vigorous framework based on the interaction between structure and agency. Resistance occurs within this complex interaction. Pupils do possess the will to behave in a certain way, but agency is limited according to external societal, cultural and local community milieu. This research contributes to the structure and agency debate by explaining how the two interact to develop different forms of resistance for different people. Pupils work within a set of structures that are always there but not always operational, how the pupil manages these structures influences their resistance.

This research attempts to draw upon and to some extent integrate different theoretical frameworks, while taking into account micro and macro levels of analysis. There is a concern to provide an adequate description, explanation and analysis at the micro level while locating this within the macro social structural framework. The focus of the research is concerned with understanding the culture of resistance within specific schools with carefully selected pupils while locating this understanding within the wider societal milieu. In addition to addressing the substantive questions this research attempts to combine micro and macro levels of analysis, while accounting for the interaction of structure and agency.



To meet these demands there are implications for the methodology. To understand how and why pupils resist their schooling experience, a methodology that gains rich information whilst retaining the ability to locate the argument within a wider framework is required. Given this objective a multi-method, multi-site approach, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative techniques is adopted.

The study is predominantly qualitative due to the need to understand resistance as grounded in the resisters perspective. Resistance has a lack of coherence in its definition, thus the flexibility and exploratory format in the qualitative approach is appropriate. An ethnographic design is utilised due to its sensitivity to meanings and values, and ability to represent and interpret symbolic articulations and practices (Willis, 1977). Given the contradictory and complex nature of resistance, investigation requires a sensitive approach, which reveals hidden meanings of actions, behaviour and attitudes, while simultaneously allowing for an analysis that acknowledges influences of wider societal structures and cultural environments.

To meet these demands Carspecken's (1996) five-stage critical ethnography format is largely followed, primarily because of its attempt to link micro and macro levels of analysis. Investigating the insider's view of reality is promoted. The process of systems analysis demands a link of the micro in-depth data to the macro societal theories. Preference for this approach includes the intention to serve the interests of the pupils themselves, this value orientation didn't necessarily 'construct' the object of study (Carspecken, 1996), rather I felt compelled to conduct research that might better the lives of the resisters, give them a voice and tell their story.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature that has attempted to define, describe and explain pupil resistance. Previous investigations have offered confusing and sometimes contradictory descriptions and explanations for resistance. Many accounts focus on the 'structure' of schooling to the neglect of considering the pupils power of agency, while others have focused on pupils who have already dropped out of formal education systems. Evidence suggests that the form and explanation for resistance differs according to pupils' class, gender and ethnicity, but few accounts examine how all these factors and national identity interrelate to shape different

patterns and consequences of resistance for different social groups. A gap in the literature exposes the need to clarify what resistance is and how we can explain it by looking at resistance in relation to the class, gender ethnic and national identity of pupils who remain in mainstream education in more than one national context.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical frameworks drawn upon in the research. How the concepts of youth, deviance and resistance have been developed and viewed in sociological discourses is summarised. Theories of reproduction, resistance theory and structuration theory are examined in terms of how they offer insight into the study of resistance in addition to considering their theoretical drawbacks. Resistance theory challenged theories of reproduction; rather than viewing resistance as a response to the structural dynamics of society, resistance theorists injected the notion of agency. Structuration and resistance theory parallel in many ways; structuration theory further develops the tension between structure and agency. All three frameworks are utilised to highlight and bring theoretical attention to how the structure and agency debate is of particular relevance to pupil resistance, as both structures and agency interact and help shape resistance.

Chapter 4 introduces the research design and data collection techniques used to address the research questions. The philosophical positioning of quantitative and qualitative approaches are described and used to justify the philosophical and methodological approach adopted in this research. The research adopts a predominantly qualitative approach via an ethnographic format. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews; recorded classroom contents; observations and general 'hanging around' techniques were used in addition to gathering questionnaire data. Research was conducted in two secondary schools in Birmingham, England and one in Sydney, Australia. The pupils constitute the focus of the research and so it is their characteristics and experiences in relation to the school, community and national contexts that are given precedence.

Resistance is a complex phenomenon so an approach whereby theory and empirical investigation are interwoven is advocated. Validity is sought via a multi-method approach. Reliability and generalisability are addressed by taking into account the



surrounding macro structures that influence the individual workings of the schools and participants positioned within them. The data collection stage and research design are summarised and evaluated. There is a discussion of the researcher's characteristics in the endeavour to increase reflexivity and acknowledge the impact the researcher has on the researched and data gathered. The implications and substantive and methodological contributions to knowledge are highlighted.

Chapter 5 is a description and comparison of the three selected schools' national, regional and surrounding area contexts to locate each school in its macro and micro local milieu. An overview of each schools' type; academic reputation; population; staff structure; organisation of school day; subjects offered; physical structure; rules; regulations; reward and discipline structure is analysed and compared.

Chapter 6 outlines the characteristics of the pupils. The pupils are described in terms of how they relate and are positioned within their peer group, school, community and state cultures. A variety of resisters have been researched enabling an understanding into the depth 'resistance' constitutes.

Chapter 7 describes the forms pupil resistance can take with reference to examples taken from the field. Four continua of resistance are developed via considering previous attempts at categorising resistance, unravelling the contradiction evident in the literature and interlinking the different dimensions of resistance. Resistance is dynamic. The continua may be used as a conceptual apparatus that help position and understand the multiple dimensions of resistance and how they operate. This chapter contributes to knowledge since it develops and refines dimensions of resistance and allows for an understanding of how resistance shifts in its meaning according to context.

Chapter 8 provides an analysis of the macro and micro influences and the relation between them that help shape pupil resistance. The state context, the schools surrounding communities, the features of each school in addition to the characteristics of the teachers and pupils are analysed in terms of how they affect patterns and explanations of resistance. Chapter 9 more closely analyses the

significance and relation between the pupils class, gender, ethnic and national identity in the construction of resistance. Tensions between the pupil's identity, culture and practices in and out of school are highlighted.

Chapter 10 summarises the main findings of the research and outlines the theoretical, methodological and substantive contributions made to educational research. Implications for policy and matters for further research are outlined.

Chapter 11 is a postscript that reflects on the pupil's circumstances after the completion of fieldwork.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Outline**

Previous attempts at defining and explaining resistance are outlined and reviewed. The relevance to and relationship between class; gender; ethnicity and national identity in the shaping of resistance culture(s) are examined. The need to examine resistance in Birmingham, England and Sydney, Australia is justified via an examination of the significance the two societal settings have on the construction and manifestation of resistance. References to gaps in the current body of relevant literature are summarised throughout, together with the implications this has for the research.

### **2.2 Introduction**

To develop understandings of 'resistance' the body of research that has already attempted to describe and explain forms of resistance and how resistance responses emerge is considered. There is a wealth of research that has facilitated insight into pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Alpert, 1991; Furlong, 1991; Davies, 1994; McFadden, 1995b), but a great deal point to simple and isolated explanations (Samuel, 1983; Moran, 1988; McRobbie, 1991). Different investigations emphasise different and often contradictory reasons for resistance. This study is an attempt to clarify the confusion surrounding this area of research.

Pupil resistance is mediated by class (Alpert, 1991), gender (McRobbie, 1991), ethnicity (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) and the wider societal and cultural environment (McFadden, 1992). The influence and relation between class; gender; ethnic and national cultures in two societal settings develops understandings of the workings of a school and the (resistant) behaviour of the actors within it.

### **2.3 Defining dimensions of pupil resistance**

Pupil resistance has been defined and explained in various ways, with different dimensions of resistance being emphasised and contradictory descriptions and



explanations given. Different authors have focused on specific dimensions of resistance and have neglected to consider others.

The term 'resistance' is usually identified with oppositional, conflicting and contesting attitudes, behaviours and actions. There is a lack of precision with the definition of resistance (Fernandes, 1988). There is no one consistent body of theory or research in which there is a clear understanding of what constitutes resistance (McFadden and Walker, 1994).

The concept of resistance is used in educational research to explain and interpret various pupil behaviours in schools (Alpert, 1991). Alpert (1991) defines 'resistance' as the following,

*'The concept of resistance is used in educational research to explain and interpret student behaviours in schools that indicate the existence of tensions and conflicts between school and the wider society to which the student belongs.'* (Alpert, 1991; p350).

Alpert offers a general definition that fails to recognise the tensions that may exist between the pupil and the school. Conflicts may emerge from outside the school, there may exist tensions between a pupil's home environment and school life. The possible tensions between personal and school related issues must be examined.

Some studies of resistance focus primarily on oppositional behaviours of pupils from non-elite groups who are confronted by and react against the norms, values and language of dominant groups in society; consequently certain social groups tend to be more prone to academic failure (Erickson, 1984; 1987). Other investigations emphasise overt forms of rebellious pupil behaviour (Willis, 1977; Giroux, 1983; Walker, 1988).

Fernandes (1988) maintains that there is no body of precisely defined concepts available which give 'resistance' analytical capacity; there is a lack of conceptual rigour. Fernandes (1988) argues there is a lack of connection between resistance theory and social and cultural reproduction theory. To link these theories Fernandes



claims that school resistance should be evaluated at two analytical levels. The 'Global Resistance' level refers to resistance at the macro position such as the reproduction of the sexual and social division of labour and inculcation of the dominant ideology. 'Partial Resistance' refers to resistance that occurs at only one level. While Fernandes (1988) distinction between 'Global' and 'Partial' resistance is useful, these analytical tools may better serve further understandings into what the pupils are reacting to rather than viewing them as forms. Pupils reacting against macro hegemonic ideologies such as sexist and racist attitudes predominant within society *and* reproduced within the school can be seen as resisting at a global level. Where pupils responding to hegemonic ideologies reproduced at the society *or* school level are resisting at a partial level.

Fernandes (1988) maintains that potential, virtual and effective resistance types should be distinguished. 'Potential Resistance' refers to resistance that has counter-hegemonic potential that lead to reproductive effects, to the reinforcement of classification between social categories and of the dominant power relations. 'Virtual Resistance' aims at counter-hegemonic objectives and 'Effective Resistance' provokes counter-hegemonic effects. Potential resistance doesn't inevitably lead to effective resistance (Fernandes, 1988; p175). These types may better be understood in terms of the rationale behind pupil resistance and its outcome(s) rather than forms.

Fernandes (1988) claims that resistance to school and cultural reproduction can be covert and not reveal itself outwardly or overt in the sense that it exposes itself in the form of attitudes, behaviour and/or actions. He distinguishes 'Latent Resistance' as a subjective stage that is hard to observe, validate and analyse and 'Manifest Resistance' that usually follows latent resistance and is made apparent via expressed attitudes, behaviour and/or actions. This research mainly focuses on 'Manifest Resistance' since these forms and manifestations are easier to substantiate.

Some forms of resistance are more visible and overt than others (Alpert 1991). Quigley (1987) suggests that there is a 'Range of Resistance' (Quigley, 1987; p66),

overt and covert represent the two extremes. Alpert (1991) and Quigley (1987) differ in their description and consequences of overt and covert forms. Quigley (1987) during his investigation of adult education in Canada suggests that students who display overt forms of resistance are more likely to stay on in education, while those that exhibit covert forms are more liable to quit. Alpert, in his investigation of pupils in upper middle-class secondary schools located in Northern California holds a contradictory argument. Alpert argues that pupils who display overt resistance are increasingly likely to disrupt their academic success and become excluded, as overt forms tend to involve official rule breaking. Where as covert forms are less likely to interfere with ones academic success or lead to exclusion from school, since such forms don't tend to involve any official rule breaking. The more covert behaviours such as daydreaming, limited participation in classroom discussions (Alpert, 1987) or criticism of the teacher over instructional procedures and policies are common behaviours in many classrooms. They may indicate rejection and challenge toward the school without being revolutionary (Alpert, 1991). Resistance is complex and contradictory (Willis, 1977). Covert forms of resistance are common elements in every classroom, they are considered to be common, legitimate responses that are less likely to lead to school failure (Alpert, 1991). Whether age (teenagers or adults) has an impact on overt and covert manifestations of resistance remains uncertain but their conflicting arguments represent a paradox in the existing definitions and explanations of pupil resistance that need to be made clear.

Resistance studies have tended to focus on the overt forms of resistance to the relative neglect of covert forms of resistance (Alpert, 1991), this according to Giroux (1983) represents a weakness.

*'By so limiting their analyses, resistance theorists have ignored less obvious forms of resistance among students and have often misconstrued the political value of overt resistance. For example, some students minimize their participation in routine school practices while simultaneously displaying outward conformity to the school's ideology, opting for modes of resistance that are quietly subversive in the most immediate sense, but have the potential to be progressive in the long run.'* (Giroux, 1983: p287-288).



Giroux emphasises the complex nature of resistance and reveals that covert in addition to overt forms of resistance exist in the classroom. Both need to be acknowledged and studied if a better understanding of pupil resistance is to ensue.

Resistance may occur individually or collectively, with the collective resistance holding most emancipative and transformative power (Fernandes, 1988). Grahame and Jardine (1990) suggest that the notion of 'play' can offer further understandings into what is considered resistant behaviour in classroom settings. They claim a distinction should be made between 'playfulness' and 'resistance'. Resistance shouldn't be solely viewed as Willis (1977) implies, as a fight against the system, a contradictory mechanism that facilitates the reproduction of working-class lads getting working-class jobs. Rather it may be better understood as a mode of play or as a pursuit of a preferred activity (Corrigan, 1979) that isn't a serious rejection of school or the schooling process but is one of the key components of play.

Previous research tends to focus on either pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988) or engagement (Woodward and Munns, 2003). With the resister being defined as the 'outsider' and the engager the 'insider'. Woodward and Munns (2003) in their investigation of the Fair Go Project in a PSFP school in Australia define engagement, when a student becomes involved as an 'insider' in the learning culture of the classroom. They describe two types of engagement; the 'procedural' refers to when a student follows instructions, completes the task at hand and complies with the teachers' requests. 'Substantive', refers to when a student invests their thoughts and some emotional and psychological investment into the work. When a student substantively engages educational outcomes should improve. Woodward and Munns claim that engagement occurs at three levels, the cognitive (thinking), the affective (feeling) and the operative (doing); when these occur at high levels the student is engaging. Fernandes' (1988) latent and manifest types of resistance can be likened to Woodward and Munn's levels of engagement; with the 'latent' being equated to the 'cognitive' and 'affective' stages and the 'manifest' functioning at the 'operative' level. Likewise when both stages are operating at high levels the pupil may be viewed as resisting. Resistance and engagement

shouldn't be viewed as mutually exclusive, a pupil may exhibit varying degrees of engagement and/or detachment and still be resisting.

Various attempts have been made to categorise forms of resistance. Resistance can be viewed as occurring at either global or partial levels or as potential, virtual or effective in its influence and property's, or as latent or manifest (Fernades, 1988) or as overt or covert (Quigley, 1987). Individual and collective forms have also been identified (Fernades, 1988). Contradictions are still apparent when trying to unravel what constitutes pupil resistance. Playfulness is sometimes misinterpreted as resistance (Grahame and Jardine, 1990) and the description of similar forms differs according to different authors. This research builds upon, and refines these categories by taking greater consideration of the flexibility and volatile nature of resistance.

## **2.4 Class**

A pupil's behaviour within the classroom and school can be partially explained via the pupil's working-class culture. A focus on class analysis and the significance of economic and political structures (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a) must be retained when analysing pupil resistance, since this helps explain why certain pupils respond as they do to their schooling experience and how certain types of resistance help legitimate and reproduce existing class structures.

Class tensions generate and shape resistance in working-class (and ruling-class) schools (Willis, 1977). Working-class kids' resistance is for higher stakes as they will not have the cushion of the affluent family network to fall back on, rather they face unemployment, a low paid job and social, cultural and economic deprivation (Connell et al 1982). Some types of resistance are a consequence of this class struggle.

It is acknowledged that middle or upper class resistance exists, but this tends to take a different form, and although this would be an interesting comparison to examine it is beyond the scope of the present study.



Research suggests that those from a lower socio-economic status constitute the educationally disadvantaged in terms of outcome, furthermore resistance by this social group tend to involve more detrimental effects for the pupils and they tend to engage in overt forms of resistance (Alpert, 1991), which are more likely to lead to exclusion. Numerous studies have shown that working-class pupil resistance exists and requires investigation (Willis, 1977; Walker 1988; McFadden, 1995b).

Willis in his seminal book '*Learning to Labour*' (LTL) (1977) developed the concept 'resistance' during his investigation of how working-class lads get working-class jobs in Smethwick (England). He distinguished between 'the lads' and the 'ear 'oles or lobes'. He described 'the lads' as a masculine, non-conformist, non-academic group of young males who opposed authority; held a sense of superiority; knew how to work the system (of school and the work place) and valued the importance of 'having a laff'. The 'ear 'oles' constituted a group of conforming, academic males, who had the ability to comply with authority, school rules and regulations. Willis describes 'the lads' as actively reproducing their status as working-class men, by contesting their subordination in the school context and embracing manual labouring futures, where as the 'ear lobes' are viewed as comparatively passive characters. Willis explains how the different group characteristics influenced the life paths of different individuals in and beyond their school days.

There is an element of self-damnation in the taking on of subordinate roles in Western Capitalism; this damnation is paradoxically experienced as true learning and as a form of resistance. Willis (1977) perceives resistance as an act of opposition to authority, as a device, which allows one to avoid the mundane routines of school life; resistance is perceived as a positive reaction against Capitalism (Willis, 1977).

Likewise Walker (1988) in '*Louts and Legends*' investigated four male groups of friends from year ten at 'Stokeham Boys High School' in Australia. 'The footballers' consisted of six males who had grown up together. He described this group as enjoying most cultural autonomy and social prestige with a strong

emphasis on mobility and the 'Aussie' masculine culture. 'The footballers' had an interest in rugby league, which had been strongly bound to the working-class Australian culture. 'The footballers', like Willis's lads, engaged in social practices such as joking, pushing, shoving and clowning around, which solidified their masculine identity. Like 'the lads' they opposed school and teacher authority, which in turn helped shape their manual labouring futures. 'The footballers' held a sense of superiority in the pupils and teachers eyes, since their success in football meant success for the school.

Walker also considered the complicated interaction of ethnicity. 'The Greeks' held a strong sense of Greek identity; they were conscious of their Greek culture and how this differentiated them from other groups of pupils in the school. 'The Greeks' tended to favour soccer (Australian equivalent of football) over football but despite their affiliation with sports they did not hold the same social privileged position as 'the footballers' in the pupils and teachers' perceptions due to their ethnicity. Their Greekness distinguished them as different. Some of the Australian working-class felt invaded by unwanted outsiders such as 'The Greeks'.

'The three friends' were an isolated group of two to three who ran the school magazine and were often referred to as 'poufs'. The fourth group, 'the handballers' consisted of the most ethnically diverse group that were tight-knit and enjoyed sport.

Both Willis (1977) and Walker's (1988) work point to how male working-class oppositional behaviour, as practiced in school, ensures 'the lads' and 'the footballers' future situated in the lower section of the social hierarchy. Both maintain that the type of resistance displayed by the males in their study is associated with their working-class origin. Walker like Willis articulates how the value placed on being perceived as tough, to be seen to reject school and engage in manual labouring futures is a macho ideology passed onto the males from their family and local communities. Thus emphasising the importance of investigating the local community and wider societal cultural context of the schools' locality. Attitudes, values and structures (such as local and national employment figures)



may influence pupil resistance within school. Walker unlike Willis does take into account the influence that race and ethnicity may have on different social groups' behaviour and cultural practices inside and outside of school, however neither considers female cultural patterns or responses to their schooling.

## **2.5 Gender**

There is a continuous process of reproducing gender differences (Thomas, 1990). It is believed that gender differences are the result of cultural and social influences (Acker, 1981). Oakley (1972) described gender as a 'social construction', concerning the differing qualities culturally attributed to women and men. Pupils' actions, behaviours, attitudes and possible rejection of schooling are socially constrained although not socially determined; people make decisions that are based on an awareness of the potentialities and limitations of certain courses of action. The choices made by men and women are influenced by social expectations of masculine and feminine behaviour (Ohrn, 1993).

There are a number of institutions that can be claimed to contribute to the reinforcement of gender differences, such as the family, work environment and media. However, education has been regarded by many as central in perpetuating gender differences, together with the potential for eliminating them (Thomas, 1990). Education has differential outcomes for certain social groups, by developing an understanding into what constitutes pupil resistance one may be better able to explain why education has differential gender consequences.

Historically, theories of gender and education have focused on females as the disadvantaged group (Good, Sikes and Brophy, 1973; Stansworth, 1983, Wilson and Handley, 1985). More recently attention has been drawn to males constituting the suffering group from new forms of educational disadvantage. Weiner, Arnot and David, (1997) maintain that it appears as though female success is viewed as a corollary to male failure. Rather than celebrating girls' achievements, a discourse of male disadvantage in which boys are viewed as falling behind in academic performance is now present. Issues surrounding the 'gender gap' and the preoccupation with boys' academic achievements are not confined to the UK;

debates have also been in progress in Australia (Lingard, 2003). However there is little evidence to suggest that girls' improvement in examinations has been at the expense of that of boys, although the predominant gender discourse in education continues to emphasise that of male underachievement (Weiner, Arnot and David, 1997; Lingard, 2003). The notion that the education system has failed all boys neglects the fact that males continue to hold the advantage at the end point of schooling, in the labour market. Many continue to argue that the education system continues to produce gender differences, even though it overtly seeks to eradicate them (Thorne, 1993).

Although females can now be viewed as catching up with males in the school environment, in the workplace they are still largely discriminated against (Blackstone and Fulton, 1975; Blackmore, 1999). The inequalities in the workplace may be viewed as deriving from the systemic reproduction of social inequalities in education. Moreover even though women's overall participation in UK higher education has exceeded males since 1994, women continue to be underrepresented in certain subjects such as computing and information technology (Clegg and Trayhurn, 1999). The study of youth subcultures and different social groups responses to formal education systems may reveal why and in what ways education leads to further success and mobility for some and perpetuated disadvantage for others.

McRobbie (1991) studied the subculture of young females in response to Willis 'LTL'. The role of females in youth cultural groupings was absent from classic subcultural ethnographic studies. When girls were acknowledged they tended to be recognised in terms of their sexual attractiveness. McRobbie claimed that the subculture and youth culture literature had scarcely begun to deal with the contradictions those patterns of cultural resistance posed in relation to females. Girls in school, as any subordinated group, do not merely accept their situation, but try to influence it, using whatever means they have to resist (Ohrn, 1993).

Some subcultural patterns of behaviour are true for both males and females, however others are much more gender divergent (McRobbie, 1991). Females are



believed to negotiate a different personal space from that inhabited by males, which consequently offer them different possibilities for resisting. Some of the cultural forms associated with females can be considered as responses to their perceived status as girls and to their anxieties about moving into the world of teenage sexual interaction (McRobbie, 1991). A possible function of the close-knit friendships often formed amongst girls is to gain private, inaccessible space.

While both males and females may refine their school uniforms to express individuality and rebellious behaviour, there may be different meanings behind the displayed behaviour for males and females. McRobbie (1991) found that many females developed their uniforms by 'expanding' on them. By managing to make their uniform more compatible with the current fashion, the girls could register their femininity in the classroom and even compete with the female teachers who were invariably ranked according to the style of the moment. Underpinning this was a clear demand that they be taken seriously as women; they may be forced to wear a uniform at school but this did not mean they would abandon their grown-up feminine appearance.

Male and female resistance responses are believed to differ according to their degree of subtlety and aggressiveness. By bringing fashion clothes and make-up into the school, the girls were undermining the schools rules and regulations, symbolically at least the school were transferred into an extension of the girl's social life (McRobbie, 1991). Girls' tactics included the more covert forms of resistance such as remaining silent in class, while quietly immersing into their own private concerns.

Both compliance and resistance occurs within schools (Anyon, 1983). Ohrn (1993) demonstrates how females resist within accommodation. It is possible for females to use their subordinate position in order to gain influence. Females can create strategies that draw on sex stereotypes and expectations for female conduct and actually use those expectations for their own purpose (Davies, 1984). In terms of power and resistance, subordinate groups may use and develop established expectations, norms and values originated from dominant groups and use them to

their own advantage; for achieving their own ends and gaining control (Ohrn, 1993).

Ohrn (1993) demonstrates that girls have the potential to profit from gender-related expectations for accommodation, provided they don't directly challenge the teacher. Teachers appear to judge themselves in charge of the situation, when interviewed the girls revealed a different understanding. Girls promoted and used the idea of being a 'good pupil' in order to achieve ends. They would be polite, nice and smiling, flatter the teacher and ask questions that they already knew the answer to, to perpetuate their label of 'good pupil', consequently, provided they behaved in an apparently accommodative manner, girls' attempts to resist and influence were largely passed as unnoticed by teachers. This illustrates the need to examine both the pupils and teachers interpretation of pupil responses to schooling, as the two may vary. Also covert forms of resistance must be acknowledged and may prove more beneficial for those that part-take in them, in that they remain overlooked.

As regards girls' behaviour, it has been suggested that the absence of expectations from teachers of female deviance means that females develop their own variations, which might potentially be more powerful since there are no established ways to counteract on the part of the school (Davies, 1984). Ohrn (1993) found that teachers frequently discussed problems when having to deal with female disruptive behaviour; they expressed difficulty in handling some of the girls. Teachers' perceptions towards male and female resistance responses were that boys usually caused more disturbances, but girls caused the more severe problems (Wood, 1984; Griffin, 1985; Ohrn, 1993). Teachers considered girls to take longer to forget and resolve conflicts and tension when compared to boys. Conflicts with girls were thought to last longer and sometimes spread through girls' social networks and influenced teachers' relations to other girls. Consequently teachers may find female resistance responses more unpredictable and difficult to deal with, as they don't know when the conflict will be resolved or whom it may involve (Ohrn, 1993). McRobbie (1991) expresses similar findings, less overt forms of resistance are more difficult to deal with; the school infrastructures don't easily cope with them. Girls' unwillingness to engage in lessons is more difficult to deal with when compared to



more overt forms of resistance such as disobeying school rules. The pupils' attempts to influence and gain control within school, may be viewed as related to societal and gender expectations in addition to individual's and group's actual situations and experiences (Ohrn, 1993).

Similarities parallel between investigations that examine pupil responses of males and females. McRobbie (1991) in her study of female subcultures and Willis (1977) in his investigation of male counter school cultures view pupils as trying to tolerate school life by channelling their energies into having a laugh at school with their mates. Overt, open resistance exists among girls (Ohrn, 1993), as well as boys.

Prior research indicates that male resistance differs from their female counterparts (McRobbie, 1991; Ohrn, 1993). Traditionally males have been viewed as more prone to exhibit aggressive, overt forms of resistance that tend to demand attention from the teacher. Researchers have typically perceived male resistance as more readily identifiable by teachers. Boys have been viewed as more likely to influence the course of events in the classroom. It has been argued that males develop a 'strategy of power', aiming at controlling peers and the teacher within the classroom context, whereas females develop a 'strategy of intimacy' orientating towards socio-emotional aspects and personal relations (Bjerrum, Nielsen and Larsen, 1985). Previous research argues that females use 'good pupil scripts', ways of being polite, nice and flattering to the teacher to influence classroom interaction where as males gain control by being more assertive and demanding (Ohrn, 1993, p155). Females tend to be associated with subtler, covert forms related to ways of seeking confirmation of self-esteem or in response to institutional conditions (McRobbie, 1991). Researchers responded to previous studies (Willis, 1977) that portrayed females as 'passive' (McRobbie, 1991; Ohrn, 1993), by claiming that girls, like any other subordinated group don't merely accept their marginalised position, but try to shape it, using whatever means they have to resist powerlessness. Ohrn (1993) showed how females were able to profit from gender-related expectations by resisting within accommodation, she indicated that females could create strategies which drew upon sex stereotypes and expectations concerning female conduct and utilise those expectations for their own purpose.

More recently studies indicate that female resistance isn't always hidden and covert but that an overt, open, more confrontational resistance also exists amongst females (Davies, 1984; Ohn, 1993; Jackson, 2004). However observational research tends to conclude that although females can exhibit overt forms of resistance, it is the males who are more likely to exhibit overt forms, cause disruption, seek influence and control within the classroom and protest publicly.

Female pupil resistance, like male resistance has been explained in terms of being an expression against dominant ideologies; McRobbie (1991) explained female youth subcultures as responding to the evils of patriarchy as well as Capitalism. However, like Willis work, the aspects of race and ethnicity and how they relate to subcultural formations and practices are absent.

## **2.6 Ethnicity and nationality**

There is a wealth of research concerning ethnicity and resistance; much of which explains resistance in terms of a legitimate reaction related to the wider societal framework of racism (Mac an Ghaill, 1989; Chen, 2002). However many of these accounts focus only on one or two ethnic minority groups within one national context (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) and so fail to gain understanding into how and why working-class male and female pupils from different ethnic and national backgrounds resist school. Ethnicity and Nationality are sometimes linked as one's ethnicity may determine their nationality and vice versa. However the two must be looked at separately to reveal how and why different ethnic groups in different national milieus resist.

There exists a wealth of research on the underachievement, differential attitudes and responses to schooling of particular ethnic minority groups (Coard, 1971; the Rampton Report, 1981; the Swann Report, 1985; Mac an Ghaill, 1989; Gilborn and Mirza, 2000; Colton, 2002; Chen, 2002). Previous research has indicated that both White working-class males and females in England and Australia exhibit resistance, with some groups of working-class White males being non-conformists, who try and portray a macho image (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988). Females have tended to be associated with subtler forms of resistance (McRobbie, 1991). Black



African-Caribbean youths have been shown to display visible, overt forms of resistance in English secondary schools while Asian pupils have been viewed as displaying more invisible, covert forms (Mac an Ghaill, 1989). Research concerning pupils from an Islander, Malaysian and Arabic background within Australia is scarce.

When explaining resistance responses from those of ethnic minority groups it has been suggested that pupils are not so much 'resisting' schooling as adopting 'survival strategies' (Mac an Ghaill, 1989). Mac an Ghaill (1989) when explaining Black pupils', of African-Caribbean and Asian parentage, responses to schooling, describes how classroom survival strategies are linked to a wider framework of racism. School for Black youths is part of a wider alienating response to them that results in their experiences of a 'different reality' from the White population, subsequently many Black youths creatively develop a number of 'survival strategies'. Mac an Ghaill views the African-Caribbean's sub-culture as a legitimate mechanism opposed to the school's institutional authoritarianism and racism. He also illustrates that in all dominant institutions and societies, the survival strategies of the oppressed (the pupils) are composed of a mixture of both rebellion and acceptance. Like in Quigley's (1990) explanation of resistance, there is a sense that the pupils are trying to keep their culture alive, a consequence of which is the pupil's resistance towards accommodating to the dominant ideologies of society and to the hegemony of schooling.

Mac an Ghaill (1992) describes how Rastafarianism was a 'source of power and dignity' in the worldview of Black youths. Rastafarianism was perceived as the symbol and source of resistance among the 'Rasta Heads'. Resistance may be perceived as pupils trying to uphold their own culture, a culture than they gain identity and power from in the face of competition against dominant societal cultures. Sewell (2000) argues that the Rastafarianism as a source of resistance for young Black people has given way to a different form of counter-culture, one based around the philosophy of rap culture. Pupils who embrace this culture may adapt their uniform, general appearance and language accordingly; such behaviours and attitudes may be met with tensions within the school setting; some Black youths

may be viewed as actively rejecting their schooling experience as an affirmation of their culture and identity.

Studies of Australian girls by Samuel (1983) and of Asian and African-Caribbean 'resisters' by Mac an Ghaill (1989) suggest that success or failure at school are more products of teachers' perceptions and labelling, rather than of any prior characteristics brought to the school by the pupil. Pupils are believed to be reacting against the form rather than the substance of schooling (Weis, 1990).

Class, gender, ethnic and national identity are influencing factors both within and outside the school. By examining the relationship between class, gender and ethnicity in relation to personal and school related issues in two societies, this research helps to make clear what factors (inside and outside of school) shape resistance.

## **2.7 Explanations for resistance**

Quigley (1990) investigated nonparticipation as a form of resistance amongst adults in adult literacy and basic education courses, he explained resistance as a choice that resisters decide to take in reaction against the normative values that they perceived as inherently wrong in the schooling ethos. The consequences of resistance meant retaining, not losing, one's self-worth in staying true to the beliefs and values of a chosen culture instead of conforming to the spurious values seen in the hegemony of schooling (Quigley, 1990: p108). Thus, in resonating with Willis and McRobbie's explanations, resistance is viewed as a means of retaining ones sense of self by refusing to comply with dominant beliefs.

Alpert (1991) disagrees with both Willis and McRobbie's account; he claims that resistance is related to the rejection of the curriculum and pedagogy encountered rather than a conscious resistance to dominant ideologies and values of society. Alpert explains that middle-class pupil resistance occurs due to the discrepancies between components of the adolescents culture and the adopted teaching approach, this gap creates tensions between the pupils' personal knowledge, skills and individual modes of expression and the academic orientated approach.



Apple (1982), like Willis indicates that pupils become quite adept at 'working the system'. Many creatively adapt their environments so that they can smoke, get out of class, informally control the pacing of classroom life, 'have a laff' (Willis, 1977) and inject humour into the mundane routines of school life. The real task of many pupils is to make it through the school day (Apple, 1982). Apple claims that some pupils reject their schooling experience at an even deeper level by rejecting the overt and hidden curricula of the school; the school norms, rules and regulations are defied as far as possible.

Corrigan (1979) in his study of Sunderland street-corner society '*Schooling the Smash Street Kids*' claims that the most common and intense activity exhibited by the majority of working-class youths is the activity of 'passing time'. He describes how the main action of British subculture is 'doing nothing' and although on first appearances this may seem like a covert response to boredom, the major components of 'doing nothing' include a lot of talking and joking around, smashing things and fighting. Within this context fights are viewed as exciting, they are easy to create and can be interesting, thus fighting at school may be viewed as a pupil's aim to inject a bit of excitement into the mundane routine of a typical school day, in parallel to Apple's account such behaviours help pass the time of the school day.

Alternatively, Walker (1993) and Moran (1988) claim that pupils aren't 'resisting' school as such, rather they are working out solutions to social and personal problems. James (1993) views resistance as a coping mechanism aimed at protecting the individual from perceived hurt or threat; likewise, McFadden (1993) maintains that what is often viewed as resistance to authority is actually a creative response to traumatic life experiences and often a cry for help and support. Watson (1993) focused on the material constraints of class and class location as an explanation of pupil resistance.

Other explanations include the notion that school is perceived as irrelevant to pupil's current situation (Davies, 1994), it's viewed as playing no integral part to ones future employment status (Willis, 1977), this is especially significant given the current widening gap between pupils aspirations as high achieving, well-

credentialed young adults and harsh economic realities (Dwyer and Wyn, 2001). Involvement in the informal economy or domestic sphere may be deemed acceptable, or more rewarding than the formal education system (Watts, 2001).

Munns and McFadden (2000) use resistance theory to explain pupil resistance within the Australian education system. The study identified several conditions, which led some pupils to reach a decisive moment in their lives where a free choice was made to reject school and education more generally. They argue that the presence and interdependence of the identified conditions in the relationship between groups, individuals and educational institutions make resistance a probable option for certain pupils. The conditions were based on two studies; study one was based in an inner-city primary school, which held a majority of Koori (Australian aboriginal people) pupils, study two focussed on how pupils previously labelled as failures in mainstream education, responded to a 'second chance' programme aimed at providing access to tertiary education. The first condition identified was 'powerlessness'; an emotion of disadvantage felt in an unequal society. Thus resistance may be viewed as a response to the role played by education in the continuation and reproduction of an unequal society. Consequently it's suggested that resistance to school is generated among groups who are historically and socially disadvantaged (such as indigenous and ethnic minority people). Racism at an institutional and day-to-day living experience may contribute to the feeling of powerlessness. The second condition of resistance is 'feeling powerless'; this involves ones acknowledgement and strong consciousness of their disadvantaged position within society, while feeling the strain of the constant battle against the system. The third condition 'school is not working for me' is when one recognises and accepts that success in life after school isn't guaranteed to follow achievement in school. The forth condition involves the 'rejection of an unequal education experience'. Munns and McFadden believe that oppositional behaviour within school can be explained in terms of protracted failure of the majority of schools in Australia to deliver educational success for sections of its population. Thus pupils resist the education system, as it is perceived as an integral part of the unequal societal structure that they oppose. As pupils become increasingly aware that school is not a place for them, the more pupils realise that the community



anticipate and therefore accept their academic failure, thus there was 'cultural support' for their opposition and resistance. There was anticipation, acceptance and understanding of academic failure contained by the community, it came as no surprise that one had been failed by the system again.

To really understand what gives rise to resistance a multiplicity of factors that may influence a pupils' rejection of school must be considered (Furlong, 1991), explanations must involve personal and school related issues contextualised within the school, community and nation. The literature suggests that many present understandings fail to embrace such complexities; a more complete understanding that embraces all these factors is thus required.

Whether pupils are acting out of free will and are conscious of their resistance responses and the implications is contested; this also requires further investigation.

*'(T)here is some evidence of disagreement about the degree to which pupils are 'free' or 'determined' in their choices, and there is also some debate about the extent to which they are fully consciousness of what they are doing.'* (Furlong, 1991; p296).

For many pupils schooling is a highly demanding experience, which can sometimes give rise to emotional injuries. Furlong (1991) advocates the need to account for the emotional aspect of resistance, we need to probe beneath the surface of what pupils tell us to the complex matter of injuries that schooling can produce. There is a need to better understand the emotional experiences that disaffected youth face. Resistance is complex and highly emotionally charged in nature (Quigley, 1990; Furlong, 1991). Those pupils who are particularly injured by their schooling experience will, on occasion give vent to their aggression and challenge those in authority. For some kids, especially those who have conflicting home lives, even the mundane routines of school life may prove too much and may become the focus of conflict and rejection. Pupils who reject school are usually emotionally vulnerable, and often need support. Once pupils have evolved subcultures that resist education, they have a rationale for rejecting school making it increasingly difficult to re-engage them (Furlong, 1991). There is a need to further investigate pupils who are potentially at risk from disengaging from formal education systems

rather than those who have already dropped out from mainstream education; there is a need to investigate how subcultures that resist education develop and work in the formal education system.

Much research focuses on those pupils who have already disengaged from the formal education system (McFadden, 1993). More work needs to be conducted with regards to those who are potentially 'at risk' of dropping out of formal systems as there remain large numbers of pupils who attend school but are disaffected by formal learning (Watts, 2001). There is a need to identify factors that may help prevent pupils from disengaging from formal education systems, thus allowing people from various social groups and backgrounds a more equal platform to start their adult lives from.

In order to achieve this Furlong (1991) suggests that the psychological in addition to the sociological explanations of pupil disaffection are required. Numerous studies investigate only the 'structure' of schooling and how this is significant in relation to deviance. This research investigates the social, personal and emotional modes of the resisters to establish a more dynamic understanding of pupil resistance.

## **2.8 Local and national characteristics**

Given the relative similarity of the Australian and English education system it is feasible to use these two societal settings to examine how different societies and their cultures influence patterns of resistance in schools. Australian and English politicians and policy makers see education and training as integral to reskilling and upskilling an underskilled or inappropriately skilled labour force (McFadden, 1995b).

Available literature regarding pupil resistance in the UK (Willis, 1977; McRobbie, 1991) and pupil resistance in Australia (Walker, 1988; Munns & McFadden, 2000), suggest that resistance parallels in England and Australia (McFadden, 1993; McFadden, 1995b) therefore an investigation that compares the effect of the two societal settings upon pupil resistance is of interest.



Accounts of schooling responses should consider the relationship between pupils' cultural background and the society to which they are a part (McFadden and Walker, 1994; Thomson, 2002). Thomson (2002) in her book, *'Schooling The Rustbelt Kids'* emphasises the influence of local geography, as well as national context as significant factors that shape the workings of schools and the actors within them. She focuses on schools in disadvantaged areas. Data was gathered via a variety of means including, interviews with 36 school principles; photographs, official statistical data and she used her own experience of working as a policy activist in a variety of national state forums and of working in disadvantaged schools and neighbourhood for over twenty-five years. Thomson describes how the current national educational policy and political climate that emphasises learning outcomes, rather than teaching individuals penalises disadvantaged schools, which in turn negatively affects the pupils' schooling experience. This policy shift rings true for English schools too. Thomson introduces the idea of a 'virtual schoolbag'. She explains how each child brings into school different cultural resources, shaped by their family, friends, community and national context. Each pupil has a different virtual schoolbag dependent upon their class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, family, friends and community influences, and these help shape pupils behaviour within school. Thomson argues that the particulars of the school's local geography and neighbourhoods, permeated by national and global events, together with the complex tangle of social relation network interactions taking place within and outside of school mean that interventions that work in one school may not be as successful in another.

The relations between schools, culture and society are often oversimplified (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, and Dowsett; 1982). In addition to examining the influence of class, gender and ethnicity I investigated the wider societal milieu. Although some attempts have been made to analyse the educational response of males and females from disadvantaged backgrounds, this has tended to be conducted within the same social and cultural setting (McFadden, 1998); this research addresses the need to investigate how different social and cultural environments inter-relate to influence pupil resistance in relation to class, gender and ethnicity.



Few studies investigate how nationality may influence pupil resistance; such issues are increasingly important in the globalising era and are of particular significance in multicultural societies like Australia and England, where migrations are multiple. The two have rich yet different multicultural compositions allowing for an examination of the relationship between pupils' personal cultural background and their national cultural environment.

*'Resistance is a phenomenon which crosses class, gender and racial boundaries...any account of educational outcomes should consider the dynamic relationship between students' cultural background and the society to which they are a part.'* (McFadden, 1992; p8).

The school is where tensions between one's public culture and private identity may arise. At school youths engage with the images and understandings of one's identification with a country, ('Australian' or 'English' nationality), which are part of the public domain, and the images and interpretations of the private domain (family culture/ethnicity); the two are evaluated and compared sometimes for the first time in school, giving rise to complex interactions that may contribute to the contestation and reinscription of a pupil's public and private cultures (Tsolidis, 2001). The construction of ethnicity has great significance in both Australia and England, cultural differences and notions of (non) belonging are inscribed through ethnicity in both societies. Gender and ethnicity play a pivotal role in the creation of diasporic identities, a source of which may lead to conflicts between the home/community and school, subsequently leading to pupils' feelings of inadequacy and not belonging, which may lead to resistance and disengagement from the formal education system (Cullingford, 1999). The similarities and differences in the two countries will allow for a comparative analysis, which intends to more clearly reveal the complexities of resistance and its implications, thus contributing further to the establishment of an advanced understanding of pupil resistance.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

There has been a wealth of research that has facilitated insight into what constitutes pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Cullingford, 1999). However the

literature also suggests that there is a need to refine the definitions of forms pupil resistance may take. Previous attempts at offering typologies of resistance differ on their emphasis of dimensions, giving some privilege over others. Different studies have offered various but sometimes contradictory explanations for resistance, with some focusing on class (Willis, 1977); gender (McRobbie, 1991, Ohn, 1993) or ethnicity (Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghail, 1989) in isolation. Evidence suggests that resistance has differential class, racial, ethnic and gender consequences (McFadden, 1995a); but many accounts fail to incorporate such complexities. There is a need to investigate class, gender, ethnic and national cultures, as well as the individual schools, their local geography and the people operating within them; all of these factors share the focus in this research.



### **3 Theoretical frameworks**

#### **3.1 Outline**

The theoretical concerns and approaches drawn upon in the research are outlined. The discussion begins with an examination of the theoretical context from where the investigation of pupil resistance emerged. The way in which young people's behaviour is understood and researched has changed. The significance that reproduction, resistance and structuration theory have for understanding pupil resistance is considered. The agency versus structure divide is discussed; the freedom/determinant dialectic remains unclear and requires further examination. This research hopes to refine knowledge by applying different theoretical frameworks to the study of pupil resistance and showing how resistance operates within the agency and structure context.

#### **3.2 Introduction**

To understand what constitutes resistance, a consideration of the relevant theoretical frameworks, together with the developments in understandings of youth, youth cultures and deviance is required. Consensus theorists (Durkheim, 1951; Parsons, 1959) offered insights into the functions of schooling but failed to incorporate the notion of resistance. Conflict theorists (Althusser, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a) are examined in terms of their deterministic approach to the concept of resistance. Resistance theory developed largely as a reaction against the pessimism and determinism of reproductive accounts of schooling. Resistance theorists offer the possibility of education producing creative agents capable of influencing social structures (McFadden, 1995a). Resistance theorists have been criticised for basing their theoretical models of cultural (re)production around the theme of social origin, at the relative neglect of other factors that influence resistance, such as gender and ethnicity. The conclusion that educational research needs to address the agency versus structure divide is proposed via the work of McFadden (1995a).



### 3.3 Theoretical context of pupil resistance

Before resistance as a subject of investigation was acknowledged, studies involving youth and youth cultures emerged. 'Youth' appeared as an emergent category in post-war Britain, it provided the focus of official reports, pieces of legislation and official interventions. 'Youth' was signified as a social problem, something that needed to be dealt with (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1976). This belief remains in present media attention, political rhetoric and societal values. 'Youth' and 'youth culture' as subjects of study emerged. The term 'youth culture' directs one to the cultural aspect of youth.

*'We understand the word 'culture' to refer to that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and life experience. Culture is the way, the forms, in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence...The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in mores and custom, in the use of objects and material life.'*  
(Clarke et al, 1976; p10). Emphasis stressed by authors.

Groups that exist within the same society and share some of the same material and historical conditions, share each other's 'culture' to a certain extent. However different cultures are ranked differently along the scale of 'cultural power' (Clarke et al, 1976; p11), some stand in opposition to one another in relations of domination and subordination, thus resistance against or in reaction to certain cultures may occur.

Historically educational theory was firmly entrenched in the logic of necessity and efficiency and was mediated through the political discourse of integration and consensus (Giroux, 1983). Consequently notions of struggle and conflict were either downplayed or ignored in the discourse of traditional educational theory and practice; Durkheim and Parsons' work signifies this.

In search of explanations of how and why forms of resistance, such as disruptive behaviour and truancy are patterned in significant ways, some educational

researchers (Furlong, 1991; Walford and Pickering, 1998) turned to the work of Durkheim (1950, 1951). In his book 'Suicide' Durkheim writes that education is

*'Only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter in abbreviated forms it does not create it.'* (Durkheim, 1951; p372).

Durkheim assumes a form of determinism and inflexibility within the processes of education, (Walford and Pickering, 1998). Durkheim viewed the major function of education as the transmission of society's norms and values. In his book 'Moral Education' (1925), Durkheim advocated that the school's function was to transmit a sense of morality to pupils. He believed that society required a certain degree of homogeneity; education can perpetuate and reinforce this homogeneity by installing into the child 'essential similarities' which collective life demands. However without a certain degree of diversity cooperation is impossible, thus education also ensures the persistence of this necessary diversity by being itself diversified and specialised. The diversity of the complex social whole is bound together by the moral unity of the collective conscious.

Durkheim has also had an influence on and developed further understanding into how sociologists view the school deviant (Furlong, 1991). Durkheim suggested that deviant behaviour was not pathological, but normal and rational. Thus the deviant should be examined in terms of their behaviour designed to respond to social circumstances. Thus resistance could be understood as the individual's rational response to the social context. This is a deterministic view, implying that resistance may be a product of the external environment, thus representing a shift from the belief that all deviant behaviour is illogical, irrational and occurs for no given purpose.

Sociologists began to change the way they thought about deviance and delinquency, such behaviour was understood within the context of the people concerned, rather than a set of activities, which are self evidently 'wrong' (Corrigan, 1979). Much of the research in the 1950's and 1960's had specifically looked at individual rule-breakers as a group radically different from others. This



was especially true in the field of juvenile delinquency, where the search for variables became tied to the social importance of isolating offenders as young as possible. The plethora of self-report delinquency surveys soon showed that offences against laws weren't simply caused by one specific characteristic of an individual; rather they were the result of a series of age-related experiences; consequently research into juvenile delinquency became closely linked with that of youth culture research. The focus of research shifted from the individual law-breaker and his or her law-breaking activities to the overall set of activities carried out in the youth's spare time (Corrigan, 1979). Subsequently researchers could now view delinquent behaviour as a 'normal' response; furthermore researchers began to view the delinquent as conscious of their actions (Corrigan, 1979).

Following the Durkheimian perspective, the Parsonian (1959) view of schooling advocates a view of schools as neutral institutions designed to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills needed for wider society. Giroux (1983) claims that this laid the basis for a sociology of education that refused to interrogate the relationship between schools and the industrial order. Within this perspective schools are viewed as instructional sites. The idea that schools are also cultural instruments that represent arenas of contestation and struggle among differently empowered cultural and economic groups is largely ignored (Giroux, 1983).

Social and cultural life is too complex to be explained by deterministic models; in any real situation there will be elements of resistance, struggle and contradiction (Apple, 1982).

### **3.4 Theoretical frameworks**

To understand 'resistance' within the school setting and wider societal context, one must identify the different theoretical frameworks' accounts of how resistance may emerge. Elements of reproduction theory, resistance theory and structuration theory are utilised. All three theoretical frameworks offer valuable attempts to explain the effects of schooling on individuals and society. Their limitations will be discussed with reference to how this research contributes to knowledge.



Reproduction, resistance and structuration theory are linked via assumptions that societal relations reproduce themselves. What constitutes 'resistance' is a complex question that requires a dynamic theoretical framework. The later two theories compliment each other; both have a vigorous framework to help understand the interaction between structure and agency, this is required as resistance occurs in accordance with this complex interaction. Pupils' do possess the will to behave in a certain way, but agency is limited according to external societal, cultural and community milieu. The freedom/determination dialectic remains unclear (Walker, 1988), and thus requires further examination.

### **3.5 Theories of reproduction**

To understand why resistance theory offers insight into what constitutes resistance one must acknowledge the theory's foundations, which lie in reproductive accounts. Reproduction theories as exemplified by the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976) have developed contributions by structuralist theorists such as Althusser (1971) to accentuate a structural deterministic view of society and the education system. Schools are considered to reproduce the relations of production in the interests of the capitalist class (Sultana, 1989), via the maintenance and development of a 'legitimate' ideology in service of the dominant culture (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a). Schools are viewed as organisationally, symbolically and culturally implicated in a reproductive process. Reproduction theory suggests that schools contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, by reproducing the existing relationships between social groups (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) and between their cultures (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a), thus serving to maintain an unequal society.

Theories of reproduction take as their central concern the issue of how schools function in the interests of the dominant groups within society (Giroux, 1983). But unlike liberal and structural-functionalist accounts the assumption that schools are democratic institutions that promote value-free knowledge and objective modes of instruction is rejected. Instead, reproduction theories focus on how power is used to mediate between schools and the interests of capital. Theories focus on how schools utilise their material and ideological resources to reproduce the social

relations and attitudes needed to sustain the social divisions of labour necessary for the existing relations of production (Giroux, 1983).

Reproductive accounts have played a significant role in exposing the ideological assumptions and processes behind the rhetoric of neutrality and social mobility. Such approaches represent an important theoretical development on idealistic and functionalist paradigms in educational theory. It may be argued that such theories still ultimately support rather than challenge the logic of the existing order of society (Giroux, 1983).

The reproduction framework is relevant to the study of pupil resistance as it highlights the macro, structural dimensions of educational institutions in the context of society.

Reproductive accounts can be divided into two positions:

- 1) Theories of social reproduction
- 2) Theories of cultural reproduction

### **3.6 Theories of social reproduction**

Theories of social reproduction take as a central issue the notion that schools occupy a major, if not critical role in the reproduction of the social formations needed to sustain capitalist relations of production. This strong structuralist preoccupation with the concern with the way in which social systems position or structure human subjects is signified by the work of Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976). While both stress different aspects of the reproductive process they both believe that the economy-school nexus represents a major set of relations in the maintenance and reproduction of industrial societies.

Louis Althusser (1971) explained how a labour force could be constituted to fulfil the important material and ideological functions necessary for reproducing the capitalist mode of production. This involved training workers with the skills and competencies necessary for working within the process of production, while also ensuring that workers embodied the attitudes, values and norms that provide the



required discipline and respect essential for the maintenance of the existing relations of production. Althusser claims that the maintenance of the status quo depends upon the force and use of ideology.

Althusser's work is an extension of the Marxists theory of the State. He attempts to develop a theory of ideology via a theory of institutions that includes the educational Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which he claims is the dominant ISA in capitalist societies. Schools are viewed as agents of social control. Values taught in schools are believed to favour the ideologies of the bourgeoisie. In order to maintain the capitalism and perpetuate the ruling class ideology, 'the reproduction of labour power' is essential. Skills required to preserve an effective workforce, together with the acceptance of this ideology are necessary for capitalism's survival. Education transmits an ideology that legitimates the capitalist system; it also reproduces the attitudes and behaviour required.

Althusser has been criticised for collapsing the notion of ideology into a theory of domination that restricts its meaning to such a degree that it appears as a 'force' able to invalidate or diffuse any type of resistance.

*'Ideology becomes an institutional medium of oppression that appears to function so efficiently that the state and its ideological state apparatus are presented as part of a static and administrative fantasy. In this view, schools and other social sites seem free from even the slightest vestige of conflict, contradiction, and struggle. Finally, Althusser has developed a notion of power that appears to eliminate human agency.'* (Giroux, 1983; p82).

Pupils aren't passive agents that accept any role designated to them, this is lost in Althusser's analysis. Althusser produced a general theoretical framework. His ideas aren't supported via empirical evidence, as he himself admits. Bowles and Gintis (1976) provide a detailed application of this framework.

Marxian Reproduction theorists, such as Bowles and Gintis (1976), like Durkheim accentuate a structural deterministic view of society and of the education system. Like Althusser, Bowles and Gintis view the major function of education as the



reproduction of social relations of the capitalist society. The economic role of fragmented education is to provide a stratified and conforming workforce, which has the attitudes, value and subservient behaviour most useful for the conservation of the capitalist system. Their main argument is that there is a correspondence between the teacher-pupil relations in school and those of manager-worker in workplaces that reproduce the authority structures of control in class society.

The education system structures the workforce. The school acts as a mechanism for selecting those who will be dominant and those who will be subordinate in the future workforce and thus transmits the essential inequalities of the capitalist system. For this process of reproduction to operate effectively, the pupils must experience such inequalities as legitimate. When such inequalities are not viewed as justified resistance may emerge. Thus resistance is viewed as a reaction and acknowledgement to the coercive nature of the education systems' contribution to the reproduction and maintenance of the social order.

Bowles and Gintis have made a number of positive contributions to educational theory. They developed knowledge of how the hidden curriculum help maintain capitalist social relations and articulated the relationship between specific modes of schooling with social processes in the workplace. Furthermore they pointed to specific classroom social relations as social processes that link schools to determinate forces in the workplace. However their theory of social reproduction is over determined. Not only does their argument point to a spurious 'constant fit' between schools and the workplace, it does so by ignoring the role of consciousness, ideology and resistance in the school process (Giroux, 1983). Dominant control in this perspective is characterised by a mode of analysis that overlooks the fact that social structures like the school and workplace represent both the medium and the outcome of reproduction practices (Giddens 1991).

### **3.7 Theories of cultural reproduction**

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a) and Bernstein (1996), like Bowles and Gintis argue that schools were implicated organisationally, symbolically and culturally in a reproductive process. However they reject reproductive accounts that view the

school simply as a mirror of society, and argue that schools are relatively autonomous institutions that are indirectly influenced by more powerful economic and political institutions. Schools are viewed as symbolic institutions that reproduce existing social relations subtly via the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction starts with the assumption that class-divided societies and the ideological and material configurations on which they rest are mediated and reproduced, in part through 'symbolic violence'. Education is viewed as an important social and political force in the process of class reproduction. By appearing to be an impartial 'transmitter' of the benefits of a valued culture, schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity.

The concepts of cultural capital and habitus are central to understanding Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) analysis of how the mechanisms of cultural reproduction function within the school.

Cultural capital refers to the different sets of linguistic and cultural competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class located boundaries of their families. The habitus refers to the subjective dispositions that reflect a class-based social grammar of taste, knowledge and behavioural internalised competencies. Individuals are embedded in their cultural inheritance, and those from a higher social class have the advantage of economic, cultural and thus social capital, which ultimately increases their likelihood of making it through the education system compared to those from a working-class background. The upper-classes habitus is similar to that perpetrated and (re)produced in the school. The upper-classes have a hereditary advantage, which acts to enhance their academic advancement.

Bourdieu has been accused of viewing culture as a one-way process of dominations (Giroux, 1983). Subsequently it is mistakenly implied that working-class cultural forms and knowledge are homogeneous and merely reflect the dominant cultural capital.



*'Working-class cultural reproduction through the process of resistance, incorporation, or accommodation is not acknowledged by Bourdieu.'* (Giroux, 1983; p90).

Thus Bourdieu's portrayal of the dynamics of culture, class and reproduction serves to eliminate conflict between and within different social groups. Notions such as struggle, diversity and human agency are neglected in this reductionist view. By reducing classes to homogenous entities whose only differences are based on whether or not they exercise or respond to power, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a) fail to theoretically reveal how cultural domination and resistance are mediated through the complex interface of racism, gender and class (Arnot, 1981). Culture must be viewed as both a structuring and transforming process.

Dominant ideologies are not simply transmitted and accepted in schools as suggested by Bourdieu and Passeron, on the contrary, teachers, pupils and parents frequently meet them with resistance. While Bernstein (1996) accepts Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic violence' he maintains that some social groups are aware that schools are not neutral institutions. Schools are not static institutions that reproduce the dominant ideology; they are active agents in its construction as well. By failing to develop a theory of ideology that explains the way human agents dialectically create, resist, and accommodate themselves to dominant ideologies, Bourdieu and Passeron exclude the active nature of domination as well as the active nature of resistance (Giroux, 1983).

Despite its limitations, the reproduction framework does contribute to developing understandings of resistance as it highlights the macro and structural dimensions of educational institutions in the context of society. However reproduction theorists have been criticised for their excessive emphasis on the socio-structural imperatives of school (McFadden, 1995a). In response many resistance theorists have departed from reproduction explanations of class inequalities. Resistance theory has appropriated the advances made by reproduction perspectives over liberal theorising in linking education to economic, cultural and ideological processes and moved on from that to explore the power of human agency (Sultana,



1989). Since 'resistance' is complex and contradictory (Willis, 1977), a framework that incorporates the interaction between structure and agency is required. Reproductive accounts offer pessimistic and deterministic reproductive explanations of schooling and are thus only of partial use. The resistance framework is influential because it offers the possibility of education producing creative agents capable of manipulating social structures (Willis, 1977).

### **3.8 Resistance theory**

By the late 1970's reproduction theory was challenged by theories of resistance. Dynamic accounts of how working-class youth fail school via pupil opposition, agency and class struggle were offered. Resistance theorists viewed pupil as actively rejecting school by deploying 'working-class cultural weaponry' (Davies, 1994; p333). Resistance theory maintains that individuals reject school because of their counter-school cultures, derived from wider working-class antagonism to intellectual practices and to 'mental labour' (Walker, 1988; p5). Rather than viewing resistance as a response to the structural dynamics of society, resistance theorists injected the notion of agency. Subcultural peer groups such as 'the lads' (Willis, 1977) and 'the footballers' (Walker, 1988) were claimed to contest school authority in a solidaristic affirmation of their culture.

Given the need for a theoretical framework that effectively captures the tension between structure and agency, it is appropriate to recognize the seminal study '*LTL*' (Willis, 1977). Willis moved the debate about pupil disaffection from overtly deterministic views of social and cultural reproduction to a consideration of the interrelationship between social structures and agency (Munns and McFadden, 2000). He paid great attention to the subjectivities of the lads and goes beyond the traditional Marxist socio-cultural reproduction theorists' thesis, he didn't just analyse society's structures. He demonstrates that oppositional forms of resistance are only partial insights into 'the lads' choosing to reject mental work; they were preparing themselves for the manual labour workplace. Structures impinge upon the actions of individuals, while individuals have the power to influence structures, like Willis, I believe that this conceptual framework allows for the analysis of the resisters perspective.

Resistance theory remains influential. Munns (2001) utilises Willis' concept of cultural reproduction when analysing the educational outcomes for pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds by applying it to a classroom context. Munns views individuals as creative, whilst perceiving their responses as modified by the local conditions of society. Munns proposes that classroom practices are produced as pupils and teachers respond culturally to each other within their local community and educational context. This suggests that an understanding of the process of classroom pedagogies can be found by an examination of how locally produced contextual issues impact on school and educational processes. This contextual framework is appropriate to this research as it allows for an analysis of different societal conditions; to investigate how they might impinge upon resistance, while viewing the pupil as possessing a degree of power over their situation and response to education.

Questions of an empirical nature emerge when resistance theory is confronted by quantitative research on schools and delinquency. Willis (1977), Giroux (1983) and Apple (1982) may have overstated the link between class and resistance. All assume that working-class culture is the catalyst for pupil resistance. Evidence indicates that the relation between opposition to school and class background is weaker than resistance theorists acknowledge (Davies, 1994), they may underestimate the extent to which gender and ethnicity affect the emergence and participation in pupil resistance. This research helps address this by examining the significance and relation between class; gender; ethnicity; nationality and resistance in two different societal settings.

Willis' conceptual framework may be deemed paradoxical. Walker (1986) criticises Willis' theory of cultural production due to its essentialism and dualism, consequently leading to the romanticising of 'resistance' and 'culture'. Walker questions Willis' assumption that one is able to freely choose their own destiny while simultaneously being constrained by structure.



Walker's work with males in *'Louts and Legends'* (1988), moved the debate away from romanticised notions of male working class-culture and instead focuses on the cultural as a wider arena for possible social and cultural change. Walker highlights the informal practices and relationships that develop in school as the root of many conflicts and resistance responses, especially those between pupil and teacher. The difference for Walker is not a romantic hope for the working-class in their resistance but a conceptualisation of a cultural strategy that helps people construct possibilities for change (McFadden, 1995a).

Research that continues to be done in relation to youth subcultures, resistance and social change (McFadden, 1993; Moore, 1994), finds itself bedevilled by criticisms about the privileging of either structure or agency (McFadden, 1995a; p. 295). The agency versus structure debate is contested. This research refines theoretical knowledge by providing insight into how pupil resistance operates within the interaction of the agency and structure context.

The problem with resistance theory is that it discusses the concept of 'resistance' via a dichotomous explanation of structure and agency (McFadden, 1995a). Questions about agency and structure have been posed over a divide with answers being given in dualistic ways, which either reduce structure to agency or agency to structure.

*'There is a need to move beyond limited resistance perspectives to focus on individuals and groups as creative agents able to effect change in social structures.'* (McFadden, 1995a; p293).

I, like McFadden advocate the need for a theoretical framework that allows discussion of both agency and social structure, which can explain why education can be the damnation and the salvation of the same person at different stages in their life, and why education continues to fail certain people regardless of their aspirations.

*'To be able to talk about challenging and changing structures which institutionalise disadvantage without falling into dualist traps, we*

*need a theoretical framework that allows the discussion of both agency and social structure.'* (McFadden, 1995a; p299).

### **3.9 Structuration theory**

Shilling (1992) and McFadden (1995a) claim that structuration theory offers a possible resolution to the dualism. Giddens' (1991) theory of structuration attempts to deal with concerns of agency and structure by positing a duality of structure.

*'Structuration theory offers a resolution to the dualism which has hampered theoretical progress in the sociology of education.'* (Shilling, 1992; p77).

Structuration theory reconceptualises notions of structure and agency. Social structures are not viewed as constraining, impersonal forces that stand above and apart from individuals; rather interacting actors reproduce them. Structures are viewed as enabling and constraining, as the medium and the outcome of agents' actions. A distinction is made between social system and structure, helping diminish the problem of dualism traditionally found in educational research (Shilling, 1992). Social systems possess structural properties but they are not structures in their own right. Rather social systems consist of reproduced relationships between individuals and/or collectives across space and through time. Structures are sets of rules and resources, which actors' utilise and reproduce in social interaction. Rules and resources are reproduced only in and through the actions of individuals; they don't determine behaviour (Shilling, 1992). This view of social structures is an advance on existing approaches as it places agents at the centre of social reproduction.

Structuration theory provides an alternative framework to view agency, by distinguishing between capability, knowledgeability and motivation (Shilling, 1992). Power relations are reciprocal and dependant on the actions of both the dominator and dominated, whether the dominated are aware of their power or not, they have the capability to influence social events. Agents are believed to know a great deal about society, they account for the consequences of their actions, and are able to alter their actions in light of the information gained from discursive



consciousness. This notion compliments the idea of resistance being a dynamic concept; the resisters are viewed as conscious beings able to influence their situation.

Structuration theory has been criticised for its misinterpretation of other theoretical positions and for inadequate conceptualisation of the actions of agents in time and space (Bryant and Jary, 1991). It has been criticised for its lack of empirical application (McFadden, 1995a). However Giddens (1991) claims that Willis's '*LTLE*' closely confirms to the main empirical implications of structuration theory, implying that the theory is empirically applicable. Willis treats 'the lads' as actors who know a great deal about the school environment of which they form a part; he shows how the rebellious attitudes, which the boys take towards authority, have certain unintended consequences that affect their fate. When leaving school 'the lads' take up manual labour, thus facilitating the reproduction of some features of Capitalist industrial labour. Thus Willis's resistance framework compliments Giddens's structuration theory. Structures can be viewed as enabling and constraining, constraint in Willis's study is shown to operate through the active involvement of the agents concerned, not as some force of which they are passive recipients (Giddens, 1991; p289). This is an appropriate theoretical framework as it incorporates the interaction of structure and agency.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

Reproduction theory, resistance theory and structuration theory all offer insight into how schools and the individuals within them operate. This research draws upon reproduction theory; social relations are viewed as reproducing themselves within school and the wider society and structures are viewed as important (but not necessarily domineering) influences. Resistance theory developed as a reaction against the structural determinist view reproductive accounts offered. Resistance theories injected the notion of agency, and as such are useful when examining how resistance operates within the agency and structure context. In response to resistance theory's criticism of focusing too centrally on social class, this research examines, working-class, male and female resistance with pupils from various ethnic and national backgrounds in Birmingham, England and Sydney, Australia.

Structuration theory is used in an attempt to deal with the relation and significance of agency and structure in the construction, manifestation and explanation of resistance.

By drawing upon all three theoretical frameworks this research is better equipped to address the issue identified in the literature (McFadden, 1995a) that a more complete account of what constitutes 'resistance' in school and why such responses occur is necessary. The literature suggests that there is confusion with the concept 'resistance' and current explanations fail to incorporate all of its complexities. The way forward is to adopt a theoretical framework that accounts for both structure and agency. Factors that have been identified as being ignored or examined in isolation in previous investigations of pupil resistance are looked at together in this research. Gender and ethnicity in addition to class are examined.

The next chapter outlines the philosophical and methodological position adopted in the research.



## **4. Philosophy and methodology**

### **4.1 Outline**

The philosophical and methodological bases of the research are described. The quantitative and qualitative methodologies and their related philosophies are appraised. The methodology and philosophy selected are related to the research issues. The rationale behind the adopted methodology and philosophical standpoint are justified. The need to link micro and macro levels of analysis is advocated via the use of Carspecken's (1996) five-stage critical ethnography. The data collection stage is summarised and the implications of the research design evaluated.

### **4.2 Introduction**

All approaches to the study of society are located in a frame of reference of one kind or another. Methods of social research are intimately connected to different visions of how social reality should be studied. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies shouldn't be viewed as mutually exclusive. The research adopts a predominately qualitative approach within which the Self Description Questionnaire (SDQ) II (Marsh, 1990) is utilised. A quantitative research technique is used in addition to the ethnographic format. Triangulating the data increases the validity of findings. This research accepts both qualitative and quantitative methodologies can contribute to an understanding of resistance.

A qualitative exploratory approach is adopted to establish a good understanding of resistance, to gain insight into how and why certain pupils resist school. The significance and relationship between class, gender, ethnic and national identities in the construction of resistance are examined. Two societal settings (England and Australia) are investigated allowing understanding into the effects of how different cultural environments influence resistance. The SDQ II data offers insight into the emotional state of the pupils. Investigating such complexities from the pupils' perspective requires a methodology that is able to gain the insiders point of view, to contextualise resistance and explain its occurrence. A multiplicity of realities is

established; staff and pupil perspectives are investigated, to gain depth and validity to the findings.

Before embarking upon a piece of research the researcher is faced with a decision. Either the researcher has a worked out theoretical framework within which information is gathered, or the researcher modifies and builds upon theoretical perspectives as the research develops (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The latter approach has been adopted throughout this research. This strategy allows theory, method and data to develop simultaneously each informing the other; thus providing a fruitful approach to conduct educational research (Meyenn, 1979).

Related to the methodology is the philosophy. The philosophical position is outlined after a discussion concerning the advantages and disadvantages of different philosophies and their related methodologies. A 'soft' realist approach is embraced.

#### **4.3 Philosophy and quantitative methodologies**

Quantitative methodology largely originates from within the positivist position. Positivism as posited by Comte (1970) asserts empirical science as the only foundation for valid knowledge, thus signifying its epistemological approach. Quantitative researchers have often sought to conform to the methods and procedures of the natural sciences and have been considerably influenced by positivism (Bryman, 1993).

Realism denotes an ontological assumption sometimes held by quantitative researchers. Like positivists, realists contend that the social world external to individual cognition is a real world consisting of tangible structures; the world exists independently of our knowledge of it (Burrell and Morgan, 2001).

Positivism argues for the application of the method of the natural sciences to the social sciences and thereby presupposes the unity of the sciences (Delanty, 2000). Quantitative methodologies are usually utilised. Quantitative data collection traditionally occurs via survey, structured interviews, experimental methods and



the review of official statistics. Contact with participants is kept to a minimum and the researcher conventionally maintains an outsider perspective, observing the social world using a set framework. The foundation of science is believed to be observation (Delanty, 2000). For positivists, development of knowledge occurs via observation to verification of means of the experimental method; the scientist conducts experiments to uncover objectively existing, general laws from which hypothesis can be made and used to predict (Delanty, 2000).

*'Theory is arrived at from presuppositionless observation and not the other way around.'* (Delanty, 2000; p15/16).

A deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research is usually endorsed (Bryman, 2001). The adherence to the scientific model helps to ensure generalisation. Quantitative methodologies produce findings that some positivists argue are value free, objective and representative of the research population due to stringent sampling methods.

A natural science model underpins quantitative methodology. The logic and procedures of the natural sciences are assumed to provide an epistemological yardstick against which empirical research in the social sciences must be appraised before it can be accepted as valid knowledge (Bryman, 1993; p12). Such structured epistemological and ontological assumptions are not altogether appropriate to the investigation of resistance, as resistance is not comparable to issues investigated by natural scientists.

Quantitative research techniques tend to obtain quantifiable data. The quantitative researcher renders observable and measurable concepts, rooted in hypotheses often derived from a prior theoretical scheme. This tends to offer weak accounts of how concepts emerge and become subject to the measurement process (Bryman, 1993). Resistance has been defined in various ways and the literature suggests a lack of cohesion to its definition (McFadden, 1995a). Given the complex nature of resistance, a predefined use of the concept is not suitable. An inductive approach that seeks to reveal dynamic understandings and processes of resistance is required.

The quantitative researcher is more likely than their qualitative counterparts to establish generalisation of their results, thus drawing closer to the law-like findings of the natural sciences. However, problems of establishing the generalisability of findings to other populations and the ability to account for how the passage of time affects findings are questionable (Bryman, 1993). The application of the quantitative methodology tends to enable replication of the study; replication can provide a means of checking the reliability and extent to which findings are applicable to other contexts. Furthermore it is frequently viewed as a method of checking the biases of the investigator, though few quantitative researchers subscribe to the view that research can be completely value free (Bryman, 1993).

Quantitative methodologies have their place in social research; they are better equipped to deal with large amounts of data where information is easily quantifiable, verifiable and open to the possibility of generalisation. However, the quantitative researcher tends to distance themselves from the people under investigation. To fully understand resistance, the resisters perspective needs to be examined (Willis, 1977). To gain a valid understanding into what constitutes resistance, a methodology that promotes intense contact with the field and aims to gain comprehensive understandings of resistance is needed.

#### **4.4 Philosophy and qualitative methodologies**

The historical background of qualitative research lies in British anthropology and ethnography. It firmly established itself through the Chicago School of sociology in the 1920's and 1930's. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the 'others' world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The qualitative approach seeks to describe and analyse the culture of humans and their groups from the perspective of those being studied (Bryman, 1993).

Qualitative research tends to be associated with an inductive view of the relationship between research and theory (Bryman, 2001). Most qualitative researchers emphasise a preference for treating theory as something that emerges out of the collection and analysis of data. The qualitative epistemological position



is frequently described as interpretivist, hence, in contrast to the natural scientific model in quantitative research; the focus is on the understanding of the social world via an investigation of the subjectivities and interpretation of that world by its participants. Its ontological position is often described as constructionist, which implies that social properties are products of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction.

The main methods associated with qualitative research are; ethnography, observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, language-based approaches to the collection of qualitative data, such as discourse and conversational analysis, case studies, diaries, stories and narratives.

Qualitative methodology often lacks generalisability (Bryman, 2001). This limitation is especially prevalent in the case study approach. Reliance on a single case poses a problem of how far it is possible to generalise the results of the research, however the investigation of more than one case which is studied at length allows for a detailed and unique investigation (Stake, 1995). One may even question whether or not generalisation should take precedence (Walford, 2001).

*'The real business of a case study is particularization, not generalization.'* (Stake, 1995; p8).

One fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its commitment to viewing events, actions, norms and values from the perspective of the people who are being studied. Seeing through the eyes of the resisters entails a capacity to penetrate the frames of meaning with which they operate (Bryman, 1993). Although this is helpful when gaining a valid understanding of resistance, it is not without its limitations (Russell, 2005). Adherence to viewing the world through the eyes of those under investigation has led to a feeling of dubiousness regarding the imposition of prior and possibly inappropriate frames of reference (Bryman, 1993). The researcher may experience difficulty in knowing whose eyes to see through. I had to be sensitive to the different perceptions of the teachers as well as the pupils. Multiplicities of views are examined. The researcher may not always be able to

recognise everything that is important to the participants (Bryman, 1993). My own perspective may influence the interaction between the researcher and the researched and thus the research process.

Qualitative methodology enables one to go beyond pure description and provides the basis for analysis of the environments, events and behaviour of participants in their context. This is important when investigating disaffected youth. People react differently in different situations, so being able to contextualise resistance helps establish deeper understandings of resistance.

Given the multiplicity of interacting factors that influence pupil resistance (Williamson, 2000), the qualitative methodology's emphasis on process is important. Resistance is not a static behaviour that fails to change or has no flow of interconnecting events giving rise to its occurrence.

Resistance has been defined and explained in numerous ways, there is a lack of coherence to its definition, thus the flexibility and lack of structure predominant in the qualitative approach is appropriate. An unstructured, open-ended, exploratory methodology that enhances the probability of discovering unexpected, new and exciting issues of relevance is used. The adopted approach seeks new as opposed to predefined concepts and theory thus further lending itself to the opportunity to examine uncharted territory.

#### **4.5 Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies**

Much of the debate about quantitative and qualitative methodologies has created an exaggerated image of their differences, reflecting a tendency to treat quantitative and qualitative research as mutually antagonistic ideal types of the research process (Bryman, 1993). In fact many of the distinctions made between the two approaches are not definite. The contrast between quantitative and qualitative research in terms of verification of theory doesn't illustrate a plain division. Often, the relationship between research and theory in both methodologies acts as a continuum; at some parts of the research process theory evolves or is influenced by findings and vice versa. It's common to perceive the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy in terms of



respective commitments to nomothetic and ideographic modes of reasoning. The extent to which investigation within the quantitative approach are nomothetic is often exaggerated. Surveys aren't always based on random samples, and even when they are they remain relevant to a restricted population, (Bryman, 1993). Quantitative and qualitative methodologies aren't as distinct as is sometimes implied.

The research aims should determine the methodology employed. Bryman (1993) suggests that the decision whether to use quantitative or qualitative approaches should be based on 'technical' rather than 'epistemological' arguments. While it's beneficial to contrast quantitative and qualitative methodologies, it is necessary not to create a divergence too extensive between them. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are simply different ways to conduct research; the methodological choice should be determined in terms of their appropriateness in answering particular research questions (Bryman, 1993). The research does not regard quantitative and qualitative methodologies as representing mutually exclusive paradigms. Methodological eclecticism adds strength to the methodology.

In light of the claim that the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methodologies is often exaggerated and considering the needs of the research, combining the two is viable and beneficial. The research demands that micro and macro levels of analysis are combined. Resistance is influenced by individual behaviour, circumstances and personalities thus requiring a micro level of analysis; simultaneously wider structures, such as the national context and culture(s), mediate resistance; macro analysis is also required. The use of different methods enhances the scope of information obtained. Interview, participant observation, documentation analysis and SDQ II data are crossed checked to increase validity. The data is derived from more than one method of investigation. Benefits of combining more than one research technique involve the logic of triangulation (Bryman, 2001). Quantitative and qualitative research may be perceived as different ways of examining the same research issue. By blending the two I may enhance claims of validity if mutual confirmation of results is obtained (Bryman, 1993).

To gain a valid and reliable understanding of how and why certain pupils resist school, while producing results that can be located within a wider contextual framework, a methodology that gains rich information whilst retaining the ability to locate the argument within the societal structure is required. Given this objective a multi-method, multi-site approach, drawing from both quantitative and qualitative techniques is used to provide a comprehensive, holistic analysis of the research contexts (Yin, 1993).

#### **4.6 The 'soft' realist approach**

The philosophical stance of the research embraces a 'soft' realist perspective of reality; this resonates with elements of Marxism (Sayer, 1992) and structuration theory, both of which help inform the research. The choice of philosophy is determined by the theories, disciplines, methodology and nature of research questions.

Arguably, Realism originates from within the positivist/empiricist stance, the world is viewed as existing independently of our knowledge from it. Realists contend the social world is composed of tangible structures, which can generate events. However, realism does not claim that there's an absolute truth, and thus departs from positivism. Our knowledge of the world is perceived as fallible and theory-laden (Sayer, 1992). Like Marxist social science and Critical Theory, realism postulates that to be able to explain and understand social phenomena social science must be critical. For Marxists what constitutes knowledge is its transformatory power (Delanty, 2000). This research is critical and directed towards positive social change.

Realism, like structuration theory allows for a discussion of both agency and structure. Sayer (1992) makes a distinction between abstract and concrete research. In using the metaphor of 'reproduction' for describing social processes, the costs of ignoring powers of agency must be considered. Both abstract and concrete concepts refer to real objects, however not all concrete and abstract objects are empirically observable. Abstraction is particularly important for the identification of structures. Within social structures are particular 'positions' associated with certain roles; a



distinction must be made between the occupant of the position and the position itself. One of the most pervasive illusions derives from the attribution of the properties of the position, to the individual or institution occupying it (Sayer, 1992). Consequently particular people are assumed to determine events and little appreciation is given to the structure of social relations, their associated resources, constraints and rules. The reduction of structures to the individuals who compose them may be viewed responsible for the belief that pupils reject school via conscious free-willed decisions, this explanation fails to incorporate structural elements such as educational policy, labour market conditions, school rules and regulations that shape resistance. Similarly, structure must not be reduced to agency; resistance involves an element of free will (Willis, 1977). Resistance is complex; it requires the use of theories and a philosophical standpoint that accounts for the interaction of both structure and agency.

The reduction of structures to the individuals who compose them leads to the invisibility of structure, common sense thinking thus underestimates the interdependence of positions and the 'fallacy of composition' (Elster, 1978), this assumes that in all cases, what is possible for one individual must be possible for all individuals simultaneously. Realism acknowledges the 'fallacy of composition' and thus has the capacity to explain why education can be both the damnation and the salvation of the same person at different stages in their life, and why education continues to fail certain people regardless of their desires.

Structuration theory and realism compliment each other, both accept the reproduction of social structures, both acknowledge that structures don't reproduce automatically and aren't necessarily intentional, rather people reproduce them.

*'It is common in social science to talk of the 'reproduction' of social structures, but the concept of reproduction is surrounded by traps for the unwary. Social structures do not endure automatically, they only do so where people reproduce them: but, in turn, people do not reproduce them automatically and rarely intentionally.'* (Sayer, 1992; p96).

Social structures have a contingent status; they're historically specific (Sayer, 1992). Structural analysis should not be abandoned; this would give actors' accounts a false privilege. Errors lie not in the use of structural analysis as a mode of abstraction but in using it as if it could provide concrete descriptions on its own (Sayer, 1992).

Realism allows for a multi-strategy approach. Sayer (1992) states that although structures are constituted by internal relations, which must be understood qualitatively, they may in some cases be affected by size or quantities, implying the need for both quantitative and qualitative research. This recognition of qualitative methods represents a move away from the positivist reliance on quantitative methodology.

Realist philosophy acknowledges the significance of context and interaction, the production of knowledge is perceived as a social activity (Sayer, 1992). Communication is a central part of social interaction. Language is acquired through socialisation and therefore can only come into existence via a social context, thus objective data can be captured by methods sensitive to the participants and their context. This research dictates the need for ethnography; a naturalistic inquiry that takes full consideration of the context and supports a 'soft' realist approach.

The new realism in social science is anti-positivist and post-empiricist (Delanty, 2000), wanting to hold on to the possibility of naturalism. Realism defends the possibility of causal explanation but accepts the hermeneutic notion of social reality as being communicatively constructed and involves a critical dimension (Delanty, 2000).

The 'soft' realist views knowledge as the outcome of social interaction, it supports an emancipatory critique and rejection of correspondence of truth (Delanty, 2000). This research adopts the position that an objective reality exists within social interaction; while reality is constantly being constructed and reconstructed.



#### 4.7 Methodology and data collection

The ethnographic format was used. Intense observations in the classroom and playground area were completed. Each pupil was shadowed for a day; detailed observations were conducted in pupils' favourite and least favourite lessons and during school outings and college placements/programs where relevant. Forty-three recorded semi-structured interviews with pupils, classroom teachers, heads of year, members of senior management, counsellors and learning mentors were conducted, together with many informal discussions. Documents detailing the schools ethos; mission statement; rules; reward and punishment systems; and pupil attendance history and academic ability were collected and analysed. The SDQ II is used in addition to observation and interview data to investigate pupils' emotional stability and self-concept.

#### 4.8 Ethnography

Ethnography and participant observation immerse the researcher in the social setting for some time to observe and listen with a view to gaining an appreciation of the culture of a social group (Bryman, 2001). Understanding the 'cultural' is required in this research to gain a detailed view of resistance.

Ethnography is a process and a product. Ethnography combines research design; fieldwork and various methods of inquiry to produce historically, politically and personally situated accounts, descriptions, interpretations and representations of human lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

*'Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place the specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context.'* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; p455).

A key assumption of ethnography is that by entering into close and prolonged interaction with people in their everyday lives, ethnographers can better understand the beliefs, motives and behaviours of their participants (Hammersley, 1992). The research demands the investigation of the participants' perspective; the use of ethnography is dictated by the nature of my interest in 'the cultural'. It's necessary to obtain intimate information to gain full appreciation of what resistance entails

and why it occurs. The use of ethnography is advocated when investigating sensitive and ambiguous issues (Walker, 1988). Walker believes it necessary to gain 'backstage' information; the researcher should be present when the group being investigated is on its own territory and engaged in its own preferred practices (Walker, 1988). Participant observation and the ethnography are suited due to their sensitivity to meanings and values and ability to represent and interpret symbolic articulations and practices (Willis, 1977). Given the contradictory and complex nature of resistance, investigation requires a sensitive approach, which reveals hidden meanings of actions, behaviour and attitudes, reaffirming the rationale for the conduct of a naturalistic inquiry.

Naturalistic and ethnographic research methodologies are appropriate to this research. The belief that social research should be conducted in natural real world settings with as little intrusiveness as possible is adhered to (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). To fully understand resistance this research includes thick descriptions of contextualised behaviour. Resistance is examined through the eyes of the resisters to gain a valid account.

The ethnography includes participant observation, semi-structured, unstructured and pupil group interviews and informal discussions to generate an in-depth account of the resisters and their daily lives. Being an overt ethnographer/observer counteracts the ethical dilemma covert researchers entail; all participants were (eventually) made aware of their involvement and purpose of the investigation. A covert operation may have revealed resistance in a more natural form, but it would be unethical and unnecessary, as overt entry into the field was possible.

Qualitative interviewing is a broad term that describes a wide range of interviewing styles (Bryman, 2001). Semi-structured and unstructured interviews where the researcher provides minimal guidance and allows considerable latitude for interviewees were conducted (Appendix 1). Interviews with pupils were not just a one-visit episode; subsequently more of a processual as opposed to static account of resistance is obtained. 'Rambling' is deemed interesting in the unstructured interview as it may reveal a matter of importance to the participant (Bryman, 1993).



To gain insight into the resister's perspective, the unstructured approach, which allows the participant to enlighten the researcher, is considered beneficial.

Unstructured interviewing is frequently used as an adjunct to participant observation (though it is often employed on its own too). One of the strengths of participant observation is that it is often not simply a single method; rather it embraces many different ways of gathering data (Bryman, 1993). The benefit of this approach involves its capability to surface differences among participants and contradictions within and between their replies. The merit of the multi-method approach allows inferences drawn from one data source to be collaborated by another, thus allowing cross-verification among findings.

Group discussions or focus groups are finding increasing favour (Woods, 1979; Griffin, 1985). Essentially it is a form of unstructured interview with more than one subject (Bryman, 1993). Pupil group discussions were conducted in groups of two to six; some were recorded. Group discussions allowed for the examination of how resistance was perceived via group membership. Problems associated with utilising group discussions are acknowledged. The influence of other group members involved with the discussion sometimes overpowered and influenced the voice of other pupils. Difficulty in gathering all concerned members together at the same time was sometimes problematic. Teachers and pupils have other priorities to attend to. Given the nature of the participants (disaffected youth), there were occasions where they were absent from school, thus altering the dynamics of the group and influencing the data. Group discussions usually occurred under unplanned circumstances, when it was convenient for pupils to meet together, or after a significant event had occurred.

All interview data is transcribed and displayed as it was said. The accent and dialect of the pupils', teachers' and researcher's speech is incorporated into the transcriptions to give the reader a more precise picture of the researcher and participants' characteristics, as both are important in this methodology. Typically, ethnographic and interview information is written up incorporating the pupils' accent and dialect, but does not include the teachers' or the researcher's (Willis, 1977;

Walker, 1988). In an attempt to portray the cultural facets of the researched and researcher, all such data includes the accent and dialect of the researched and researcher, to mediate the effect of the pupils appearing more working-class than the teachers and researcher. By including the accent, dialect, hesitations and incorrect grammar spoken by all parties, a more evenly balanced power relationship and accurate image of the relations between the pupils and teachers, and participants and researcher is achieved.

Fieldwork was conducted in each school for approximately three months, thus the research is composed of three 'compressed ethnographies' (Walford and Miller, 1991; Walford, 2004). Given the time scale warranted for the fieldwork, the condensed, intense ethnographic format was required. Two schools in Birmingham are investigated to identify how the workings of individual schools, their ethos, physical structure and locality influence the behaviour and attitudes of individuals within them. Research in the third school revealed how schools that are located in the same city, that operate under similar conditions can still have peculiarities concerning their school rules, discipline and reward systems that influence patterns of resistance. The data gathering stage was an intensive and sometimes exhausting experience. I spent up to five school days each week over a period of months in school and promptly wrote up my fieldnotes (Appendix 2).

Critical ethnography (Carspecken and Apple, 1992; Carspecken, 1996), an emerging branch of ethnography that resonates with the critical paradigm is predominantly utilised. Reasons for this include the intention to serve the interests of the pupils. I felt compelled to conduct research that may better the lives of the pupils. The research concerns issues of power, domination, voice and empowerment. This framework accepts that forms of oppression must be considered together, allowing for the web of ethnicity, gender, class and societal context to be investigated. My research is critical; it takes a Marxian approach through to the analysis. It is concerned with social inequalities; this investigation offers insight into why education leads to success and upward mobility for some and continued disadvantage for others. The research is directed towards positive social change, factors concerning pupils considered 'at risk' are identified,



consequently contributing to the development of policy that can help pupils gain a more fulfilling experience at school.

Carspecken's (1996) five-stage critical ethnography is used as a template to help structure the ethnography. Although I followed this format to an extent, some procedures differed due to the nature of my research. Carspecken (1996) advocates that during the first stage of the fieldwork when compiling the primary record, intensive non-participant observations should be conducted. At this stage the research is 'monological' in nature because the third person position is adopted; describing from the perspective of an uninvolved observer. I conducted observations in the classroom and playground and interacted with pupils and teachers during the initial stages of the research. A focus on gaining rapport with the pupils was especially important during the early stages of the fieldwork given the aim to gain an understanding of resistance from their perspective. The level of participation increased throughout the research.

The 'preliminary reconstructive analysis' stage involves an initial analysis of the primary record. The primary record compiled from the first observations; interaction patterns, their meaning, power relations, roles, interactive sequences, evidence of embodied meaning and intersubjective structures are evaluated. This is 'reconstructive' because it takes conditions of actions constructed by the participants on nondiscursive levels of awareness and reconstructs them linguistically. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, flexibility permitted preliminary analysis to occur alongside the data collection and informed how the fieldwork was conducted to some extent thereafter.

Rather than having a third set stage that Carspecken names 'dialogical data generation' whereby the researcher begins to converse intensively with the participants, information was generated via interacting with participants from day one of the fieldwork. I too in parallel to Carspecken's five-stage ethnography gained information *with* the participants, but this was done throughout. Preliminary understandings concerning whether teacher and pupil perceptions correlate, if tension between pupils' home and school life is related to their behaviour within

school and whether different social groups' resistant responses correlate in Birmingham and Sydney began to reveal themselves. New and unanticipated themes emerge when such a flexible, open methodology is adopted, for example, I started to realise that the actual physical structure of the school impacted upon the schools' formal rules and pupils' behaviour.

Carspecken advocates the need to use analytic procedures that help identify how individual micro level behaviour is related to macro structures. The analysis involved stage four of Carspeckens design 'discovering system relations' whereby relationships between the sites studied and other specific social sites within the immediate locality bearing some relation to it are examined. The communities that the schools are located within are evaluated. During stage five 'using system relations', findings are examined with reference to broader societal features. The national in addition to the local structures are looked at to help explain resistance and what the implications are for Sydney and Birmingham. This analytic framework helps develop understandings of how different societal and cultural settings influence resistance. The macro and micro are analysed.

#### **4.9 Self-description questionnaire II**

Researchers have increasingly given consideration to self-concept as a significant educational variable during the last thirty years (Burns, 1979; Marsh, Smith and Barnes, 1983). Self-concept is viewed as an important product of one's educational experience and is believed to be a medium that serves to improve other positive outcomes such as academic achievement (Shavelson and Bolus, 1982; Marsh, Smith, Barnes, 1983; Wylie, 1979). However, defining and measuring self-concept is difficult. Self-concept definitions are often inaccurate and few of the more commonly used instruments have been sufficiently validated (Marsh, Smith and Barnes, 1983). An implicit assumption of most theorists is that self-concept is multifaceted (Marsh, Relich and Smith, 1983), one may have a strong sense of self-concept when confronted with non-academic areas of their life such as how one rates their appearance but may simultaneously have a poor self rating concerning academic skills. Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) reviewed existing research and self-concept instruments and developed a multifaceted, hierarchical model of



self-concept. Shavelson et al (1976) stated that self-concept, in general terms, is one's perceptions of self and that these insights derive from interactions with significant others, self-attributions and general experiential features of the social environment. They claim that self-concept is thus multidimensional and hierarchically organised; perceptions of self alter from broad inferences to narrow ones. Shavelson et al (1976) multifaceted, hierarchical model of self-concept is used as a basis for the Self Description Questionnaire II (SDQ II) (Marsh, 1990).

The SDQ II was selected from a number of self-concept measuring instruments. The SDQ II has been used and refined since the 1980's (Ireson, Hallam and Plewis, 2001). It is a well utilised credible measurement of self-concept; the validity and reliability of the scales have been established (Marsh, 1990). The facets and organisation of self-concept were investigated as a prerequisite to the development of the SDQ II; factor analysis has been conducted to test if teachers and pupils measure the same construct; investigations concerning the relationships between specific facets of self-reported self-concept and other constructs (such as academic achievement and inferred self-concepts based on ratings by significant others such as teachers) and on the effects of interventions designed to alter self-concept have been rigorously carried out and evaluated, contributing to the refinement and development of the SDQ II. The SDQ II is a multidimensional self-concept scale that measures academic and general facets of the self-concept, thus providing an overall balanced self-concept total score. The SDQ II contains several scales, Reading, Mathematics, General School, Physical Abilities, Physical Appearance, Peer Relations (divided into same sex and opposite sex relations), Parent Relations, Emotional Stability, Honesty – Trustworthiness and a General Self scale. The SDQ II has 102 items divided into three areas of academic self-concept, seven areas of non-academic self-concept, and general self-concept derived from the Rosenberg (1965, 1979) self-esteem scale. The eleven scales sum to form a Total Self-Concept score, which reflects an adolescent's self-rating of their self-concept drawing upon various facets of the self-concept construct (Marsh, 1990).

The SDQ II is designed to measure self-concept for ages eleven to fifteen. Pupils are asked to respond to declarative sentences with one of six responses: False;

Mostly False; More False Than True; More True Than False; Mostly True or True. Each of the facet scores is established via the pupil's self-ratings on 8-10 items, half of which are negatively worded with the aim of mediating a positive response bias, (Appendix 3).

The SDQ II can be administered either individually or in groups. No special training is required to administer the questionnaire (Marsh, 1990). Separate questionnaires are administered to males and females since responses vary according to sex; the norms are worked out separately according to sex. I administered the SDQ II individually. Although this is a timely procedure it allowed pupils privacy to respond honestly and without distraction or influence from other pupils. It enabled me to read each item out and help explain items that caused confusion. One of the problems with the SDQ II was that some pupils found it difficult to understand some items and responded negatively when they intended to respond positively and vice versa. Some had issues answering the items that had the term 'parents' in them, since they had a positive relationship with one parent and a negative relationship with the other. One pupil crossed out the 's' transforming the term 'parents' into 'parent' and answered all parent relation questions with only her father in mind, since she had a negative relationship with her mother and a relatively strong one with her father. Administering the SDQ II individually helped mediate these issues and allowed for time to assist the pupils with their responses. The majority of pupils found some of the items repetitive, boring and daft. The SDQ II took approximately twenty to thirty minutes to administer with each pupil. Once I'd gained the pupils trust it was easier to convince the pupils to complete them. Only one out of the twenty-two pupils initially refused to complete the SDQ II, but he later agreed to complete it. I think some pupils marked one of the two extreme responses to quicken the procedure; some did get bored and needed breathers while answering the items, and some marked more than one response or missed items. Administering the SDQ II to delinquent youths is difficult; many hated reading and writing in lessons let alone completing the SDQ II on a voluntary basis. Completing the SDQ II took concentration and time, thus I had to introduce the SDQ II during the later stages of the fieldwork once I'd managed to gain rapport with the pupils.



When interpreting the results of the SDQ II, one must acknowledge that a pupil may have a self-perspective that is unrealistic and fails to correspond to objective information, thus pupils may respond negatively when asked about their mathematical ability and yet have a positive mathematics self-concept in reality. Secondly, interpretations of the SDQ II are based on the assumption that the pupils are responding honestly.

Individual scale raw scores were used to calculate the Total Self-Concept raw score using the SDQ II scoring and profile booklet and manual (Marsh, 1990). The raw scores were then converted into percentiles and T-scores using the T-score profile (Marsh, 1990). The pupils' relative position in the standardisation sample can be identified when raw scores are converted to percentiles. The use of T-scores makes possible the construction of a profile for each pupil. When raw scores are transformed into T-scores, the resulting scores are comparable on the basis of standard deviation units (Marsh, 1990). In general, a high scale score indicates that the respondent has a positive self-perspective in that area, where as a low score indicates a negative self-perspective.

Although there are no absolute cut off points that define high and low self-concept, T-scores of 50 or above represent above average self-concept (Marsh, 1990). The SDQ II enabled each pupil's self-concept rating to be scored for each (academic, non-academic and general) facet. Thus a range of self-concepts for each pupil is obtained in a range of areas. The Total Self-Concept is calculated and this is the score predominantly drawn upon throughout this study, since the SDQ was used as an additional tool to measure the emotional aspect of pupils' character and behaviours. The SDQ II therefore supports the interview and observational data gathered via the ethnography to serve for validity purposes.

Marsh (1990) doesn't encourage users of the SDQ II to emphasis the Total Self-Concept score, rather the specific facets of the self-concept are to be utilised. The Total Self-Concept score represents the sum of the eleven individual scales, thus it is an aggregate of the many distinct facets of self-concept and is therefore

interpreted with caution. However, given the aims of this research the SDQ II was used in addition to the ethnography and was therefore utilised and interpreted as supplementary to the ethnography, not instead of.

Furthermore in this investigation the SDQ II was not used in a large-scale quantitative study. The focus of this research isn't to distinguish between different facets of self-concept. The sample of twenty-two (including 12 girls and 10 lads) didn't constitute a large enough sample to conduct factor analysis to derive factor scores, rather the results of the hand scored scales are used; this is viewed as sufficient considering the aims of the research and predominant qualitative methodology adopted.

#### **4.10 Gaining access**

Each school was carefully selected. All secondary schools under Birmingham LEA control were evaluated. The initial criteria for selecting a school included mixed sex, community comprehensives that catered for eleven to sixteen year olds located in deprived, urban settings. Schools with no religious foundations and ones with an ethnicity make-up that roughly reflected that of the city were chosen. In Birmingham, schools that had a GCSE performance rate lower than the Birmingham LEA average and had a comparatively high rate of unauthorised absence were selected. Six schools that fitted these criteria were identified. The LEA gave permission to conduct the research providing the school Head granted access. Each of the six schools were contacted via a letter and follow-up phone calls to the Head. This proved a lengthily process that required endurance. After finally communicating with the Heads of each school, five out of the six decided not to take part in the investigation for a variety of reasons. One school already had another research investigation underway and felt that the school was already 'doing its part' while others gave more general refusals such as 'we can't help you at the moment'. I finally gained access to the Drillands High School through perseverance and 'name dropping'. I knew one of the teachers in this school via my work on the CCVYP a few years previous, this I'm sure helped ease my access.



Gaining access to a school in Sydney occurred via a different process. Information regarding each school is not so readily available in NSW as it is in England, consequently I needed to seek outside guidance to help identify and secure access to a school. I needed to affiliate myself with a near-by university for practical reasons and to meet the criteria needed to pass the NSW ethics committee approval. Dr Geoff Munns from the University of Western Sydney offered me guidance and support throughout my time in Sydney. I was affiliated with the University of Western Sydney throughout my Australian fieldwork. The New South Wales Department of Education and Training require all external agencies conducting research in NSW Government schools to go through a stringent ethics approval procedure. All doctorates sought from state office must go through the State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP). A proposed outline of the intended research; documentation of ethics approval from Aston University and the University of Western Sydney; interview questions, questionnaires, letter to principals, letters for distribution to all participants and their primary care givers; a list of schools that were to be invited to take part and two referee reports needed to be sent and approved by the committee before I even attempted to approach schools.

I familiarised Geoff Munns with the school selection criteria before my arrival in Sydney. Geoff helped me identify and gain access to the second school; The Spotsworth High School.

Since all six schools that met the desired criteria for schools in Birmingham had already been approached, when looking for my third school, I searched through the LEA league table information again. I found a school that met all the criteria that the Drillands High did except its unauthorised absence rate was slightly lower. Furthermore I'd worked with the Learning Mentor that worked there during my time working on the CCVYP. I sounded out the possibility of conducting research in this school before I went to Australia and was told by the Learning Mentor to contact him once I'd returned. Access was gained at Lodgelands Comprehensive initially via my contact and then approved through a meeting with the head of year ten and indirectly approved via the head. Gaining access to this school took longer

than anticipated, and fieldwork occurred during year ten examination time. Fieldwork was prolonged and ran over preliminary timeline plans. Research began in May, stopped in July and began again in September due to the summer holiday. This was problematic; I had to build up relationships with staff and pupils again after the six-week break, which was time consuming and frustrating. Few research projects have occurred during this transition time, especially ethnographies that have been conducted over a relatively short period of time. I investigated pupils who were going through a number of transitions. Year elevens had left, making the school feel more empty and relaxed after the GCSE examination chaos. Year tens (the year I investigated) found themselves the most senior year and they too had added examination pressures placed upon them. Year ten exams occurred during my fieldwork, all of which influenced the behaviour, attitude and actions of the pupils and teachers. The group of pupils selected were followed through to their year eleven status.

In the two previous schools, research was conducted during the beginning of the academic term. Research was conducted in the Drillands High School (in Birmingham) from October to December 2002. NSW have their summer vacation during December and January (since these constitute their summer months) and fieldwork in the Spotsworth High School (in Sydney) occurred during February to April 2003. Lodgelands Comprehensive (in Birmingham) School was investigated during the end of its annual academic term 2002/2003 through to the start of the 2003/2004 term. Research was conducted from May 2003 to November 2003 (with the summer vacation in-between). Thus different sets of circumstances that correspond to different times in the school term were investigated and analysed in terms of how they influenced participant's behaviour.

After access had been agreed a facilitator was appointed to help with the practicalities of the research. These facilitators helped to identify the pupils I investigated. I asked for a group of six to ten pupils who consisted of males and females from White and ethnic minority backgrounds. The most important criteria were that they were resisting school in some way and were identified as not being able to cope with school life. Pupils selected needed to feel at ease with me



hanging around. This broad criterion captured a range of resisters allowing me to study an array of resistant behaviours and cultures. In all schools pupils were identified for a number of different, sometimes interacting reasons, including low attendance records, low academic achievement, low self-esteem, disruptive behaviour and negative attitudes towards school and education in general. The consequences of selecting pupils in this way meant that the overall sample didn't represent the wider city population. Of the twenty-two pupils, twelve were female, ten male; ten were British Anglo-White, four Australian Anglo-White; two Jamaicans; one Lebanese pupil; one Vietnamese; two New Zealanders, one who came from the Cook Islands and one whose mother was Aboriginal and father Anglo-White formed the group. Although the Sydney school selected a varied ethnic and national make-up, seven of the ten pupils were female. In each of the Birmingham schools, five out of the six were British Anglo-White and only one Jamaican. There were no Asians in the Birmingham selections of pupils despite the significant numbers of Asians in the country, city and each school. Although the samples don't exactly reflect the city's cultural populations, every effort was made to match each school's cultural composition to that of the city. Also the most important criteria for selection wasn't the pupils ethnic or national background, but that they were resisting school in some way.

#### **4.11 Taking sides**

Before entering the field a decision as to whose side I *was* on (Becker, 1967) or rather *appeared* to be on (Mac an Ghaill, 1991; p116) needed to be made. Questions such as what role(s) I'd adopt and how I should respond and behave with pupils and teachers needed to be thought through.

Relationships between myself and the teachers and myself and the pupils needed to be built simultaneously. The pupils' side was predominantly taken in the hope that further insight into pupil resistance would be gained. Taking the pupils' side has implications for the role(s) adopted in the field.

Different ethnographers have adopted different positions within the field depending upon their research aims, their personal experiences and dispositions. Some

researchers working in this tradition adopt the role of teacher (Hargreaves, 1967; Mac an Ghaill, 1988). Others try to minimize the power differential status and adopt roles such as 'adult helper' (Skelton, 2000). I, like Corrigan (1979) and Walker (1988) felt it would be impossible to gain valid information from the pupils should I adopt a teacher role. Given the purpose of the research and my lack of experience as a teacher I needed to adopt an alternative non-threatening role.

I attempted to distinguish myself from teaching staff, to gain trust from pupils and acquire access to certain sorts of information. Dressing informally and sitting down on the yard floor with pupils playing cards during recess are just some of the ways I tried to differentiate myself from teachers. Over identification with teachers invariably threatens the complex relationship between the researcher and the pupils, given the differential status and distance between the teachers and pupils (Munns, 1996). Nevertheless the importance of being accepted by teachers is also key to gain access and teacher insight. I therefore had to build and maintain rapport with both teachers and pupils.

Walker (1988) discusses how staff readily accepted him due to his previous experiences as a teacher; it enabled the staff to place and relate to him. During his fieldwork he remained a 'researcher'. Walker thus describes his role as an 'experienced outsider', while he could fit reasonably well into staffroom situations and discussions due to his past experience, he also remained an outsider due to his status as a 'researcher'. Other ethnographers have described how their previous experiences as a teacher are of major importance when trying to gain access and become accepted in the school (Walford, 2004). I sometimes found staff room situations awkward, having no previous teaching experiences to draw upon. Furthermore I wanted to avoid being asked tricky questions by teachers, such as how pupils behaved in other classes, given that I'd told pupils that no unruly behaviour would get back to the teachers. My lack of experience as a teacher and researcher together with the aim of the research made me feel uneasy in certain situations. The main difficulty wasn't deciding whose side I *was* on (Becker 1967) but rather whose side I *appeared* to be on (Mac an Ghaill, 1991: p116).



Interviewing the teachers was left to the later stages of the fieldwork. It was important to show pupils that it was chiefly their perspective I was interested in, so chatting to, let alone setting up interviews with teachers was a sometimes difficult feat to achieve. The following vignette taken from field notes in Sydney demonstrates this predicament.



This vignette demonstrates the difficulty I experienced when attempting to converse with teachers while being overheard by pupils. Talking and being seen to talk with teachers became less of a threat to pupils once I'd spent significant time with them and listened to their side of the story.

Other ethnographers in this tradition have experienced similar dilemmas (Jones, 1986; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Lappalainen, 2002; Walford, 2004). Researchers who take on teaching responsibilities to help gain access and become part of the school (Walker 1988) may threaten opportunities to gain real-life pupil accounts. Where researchers have joined pupils for regular lessons over a period of time and have befriended pupils (Jones, 1986), conflict over allegiances may occur (Munns, 1996).

While trust is needed to observe defiant behaviour and collect intimate details concerning the pupils' lives the researcher shouldn't identify too intimately with

participants since objectivity becomes threatened (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The boundary of trust and rapport should be delicately balanced; accomplishing a certain level of attachment and involvement with participants is desirable although maintaining an appropriate analytical space or separation is simultaneously needed (Woods, 1996). The degree of connection between the pupils and myself was greater compared to my relations with teachers. Gaining equal insight from teachers and pupils would have been problematic since I wanted to acquire the pupil's perspective. Some pupils pushed the boundaries and tested my vigilance to remain impartial. The differential range of knowledge I gained, attaining more detailed information from pupils in comparison to teachers, meant I had to be careful not to over sympathise with pupils. A balanced account had to be retained.

Lappalainen (2002) discusses the methodological and ethical challenges she faced while working as a novice researcher between teachers and children in a pre-school context. She discusses the dilemmas she encountered while adopting a 'least adult role' (Lappalainen, 2002: p64). This role involved giving up her adult-based authority in an attempt to distinguish herself from teachers. This she believed would help her gain a more detailed and valid insight into the children's viewpoint. She discusses the emotional upheaval she experienced when incidents of violence occurred between children. Given her past experience as a teacher she explains how she struggled to displace herself from teacher mode. As a teacher she would have known how to react and deal with such incidents but as a researcher adopting a 'least adult role' she felt powerless to intervene due to her lack of authority that would have been naturally assigned to her previous role as a teacher. She discusses experiencing confusion over how a researcher should deal with such situations. I also experienced episodes of violence during the fieldwork. My experiences differed, Lappalainen explains how her experiences of being a teacher made it difficult for her to leave teacher mode and act accordingly. As a young, novice ethnographer I had no such preconceptions on how to react when confronted with situations that teachers would normally forbid. Furthermore I was a young ethnographer researching teenagers. This influenced the rapport I gained and the interaction I experienced with the teachers and pupils. I experienced the transaction



of moving into this 'least adult role' differently. Although I experienced times of helplessness and discomfort, I had no previous knowledge of how to deal with situations (as a teacher or as a researcher). My naivety and age enabled pupils to relax and trust me more readily.

There were instances where pupils broke school rules that could have led to dire consequences. I witnessed pupils truant, thief, damage school property, take illegal substances and even ask me to participate. As a novice ethnographer such instances were difficult to deal with. Each situation was different and required immediate decision-making skills. Boundaries between the researcher and the researched had to be set and maintained. The boundaries did shift; they differed according to the participant's personality, dispositions, behaviour and position within the school. Furthermore the trust relationship fluctuated in intensity between the same participant and myself; feelings of trust and the detail of intimate information revealed varied depending upon the participants' mood, the event(s) of that day and the amount of time I had spent with that person. I struck a bargain with the pupils, it was made clear to the pupils that I would not volunteer information to teachers, but I wouldn't be used as an excuse. I wouldn't telltale if they agreed not to use me to justify their rule-breaking behaviour to teachers if caught. The majority of pupils respected these boundaries. Setting such boundaries is important otherwise I could've found myself in all sorts of undesirable predicaments. On one occasion I witnessed a lad kick and bash a school vending machine during break-time, although present I physically separated myself from the location of the incident to show I didn't legitimate the behaviour. I didn't segregate myself to the extent that I couldn't resume with this pupil after the incident had occurred. I sat outside on the school-step with my back turned, once the incident had finished I said nothing concerning the event to either the pupil or the teachers but continued to spend the remainder of break with the pupil, talking as we would normally. I continued to look at his break-time activities. Fortunately no teacher questioned my or the lad's involvement concerning this event, if I had been questioned I'm uncertain what my response would have been.

Questions concerning the pupils' welfare arose. Some informed me about illegal activities such as joyriding and their drug using habits. Upon discussions with teachers who had the most dealings with such kids it was clear that they already knew the situation. Staff would corroborate such information confirming validity while reassuring me that I had no need to tell teachers information they already knew. I witnessed pupils take illegal substances on school premises, while this initially shocked me and made me question whether I should inform teachers for the sake of the child's wellbeing I later came to learn that teachers already knew which kids came to lessons stoned.

#### **4.12 Describing myself to pupils**

The initial encounter is essential to the facilitation and maintaining of relationships with pupils (Mac an Ghaill, 1991). Pupils were given an explanation, concerning the research purpose and what was required from them should they choose to consent. It was emphasised that anything they did or said whilst in my presence wouldn't get back to the teachers, an issue that needed instant clarification if I was to gain their trust. Pupils wanted to know if I truly wouldn't inform teachers if they broke school rules while in my presence. Once pupils' understood I would not telltale, word quickly got around that they could trust me.

Most pupils enjoyed informing me about their lives at school. Others asked why I wouldn't let them show me around, they wanted to be a part of the study, giving those few that were selected a feeling of privilege, as I was interested in their point of view. Some pupils consequently put on a show for my benefit. There were occasions where pupils would purposely act unruly in my presence with the hope that I'd notice them and ask them to participate. As the 'honeymoon' period passed this became less of an issue.

Like Corrigan (1979) in his study *'Schooling the Smash Street Kids'* I described myself as a 'writer', that was interested in what school life was like for them. Pupils didn't understand the term 'researcher'. Nevertheless they quickly gave me their own label, they helped position me within the school. In the inner-city Birmingham school I was initially known as the 'follower', given that I followed



certain pupils around. Some described me as a 'leech', a person who latched onto people and sucked information from them. As time passed I'd progressed to being named 'Lisa'. In the school in Sydney pupils referred to me as 'writer' or 'visitor' given the badge I had to display. Some named me 'Lisa' but others continued to call me 'miss' despite my constant reminder that my preference was 'Lisa' a difficulty also experienced by Lappalainen (2002). The following extract from my field notes shows how my role was sometimes confusing to pupils, and illustrates how boundaries between the researched and the researcher can become blurred.



The need to gain the pupils' trust dictated that I interview teachers after I'd spent considerable time with the pupils, that I conducted the SDQ II with them and introduced the dictaphone during the later stages of the fieldwork. In an attempt to deal with reservations made concerning the feasibility of taking the participants' perspective (Bryman, 1993), given the gendered and cultural differences, I developed thorough reflexivity accounts. I kept detailed records about how my presence and dispositions influenced pupil and teacher behaviour. This information was logged and reflected upon during analysis.

The researcher is an essential part of the research process (Walford, 1991). The reflexivity and interpretation skills of the researcher are especially prominent in qualitative methodologies. Good practice demands the qualitative researcher to record their feelings, emotions, reflections and impact on the research. Given the personal quality of the research there is a danger that the researcher may 'go native', whereby one accommodates to the viewpoint and valuation of the people on site, (Stake, 1995).

Pupils were allowed to read field notes that referred to them. Although this carried the risk of them influencing the data collected, like Carspecken (1996) I believe that gaining data with participants and encouraging feedback facilitated validity. Providing the researcher has spent adequate time in the field and has gained enough knowledge about the participants, encouraging feedback is positive. I could tell whether participants were trying to mould data to fit more socially desirable responses or change data because I'd misinterpreted it. By allowing the researched the chance to see what was being written about them the necessary trust between the pupils and myself blossomed. The feedback and verification also served to check interpretation was accurate thus gaining internal validation.

The data gathered from pupils was influenced by the knowledge of their position in the research; there is evidence of this in Walkers' *Louts and Legends* (1988) (Munns, 1996) and Willis' *LTL* study (1977). This can be seen in the following taken from an observation conducted in a geography lesson in the school in Sydney.



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Such instances occurred less as my time in the field progressed, once boundaries between the researcher and the researched became clear and my presence less of a novelty. Such difficulties may be appeased providing the researcher has spent adequate time in the field to get past the ‘honeymoon’ period, become a familiar face and is able to recognise when behaviour is being influenced. I documented the effect of my presence and developed a detailed reflexivity account.

#### **4.13 Describing myself to teachers**

Not all teachers were fully aware of the purpose of my presence, despite the teacher information sheet I provided to distribute to teachers. The ‘Assistant or Observer’

example indicates this. In retrospect perhaps I should have pushed for an initial meeting with teachers. How I presented myself to teachers varied from one situation to the next and from one teacher to another, it depended on whether the pupils were present and whether the teacher was popular. My relationship with teachers in general varied from one school to the next, I found relations improved as my confidence as an ethnographer grew. Interactions in the third school were more intimate than in the previous two, this may be attributed to the teachers' higher level of interest in their pupils or it may be explained in terms of my heightened confidence and greater experience that facilitated how I responded and gained information. This initial ignorance caused a number of complications during the early stages of the fieldwork (Russell, 2005). Teachers introduced me as 'visitor' and highlighted how pupils should behave when a 'visitor' is present. Some teachers saw me with disruptive pupils and consequently assumed I was there to mediate their behaviour. Thus when I failed to intervene with troublemaking behaviour I was sometimes frowned upon causing friction and confusion, as the following extract taken from field notes in Sydney illustrates.



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This illustrates one of the more harrowing predicaments I faced when trying to gain trust from pupils and attempt to show respect to teachers. Whose side I *appeared* to be on differed from one situation to the next depending upon whom I was with (Russell, 2005). Balancing this trust relationship is a delicate affair that has consequences concerning the methodology. In some circumstances like the predicament described above, the taking of field notes deemed inappropriate was completed later.

#### **4.14 The researcher's dispositions**

Ethnographic research is of a very personal nature, thus the personality and personal dispositions of the researcher become an important element. (Stapleton, 1984). My gender, nationality, use of language, size and age influenced how pupils and teachers related and interacted with me. I'm a White, female, novice ethnographer. My age (twenty-three/four at the time of fieldwork), smallness in

height and build influenced how pupils and teachers interacted with me. My Northern Lancashire accent created curiosity among participants in Sydney and Birmingham. I have experiences working with disaffected youth working as a mentor and facilitator of pastoral programmes. Unlike other researchers (Mac an Ghaill, 1989; Walker, 1988) I had no previous experience as a teacher or a researcher. My relative naivety concerning the practicalities involved in conducting research that aims to understand the world of the pupils and researchers, meant that I experienced particular issues and dilemmas while attempting to balance the trust relationship between the researched (the pupils and teachers) and myself (Russell, 2005). In particular I didn't find myself 'fighting familiarity' (Delamont and Atkinson, 1995), in the sense of facing situations with a teacher mind-set. In some ways my novice naivety acted as a benefit when trying to manage the impulsive and sometimes shocking behaviour of pupils.

There are numerous cases of gender impacting on research documented (Meyenn, 1979; Oakley, 1981; Troman, 2000). Female fieldworkers are thought by some to have greater sensitivity and emotional communication tendencies, thus contributing to their non-threatening presence and gaining access to certain information (Troman, 2000). Being female is thought to be advantageous when investigating other females and female issues, such as motherhood experiences (Oakley, 1979). Being female did influence this research. Unlike Meyenn (1979), in his study of white girls' peer groups, it was acceptable for me to enter the female toilets, a site where girls frequently gathered to smoke, chat and guard for threat of teachers entering. Many females discussed their peers, family and boyfriends freely in my presence. Females may have discussed intimate issues more readily due to my gender, but my age also contributed to the participants feeling comfortable when discussing intimate secrets. Although I was denied access to certain significant sites such as the males' toilets, males still shared areas of their private lives with me. Some discussed their home lives; others mentioned their sexual behaviour. I sometimes felt as though they did this in an attempt to emphasize their macho bravado for my benefit rather than to simply share their thoughts and feelings. Given our relative closeness in age some males felt they should impress me by informing me how they engaged in adult activities. The pupils sexuality and mine



influenced the pupils behaviour and data collected. Some males experienced ridicule due to my presence; classmates would infer that I was their girlfriend. Some males would flirt with me and embellish the idea of sexual innuendo. One male joked about our being alone during interviews. Some females laughed at the boys' attempts at chatting me up. Such instances were an effect of my age, sexuality and attempt to fit in with the teenagers.

My age helped me engage in and indeed understand discussions. The fact that I was younger than most of the teaching staff smoothed the process of me differentiating myself from teachers and helped pupils identify with me, males and females would initiate conversation about various topics such as their preferred choice of music and assume I was knowledgeable and indeed interested in their social world.

Language acted as a barrier in some instances, especially during fieldwork in Sydney. Pupils spoke Tongan, Samoan, and Arabic frequently amongst friends and sometimes with the intent to exclude teachers from their discussion. My level of understanding influenced the depth of insight into the data collected.

Meyenn (1979) describes how being an Australian researcher in an English school acted as a stimulating mechanism that facilitated participants' inquisitiveness and interest in him. Likewise I found that being English in an Australian school acted as a source of excitement and curiosity facilitating the relationship. Pupils and teachers asked questions expressing interest to learn about England. In Sydney many pupils would try and mimic an English speaking voice (sounding more like Mary Poppins than myself). Others asked me if I had seen David Beckham or had ever eaten cucumber sandwiches with the Queen. This helped to promote initial conversation and break down social barriers.

My northern Lancashire accent acted in a similar way in the Birmingham schools. I described myself as coming from north of Manchester; most participants had heard of Manchester. Pupils would try to mimic my accent and ask if I had ever been to Moss Side, an area that has been highlighted by the media concerning its high criminal activities and reputation. To these kids Manchester seemed a distant place.

Pupils and teachers would ask questions concerning where I was from thus facilitating conversations between the participants and myself. Troman (2000) explores the benefits of the researcher entering the field as a 'stranger', stating that participants sometimes found it difficult to disclose personal information to those they knew, finding it easier to talk more openly to someone they were not so close to and may never see again. Where I came from was one dimension of myself that highlighted a 'stranger' status. This acted as a source of inquisitiveness and helped the trust relationship commence and flourish.

My quiet, reserved disposition and smallness in height and build influenced the way pupils and teachers related to me. I faded into the background. Pupils would often forget my presence; sometimes teachers and other pupils mistook me for a pupil or student teacher. Pupils acted as my protector, as I was thought not to be 'tough' and 'street wise' partly due to my smallness in height and partly due to my apparent ignorance of their world in the sense of knowing specific information like who to (not) sit with during recess. Pupils felt a sense of responsibility towards me, especially in the yard. Pupils who were not part of the sample would threaten to use me as an excuse if getting caught bending school rules. For example pupils who were not part of the study would sometimes threaten to inform teachers that I gave them permission to smoke if they got caught while in my presence. The pupils who participated always defended my position, respecting the boundaries and understanding that I wouldn't betray them if they didn't exploit my position.

#### **4.15 Leaving the field**

Due to the personal, intimate nature of ethnography (Spradley, 1980; Hammersley, 1992) leaving the field can be difficult. Like other ethnographers (Corrigan, 1979; Walker, 1988) I felt a sense of guilt; the supporting role I had adopted in return for their exchange of information would now cease to exist. Due to the intense relations I had built with the pupils, I experienced some emotional upheaval when leaving the field. I knew personal details about some of the pupils' day-to-day activities. Some pupils and teachers had become so accustomed to my presence around the school that they were shocked to hear of my departure. I acted as a source of support and guidance for some. Pupils had got used to sharing their ups



and downs with me. Some used me as a shoulder to cry on when disclosing problems they were experiencing both at home and in school. I held a degree of emotional attachment towards some pupils given the significant time I had spent with them and the nature and detail of their lives they shared with me. A farewell and thank-you gathering took place during my last day in each school, where all (present) relevant pupils assembled.

Temptation to postpone my leaving date in the third school was particularly strong since I felt extremely worried for one pupil. Rachel lived with her alcoholic mother, two younger brothers and younger sister. Rachel was essentially running the household. Her appearance on the day of my departure was shocking; she was extremely pale, thin and gaunt, her eyes red and swollen from crying. Rachel was concerned that social services would intervene and take the children away from her mother; this was causing her extreme difficulty coping at school. The school described her as 'suicidal'. As a researcher I'd made a decision to leave the field. I had spent more time conducting fieldwork than originally anticipated; I felt I needed to leave in order to complete the investigation before funding ran out. As a compassionate human being I also felt I wanted to stay and support Rachel in her time of need. The upset of seeing Rachel in such a distressed state on my day of departure together with the conflict I felt between whether to stay and offer support or go and complete the investigation meant that I experienced considerable emotional turmoil. Nevertheless I decided to leave as planned, other supporting members of staff were there to help her. I had to leave at some point. As an ethnographer I had to be prepared for the unpredictable and not allow the volatile nature of the fieldwork and knowledge of the intimacy of the participants lives disrupt the overall objectivity and aims of the research. This experience is a consequence of the intimate relationship of trust gained between Rachel and myself and represented an unpredictable occurrence that I had to manage.

My lack of experience conducting ethnographic fieldwork with disaffected youth within schools, and of teaching experience, together with my investigating the complexity of class, gender, ethnicity, nationality and locality meant that specific predicaments were experienced (Russell, 2005). This had implications for how the

research was conducted and how the process was experienced by the participants and myself. A reflexive attitude was employed to understand how the interaction between myself and the researched and how my autobiography influence the data collected and the ethnographic process.

#### **4.16 Conclusion**

A 'soft' realist philosophical standpoint informs the research, related to which an exploratory, flexible methodology is adopted. The research takes a multi-method, multi-site approach. Two secondary schools in Birmingham and one in Sydney are investigated. The ethnographic format within which recorded semi-structured interviews (with pupils and staff), informal discussions, participant observation, documentation analysis and the SDQ II are utilised.

Resistance is complex, thus an approach whereby theory and empirical investigation are interwoven is advocated. Theory and methodology are viewed as working alongside one another, each informing and consequently refining the other. Benefits of this approach include the research being less likely to lose touch with its empirical referent. Theory is allowed to emerge from the data, providing a framework that is capable of coping with the unstructured complexity of social reality and so renders the obtained data more manageable. Like grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) Carspeckens' five-stage ethnography permits the development of theories and categories that are meaningful to the participants (Bryman, 1993) as information is gathered with the participants. Validity is ensured via the multi-method approach, reliability and generalisability are addressed by taking into account the surrounding macro structures that influence the individual workings of the participants and schools positioned within them. This is an in-depth investigation that seeks detail; consequently the reliability and generalisability are not given precedence due to time constraints and the predominant aim of gaining valid, thorough, contextualised information. Analysis advocates the integration of the micro and macro, individual actions and behaviours are interpreted and analysed in terms of the school, the local community and the national macro structure. The next chapter describes the schools and their local and national characteristics to locate the schools and pupils within their school, community and national context.



## **5 The schools and their location**

### **5.1 Outline**

This chapter outlines the schools and their local and national characteristics, as these are interacting factors that influence resistance. Demographic information about Birmingham (England) and Sydney (Australia) and details of the English and New South Wales (NSW) formal education systems are summarised. The characteristics of each school are described, including their population composition and culture; structure of school day; course information; the schools' physical organisation; school policies; reward and discipline structures. Each school's surrounding community is described, as there is a need to place the school within the local region in addition to their national context. All participants and schools are given pseudonyms to conceal their identity.

### **5.2 Introduction**

Co-educational schools composed of multi-cultural populations in lower socio-economic areas are selected to investigate male, female, different ethnic and national working-class resistance. Two schools in Birmingham and one in Sydney are studied. Both cities have multicultural populations that differ in their composition and provide sites that reveal why, and in what ways, the wider societal environment shape patterns of resistance within schools. Furthermore both regions (at a national and city level) have similar education systems making comparisons viable.

There is a need to place the pupils and the teacher's behaviour within the wider social structure of their individual schools, community and national context. An overview of Birmingham and Sydney and their associated education systems is given to locate each school. The pupils are positioned in their school in the next chapter. The school environment as well as the community and national context influence the way individuals work, behave and interact within school.

### 5.3 The nations

The UK is 244,820 square kilometres (sq km) in area, with 12,429 km of coastline. Australia is much larger than the UK occupying a total area space of 7,686,850 sq km and a 25,760 km coastline. Australia has a hotter climate than the UK reaching tropical levels in the North. England has forty-seven boroughs and thirty-six counties, compared to Australia's six states and two territories. Australia is the sixth largest country in the world, located on the smallest continent, its capital is Canberra; its other major cities include Brisbane; Sydney; Perth; Melbourne; Darwin and Adelaide. England's capital is London and some of its other major cities include Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Durham and Nottingham. Despite Australia's size, its population are mainly located within urban areas. Although a large proportion live in the cities, these cities still have relatively small populations compared to other cities in the world. In 1994 Tokyo was the largest city in the world with 26.5 million, more than the entire population of Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004).

The UK has an estimated population of over 60,000,000. UK Ethnic and national group populations compose of 81.5% English, 9.6% Scottish, 2.4% Irish, 1.9% Welsh, 1.8% Ulster, with West Indian, Indian, Pakistani and other constituting 2.8%. The UK has a population growth rate of 0.3%. It has a birth rate of 10.99 births per 1,000 population and a death rate of 10.21 deaths per 1,000 population. The UK population has grown by 17% overall since 1951, but compared with many other developed countries over the same period; the UK population is growing more slowly. It is smaller than the average growth for European Union (23%) and considerably smaller than the USA at 80% and Australia at 133% (Census 2001, office for National Statistics). The UK's net migration rate is 2.2 migrant(s) per 1,000 population. The life expectancy is just over 78 years. Although geographically larger, Australia has a smaller total population of 19,731,984 and a faster population growth of 0.93%. Its birth rate is higher than that of the UK (12.55 births per 1,000 population) and its death rate lower (7.31 deaths per 1,000 population). Australia's net migration rate is significantly higher than the UK's at 4.05 migrant(s) per 1,000 population (Census 2001, office for National, Statistics). Since Australia's census and population surveys don't usually



collect information on ethnic origin, estimates of the population's ethnic composition are derived from data on birthplace, parent's birthplace, language and religion. It's estimated that 70% of Australia's population are of Anglo-Celtic origins, 18% of other European origins and 10% of Asian or Middle Eastern origins (Price, 2000), with the 2001 Census recording fewer than 2% constituting the nations indigenous aboriginal population.

Since 1945, over six million people have entered Australia as new settlers and have had a marked influence upon its society. In the fifty years of planned post-war migration, Australia has seen 5.9 million migrants arrive, comprising about 3.1 million males and 2.8 million females, with more than 600,000 people arriving under humanitarian programs, initially as displaced persons and more recently as refugees. The trigger for a large-scale migration program was the end of World War II. Agreements were reached with Britain, some European countries and with the International Refugee Organisation to encourage migration, including displaced people from war-torn Europe. About one million migrants arrived in each of the five decades following 1950. Nearly one in four of Australia's 19 million people were born overseas. The number of settlers arriving in Australia between July 2001 and June 2002 totalled 88,900, coming from more than 150 countries. Most were born in New Zealand (17.6 per cent), 9.8% were born in the UK; 7.5% born in China; 6.4% South Africa, 5.7% India and 4.7% Indonesia (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2004). Of the 19,731,948 total population, the 2001 Census indicated that almost fifteen million were Australian born. The 2001 Australian census showed that 25% of people born in Australia had at least one overseas-born parent; that is, they were second generation Australians. Of Australian-born children with at least one overseas born parent, 44% had both parents born overseas, 34% had their father born overseas and 22% their mother born overseas. The variety and size of second-generation populations reflect past migration and intermarriage patterns.

Both countries have a majority of Caucasian inhabitants. The UK and Australia have significant proportions of other but different national and ethnic residents. West Indian, Indian and Pakistani people represent significant cultures in the UK.

In comparison those born in New Zealand, the UK, China, South Africa, India and Indonesia, in addition to the Aboriginal population, represent important ethnic and national cultures evident in Australia. English constitutes the dominant language of both countries.

Forty million in the UK are from Anglican and Roman Catholic religions; 1.5 million are Muslim, with Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhists comprising other significant religions (Census, 2001). Similarly the predominant religion of the Australian population is Christianity, with Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism constituting other significant religions (Census, 2001).

Both have liberal, democratic government types. The UK has a constitutional monarchy and Australia has a federal-state system of government that recognises the British monarch as sovereign. The UK, compared with the federal constitution of Australia has a highly centralised state with an unwritten constitution. Power is concentrated at Westminster and through party dominance of parliament (the Labour Party since 1997) is effectively in the hands of the Cabinet and Prime Minister. The UK is mainly constituted via the dominance of England over Wales, Scotland and Ireland. These are individual countries with their own history, culture and form; as such the state has a range of political and administrative structures, which relate to that diversity, including ministers of state for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Miller, 1995; p23). The different histories and cultures of the countries within the UK influence the nature, structure and governance of all levels of education, including secondary. England has a different secondary school examination structure to Scotland for example.

It has been argued that that the relative power and autonomy of the Australian state in relation to civil society and indeed the world economy has a number of distinguishing characteristics when compared to the UK. The significance and relation between the state, civil society and economic interactions are quite dissimilar (Pusey, 1991; Miller, 1995).



*'In a sense, Australia was born a modern state by the time of its federation in 1901. It had a well established trades union and political labour movement, and a Labor government had been elected in Queensland in 1899, the first popularly elected Labor government in the world.'* (Miller, 1995; p29).

At that point Australia was the last of the new nations colonized by Britain, and in contrast to the USA and Canada was a primarily secular society. Pusey (1991) argued that the secularisation of Australia's colonial past contributed to contemporary Australians developing a positivistic view of politics and society (Miller, 1995; p29). The relationship between state and government structures, economic and political interests help shape the organisation and objectives of secondary schooling in both the UK and Australia

Australian and UK schools are a state responsibility and there is considerable variation between different jurisdictions. Due to Australia's larger geographical size, number and variation of jurisdictions, Australian, compared to UK education systems and school responsibility are more diverse. While all states are now firmly in the hands of Labor governments, their work is framed by the federal government which has been, since 1996, of a neo-liberal approach (Thomson, McQuade and Rochford, 2005) Through manipulating funds given to non-government schools and utilising its political influence with each state, the conservative national regime (much akin to in the UK) introduced into state school systems, the familiar panoply of heightened marketisation, increased importance placed on public education, national testing and a outburst of criticism of the alleged shortfalls of public education (Reid and Thomson, 2003).

Both England and Australia have a prosperous Western-style capitalist economy. The UK constitutes one of the leading trading powers and financial centre economies of Western Europe. Australia has a per capita GDP at the level of the four dominant West European economies.

Australia may be viewed as more of an egalitarian society compared to the UK. For much of the twentieth century, compared to other countries, Australia had lesser extremes of wealth and poverty among White residents; it had no permanent

aristocratic class or significant numbers of exceptionally prosperous corporate magnets. High degrees of social mobility functioned to prevent the formation of a rigid class structure (Thomson, 2002). This wasn't just an upshot of Australia's history and geography, but a number of public policies helped shape this stratified structure. The Australian 'wage earners' welfare state' (Castles, 1985, 1994) was a 'welfare assistance' state in which government didn't provide universal benefits, on the contrary government intervention encouraged people to be self-sufficient (Thomson, 2002). Quality of life depended upon a strong government commitment to full employment; incorporated mechanisms to support home ownership and the public provision of health, transport and education (Thomson, 2002); tariff protection; mechanisms to fix wage levels; financial regulation; intervention in the market through public expenditure; control of labour supply through immigration; low participation of women in the labour market; unequal wage awards and the White Australian Policy (Smyth and Cass, 1988). Thomson (2002) maintains that Australia was never a welfare state, despite some Keynesian strategies undertaken by the Menzies (Federal) Government of the 1970's towards free university education, national infrastructure and regional development. The welfare assistance state didn't assist everybody equally. Aboriginal people, women and immigrants struggled through the twentieth century (Thomson, 2002). Subsequently the following Hawke-Keating (Federal) Government in the mid 1980's developed neo-liberal policy concerned with equity and justice. Neoliberalism came into its own with the election of the Howard Federal Government in 1996; in comparison to the UK, emphasis turned to employment and employability rather than full time employment. Australia is experiencing economic growth, but like the UK, much of this may be attributed to the increase in part-time, poorly paid jobs, whereby improved output is achieved via more people working harder and longer (Thomson, 2002). The gap between the rich and the poor in Australia and the UK is growing.

In terms of school policy, the current Conservative Federal government in Australia and the New Labour government in the UK have reduced their interests in schooling to one of performance measures, reframed by the layering quasi-marked approach over the funding arrangements for governmental and non-



government schools. In both countries stress is placed on measuring outcomes of schooling in addition to fulfilling the needs of the economy. This culture of performativity in a context of the evolution of a national equity policy presence had fuelled concerns of boys and those from some ethnic minority groups' school performance (Lingard, 2003).

Australia is very diverse in terms of its geographical location, occupation, status and power relationships. The UK is comparably smaller in a geographical sense but exerts a lot of power both within and outside of the developed world. Australia's population is more sparsely inhabited and has a faster rate of migration. Both countries are multicultural but compose of different ethnic and national make-ups.

#### **5.4 The cities**

Birmingham and Sydney are both multicultural cosmopolitan cities. Birmingham is known as England's 'Second City'. The area is 267.8 square kilometres in size, with a population density of 3.649 people per square kilometre. There are 977,087 residents of Birmingham, consisting of 473,266 males and 503,821 females (Census, 2001).

Sydney is situated in New South Wales (NSW). Sydney Metropolitan is one of the largest cities in the world in terms of area, reaching across 4000 square kilometres; it is equal in size to London. Sydney has the largest city population in Australia, with Melbourne constituting the next largest. Sydney has a larger population than Birmingham (UK), there are 3,997,321 people consisting of fewer males (1,967,687) than females (2,029,634) like Birmingham (Census, 2001).

Both cities have a predominantly White population but differ in their ethnic and national identity composition. 70.4% of Birmingham's resident population are White (including a substantial Irish population); this is lower than the England national percentage of 90.9%. Asian or Asian British (19.5%), Black or Black British (6.1%) and Chinese or Other ethnic groups (1.2%) constitute the remainder of Birmingham's population (Census, 2001). There are over fifty different languages spoken natively within the city. Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu constitute some

of the predominant Asian languages spoken. Most Chinese people originated from Hong Kong alongside other parts of southern China; Cantonese and Mandarin are fairly common spoken languages. The main (written and spoken) language is English.

In the 2001 Census 62.2% of Sydney's residents stated that they were Australian-born; indigenous Australians (mainly Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders) comprised less than 2% of Sydney's population. Those born overseas reached over 30% of Sydney's population. Of those born overseas, the three main countries of birth were the United Kingdom (4.7%), China (2.1%) and New Zealand (2.1%). This was a change from the past two censuses (1996 and 1991) when Italy was the third most common country of birth (now displaced by both China and Vietnam). Italy now constitutes the fifth most common country of birth, after the UK, New Zealand, China and Vietnam respectively. Sydney has a large Chinese community. Over 50% of the Chinese born residents in Australia live in Sydney. Australia's Korean population is also Sydney-centric, with just under 70% of those born in Korea located in the city (Census, 2001). The sixth most common country of birth amongst Sydney residents is Lebanon, with the Philippines, India, Hong Kong, Germany and South Africa following. Most residents speak English at home. Chinese, Arabic (including Lebanese) and Greek are the three most common languages spoken at home other than English. One out of six speaks a language other than English. Like Birmingham, Sydney is a multicultural cosmopolitan city, although Sydney has a more diverse range of residents consisting of people from 180 nations, speaking 140 languages.

Birmingham's resident population (aged sixteen to seventy-four) consists of 51.6% employed and 5.7% unemployed compared with England and Wales 60.0 % employed and 3.4% unemployed percentages. Birmingham's employment rates are below the national average (Census, 2001). Birmingham has 8,850 claimants under twenty-four years of age of the UK's 242,445 total claimant count figures; Birmingham has a significant proportion of unemployed youth (National Statistics, 2004). Over 93% of Sydney's population (applicable to persons fifteen years and over) are employed in either part-time or full-time employment. This figure slightly



supersedes NSW's figure of employment. Just fewer than 6% are unemployed. Over 20% are employed as professionals (Census, 2001). The top three industries of employment include the retail trade industry, the manufacturing industry and the education sector. In addition to these three main industries, the motor and jewellery manufacturing industries play a role in Birmingham's economy. One third of jewellery manufactured in the UK is made within one mile of the Birmingham's city centre.

Both Sydney and Birmingham are relatively large westernised cosmopolitan cities. Sydney hosted the Olympic Games 2000. Both have rich yet different multicultural compositions. Sydney has high rates of immigration and fairs slightly better than Birmingham comparing employment and unemployment figures, with Sydney employing 93% of its population. This brief overview of the national and regional contexts of both cities provides contextual understanding into how their education systems are positioned. The national demographic information influences the structures of the communities that the schools serve which in turn impact upon the workings of each school and the individuals within it.

### **5.5 The English education system**

In the UK schools are usually classified according to how they receive their funding. There are two parallel school systems, the state system and the independent system. State maintained schools are those that are financed almost entirely from public funds and are consequently dependant on local or central government control. Independent schools (also known as 'private schools') are privately funded and independent of local and central government management. Tuition fees are usually charged to those that attend. Most independent schools have their own board of governors who manage the school's organisation and finances. Approximately seven percent of British school age children go through the independent system (British Council, 2003).

Many children attend pre-school education between the ages of three to four; this level of schooling is optional. Education is compulsory for everyone between the ages of five and sixteen. The first level of education is known as primary

education. In England, at the age of five, children start at primary school. Secondary schools provide compulsory education for children between eleven and sixteen. England and Wales have a National Curriculum, which is compulsory in the state system. Independent schools aren't bound by it but in practice most of them teach what the National Curriculum demands. The National Curriculum is a statement of the minimum learning requirements of all children, at each stage in their education. Core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science are assessed. All secondary schools teach pupils, at least until the age of sixteen and prepare them for their GCSE's (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Preparing for these exams takes around two years and most pupils' study between five and ten subjects. Choices of subjects include Geography, History, Drama, Music, Languages, Art, Design and Technology courses.

In England, Chinese pupils, followed by Indian, then White pupils achieve the highest GCSE grades. In 2002 Chinese pupils were most likely to attain five or more GCSE grades A\*-C, with 77% of Chinese females and 71% of Chinese males achieving so. Indian pupils had the next highest achievement levels, followed by White pupils. The lowest levels of GCSE attainment were among Black Caribbean pupils. Only 23% of Black Caribbean boys and 38% of Black Caribbean girls achieved five or more A\*-C grade GCSE's. Pupils from the Other Black, Black African and Pakistani groups had the next lowest levels of attainment. Within each group a higher proportion of girls than boys achieved five or more GCSE A\*-C grades (National Government Statistics, 2004).

In 2001/02 Black Caribbean pupils were more likely to be permanently excluded from schools in England than other pupils, at 42 per 10,000. This was three times the rate for White pupils. Chinese and Indian pupils had the lowest exclusion rates, at 2 per 10,000 and 3 per 10,000 respectively. For all ethnic groups, the rates of permanent exclusions are higher for males than females (National Government Statistics, 2004). This data provides some insight into the ethnic and national background of those selected for this research by the schools in Birmingham. Ten White, one Jamaican and one Mixed Race pupil with African-Caribbean parentage formed the participants from the two Birmingham schools. Chinese and Asian



pupils tend to be viewed by the school as not resisting; this relates to the above academic performance and levels of exclusion data.

During the fieldwork (2002/3) Birmingham had ninety-two secondary schools plus fourteen non-maintained and LEA maintained community and foundation special schools. Just under half of the ninety-two schools catered for pupils up to the age of eighteen. Twenty schools catered for eleven to sixteen and eleven to eighteen year old girls, while eleven catered for boys. Nine were City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for the Technology of Arts or Sports. Fourteen consisted of Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled schools with some religious foundation; including nine Catholic Schools, with the remainder constituting Church of England and Islamic faiths. About a tenth of schools comprised of Grammar and Registered Independent Schools. There were nineteen schools that fit this research selection criterion of mixed Comprehensive school's that catered for eleven to sixteen year olds (Department for Education and Skills, Performance tables 2001).

After the age of sixteen, pupils may legally leave school and enter FE (Further Education) or start work. FE takes place in colleges. The majority of the FE provision comes under direct responsibility of the state. Pupils can take a variety of vocational and academic courses. Including A Levels (Advanced Levels), the most commonly used entry requirement to British Universities, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) or General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ's), which are work-related credentials. English universities now charge tuition fees; the amount required is accounted via means tested assessments dependant upon parents/guardians financial situation.

## **5.6 The NSW education system**

Like schools in the UK, NSW schools are usually organised according to how they receive their funding. Pupils are either educated in public (state government) or private (independent) schools. Education in state government schools is free in most states (including NSW), although most schools do charge a small voluntary annual fee to cover extra activities. NSW public schools are centrally controlled in a large bureaucracy, there are smaller organisational units; region and school

education areas, which can be broadly compared to England's LEA's; the schools operate very much under a state system with respect to syllabus, pedagogy and assessment. Independent schools are mainly operated by religious organisations and charge fees. Independent schools tend to consist of children with parents of a professional or high managerial background. Relatively affluent, Anglo-Australian pupils tend to constitute the majority of pupils who attend independent schools, with the aboriginal youth being under-represented throughout all levels of education (Foster, 1987). Like in the UK, the ethnic minority groups compared to their Anglo-White counterparts tend to have lower levels of education success and are under-represented throughout all stages of education, decreasing in membership the higher the level of education. In the Australian education system, the higher education sector is federally funded. Each state funds its own vocational education, training sector and school sector (accounting for about 80% of school enrolments). The government does provide funding to private schools (accounting for approximately 20% of enrolments). Like the UK, the majority of pupils attend state funded schools during their compulsory education experience.

The levels of education are similar in the UK and NSW. Everyone between the ages of six and fifteen are legally required to attend school. However, like in the UK many children start earlier in pre-schools or in kindergarten. Primary school attendance is compulsory for all children aged between six to eleven. High/Secondary school presence is also compulsory. During the first four years of secondary study, the same core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science are compulsory. A broad range of elective subjects (similar to those options available in the UK) such as Computing Studies, Languages, Art, Music, Drama, Commerce, History, Geography and Technical Subjects are also offered. In general pupils aim to complete the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) to qualify for technical courses and for admissions to universities. The HSC can broadly be compared to the English GCSE. However pupils may opt to leave in year ten (age fifteen) before completion of their HSC. Pupils that remain until the end of year ten aim to achieve a year ten certificate, which shows they have completed education up until year ten. Years eleven and twelve (ages sixteen to eighteen) are geared to HSC requirements. Most schools prefer the majority of



pupils to stay in school until completion of year twelve so that they can gain their HSC. The Spotsworth High School's learning behaviour support staff explains this during an interview.

**LR:** Can you tell me a little bit about the New South Wales Education System, so like what year students can leave, what year students are probably advised to leave in this school, what qualifications they get when and...



TAFE college courses are designed for pupils who want vocational, technical or trade skills. Numerous courses cover vocational training areas including computing, plumbing, fashion design, catering and electrical studies. TAFE colleges (comparable to England's Further Education Post-16 colleges) charge fees. Costs for undergraduate university courses include student union fees, books, general administration fees and the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). HECS is a time-payment method of paying for the cost of higher education.

Of the 10,638 population of the municipality in which Spotsworth High (the Sydney school) serves, 960 persons attend pre-school or infant/primary school, with 560 attending a government type, 360 attending a Catholic and 39 enrolling at a other non-government type. 744 persons attend school at the secondary level including, 427 at a government educational institution, 289 at a Catholic and 28 at other non-government schools. 329 attend a Technical or Further Educational Institution (full and part-time) and 290 attend university or other tertiary institutions (Australian Bureau of Statistics; 2001 Census). Like Birmingham, Sydney has a majority of its school age population attending mixed state maintained schools at the primary and secondary level, with a smaller proportion attending private schools.

Both Birmingham and Sydney have similar formal education systems. Both have similar levels and teach similar subjects. The compulsory school leaving age is slightly lower in Sydney and pupils are legally allowed to leave their education without attempting their HSC. Pupils may leave school when they turn fifteen in Sydney; sixteen is the compulsory leaving age in England. At the secondary school level GCSE's form the most important examination that years ten and eleven (age 14 to 16 years) study for. The HSC is the NSW's equivalent to the GCSE, pupils in years eleven and twelve (16 to 18 years) work towards these credentials. Both view education as an instrument that helps to serve the interests of the economy by reskilling and upskilling an underskilled or inappropriately skilled labour force (McFadden, 1995b).

The characteristics of each school and their surrounding community are now outlined. The two Birmingham schools, followed by the Sydney school, are described. The national education systems contexts help locate each school in its surrounding national environment. The wider community features are also discussed allowing for a contextualised vision of the pupils and where they are located within the school, within the community and within their nations. The term 'community' used in the Birmingham context chiefly refers to the 'ward' in which the school is located; an administrative division of the Birmingham city and borough whereby the boundaries reflect the area's voting group and is represented by a councillor or councillors.

### **5.7 The Drillands High School's community**

The school is located within a predominantly White working-class ward, 86.0 % of the resident population are White, 2.9% are of Mixed Race, 2.3% are Caribbean, 2.6% constitute Pakistani and 2.1% are Indian, with the remainder percentage composed of Bangladeshi, Other Asian, African, Other Black, Chinese or Other ethnic group (Census, 2001). Christianity is the religion held by 71.1% of the resident population (National Statistics, 2004). The school qualifies for the 'Excellence in Cities' programme. This is a government initiative that offers



schools located in deprived areas additional funding with a view to help raise their standards.

The area in which the school is located is part of an 'operation Green-up Project' district. Urban regeneration is evident in that there is a relatively new (five to ten years old) residential estate. The school serves a number of surrounding council estates. Some nearby shops are boarded up. Litter can be seen on the floor and graffiti on the walls. Burnt out and vandalised cars can be seen on the estates. One of the estates is known for the presence of the National Front. The area is believed by some residents to have high levels of racial tension and high crime rates. The following indicates how the school counsellor perceived the surrounding area. Many teachers voiced similar perceptions of the area.



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Within this ward 5.2% are unemployed compared with 5.7% of Birmingham's population and 3.4% of the England and Wales's resident population aged sixteen to seventy four. Eleven percent of those unemployed have never worked and thirty-one percent are long term unemployed (Census, 2001). Those that are employed tend to work in low paid occupations. Of those pupils selected from this school five out of the six had mothers who looked after the family home and weren't in paid part-time or full-time employment. Fathers that were present worked in jobs such as lorry drivers for Birmingham's City Link logistics company or did 'handy man' jobs. Poverty is an issue. Related to that is this area's comparatively high rates of illness (Census, 2001). 21.2% of this community's resident population have a limiting long-term illness compared with 19.6% of Birmingham's population and 18.2% of England and Wales's. The area also has a higher widower (9.7%) and divorce (8.9%) percentage compared to Birmingham's official widower figures of 36.1% and divorce statistics of 7.3% (Census, 2001).

### **5.8 The Lodgelands Comprehensive School's community**

Lodgelands community is similar to the Drillands in that 85.9% of the resident population are White, 5.8% are Indian and 2.8% are Caribbean, 2.5% are of Mixed Race with the rest constituting less than 1% each of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Other Asian, African, Other Black, Chinese or Other ethnic group (Census, 2001). It's a



predominantly White working-class area where Christianity is the predominant religion. This school also meets the criteria for the 'Excellence in Cities' programme.

The houses are predominantly terrace or semi-detached, there are some large houses (three bedroom plus) together with some flat accommodation, some of which constitute council house estates. The houses are built either in brick or in wood and brick. Residents who have lived in the area for some time (20 years plus) feel the area has deteriorated over the years. Mrs. Olden a classroom teacher who lives near the school describes how the area has declined since people from the inner city started to move into the neighbourhood.



There are a few surrounding shops, and one playing field. Facilities are scarce and consequently the school is utilised by the community in a number of ways including leisure and educational purposes. In the following extract taken from interview material, Mr. Burns, the head of R.E, describes how the school attempts to involve the community and provide a place for the community to use and come together.





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The overall unemployment figure is slightly better than in the Drilland's community but is still higher at 4% compared with 3.4% of the England and Wales's resident population aged sixteen to seventy-four. Moreover the Lodgeland's community has higher percentages of long-term unemployment when compared to the Drilland's community. Twelve percent of those unemployed never worked and thirty-eight percent were long-term unemployed (Census, 2001). Those that are employed tend to work in low-paid occupations. Of those pupils selected from this school four out of the six lived with unemployed mothers who looked after the family home. One mother was a special needs teacher and one mother was a health care assistant. Only one pupil lived with his father. His father was unemployed. The resident population of the community in which the Drillands was located had above average (for Birmingham and England and Wales proportions of people with) incidence of long-term illnesses. The widowed resident population percentage exceeds Birmingham's at 9.2% like in the Drillland's community but the level of divorce is lower than Drilland's and Birmingham's at 6.4% (Census, 2001).



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Crime rates, levels of long-term illness, widowed and divorced rates are comparatively high in both communities. Both communities have similar attributes although the Drilland's community is located closer to the city of Birmingham; it is an inner-city community where as the Lodgeland's neighbourhood is located within the outer-ring of the inner-city circle.

The Spotsworth High School serves three main communities, all of which have fairly similar attributes. The characteristics of the municipality in which the school is located are predominantly outlined and compared to the two Birmingham communities. Like the Birmingham communities, the Spotsworth High Communities are defined, utilised and measured via Census information. The Spotsworth High School communities are defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'Basic Community Profiles' (BCP). Each BCP represents a selected geographic area employed by the government.

## **5.9 The Spotsworth High School's community**

Spotsworth High mainly serves three communities. All three communities have a slight majority of residents who were born in Australia, with the remainder being born overseas. The municipality in which the school is located has 5,668 residents born in Australia and 4,133 born overseas (Census, 2001). Residents of the municipality include those whose parent(s) were born in Australia, those with Maori or New Zealander descent, North-West Europeans (including English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and German); Southern and Eastern Europeans (including significant numbers with parents born in Italy, Malta and Greece) and North African and Middle Eastern, with a majority of Lebanese and then Turkish ancestry



with lesser numbers having parents whose birthplace was in North-East Asian or Southern and central Asian areas (Census, 2001). The municipality that the school serves is multicultural.

The majority of residents in all three surrounding communities (BCP'S) speak English in the home; significant proportions speak Arabic (including Lebanese) at home. Two of the surrounding communities have almost half of their residents speaking Arabic (including Lebanese) at home. Chinese, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Tagalog (Filipino), Turkish, Vietnamese, Persian, Korean, Tamil languages constitute approximately one to five percent of the languages spoken at home in the surrounding communities (Census, 2001).

The predominant religions in all three BCP areas are similar. For the municipality in which the school serves, the majority of residents are Christian, 7,149 of its residents are Christian, including 4,253 Catholic and 1,300 Anglican. 1,226 are of Islamic faith; with Hinduism and Judaism following in numbers respectively (Census, 2001).

The housing types of the communities are composed of separate housing, semi-detached, townhouses, terraces and flats, units or apartments (Census, 2001). The municipality that the school is located within has a street full of open, local shops, a small hotel, a local supermarket and a commonwealth bank. The locality is also on a bus route and has its own train station. The predominant house type is detached white panelled housing that are one or two stories high. The residential area seemed much more spacious than the Birmingham communities, more land segregated the houses; the gardens were much bigger constituting around an eighth of an acre plot around each house. Trees were planted in grassland that split the pavement from the road.

Unemployment and low paid jobs is an issue in all three of the communities that the school serves (Census, 2001). Most of the pupils' parents who took part in this investigation from this school were unemployed. Only one mother (who lived in the family home) out of the ten selected pupils was employed in a bakery, the rest

looked after the home and family. Out of the five present fathers, one worked as a cleaner, one was a printer, another was a welder and one worked as a bus driver. During an interview with the year nine advisor, Mr. Parker, I asked him to voice his thoughts on the surrounding area. He did so, making reference to income and employment.



Like the Birmingham Drilland and Lodgeland's communities, the Spotsworth's surrounding communities are all considered deprived. All three schools are viewed as serving working-class areas, where comparatively high rates of unemployment, crime and long-term illness are issues. Both the Drillands and Lodgeland's communities are composed of a predominantly White population, but the schools themselves comprise of a more diverse multi-ethnic/cultural population. The Spotsworth High's communities are more culturally diverse; all hold a majority of Australian born residents but have significant proportions of North African and Middle Eastern inhabitants (including Lebanese and Turkish residents). The Spotsworth High's school population reflects the wider communities culturally diverse populace and has a more varied multi-ethnic and multinational school population compared to the other two Birmingham schools.

The schools' national, regional and community contexts have now been outlined as there is a need to locate each school in their macro national and more micro local milieu, as both have an interacting impact upon the workings of the schools and the participants within them. The details of each researched school are now summarised.

### **5.10 The Drillands High School's characteristics**

#### **School type and academic reputation**

Drillands High School is a comprehensive secondary school situated in inner-city Birmingham (England). It is a community school, thus it is maintained by the LEA (Local Education Authority). It's a co-educational school that caters for eleven to



sixteen year olds. It has just over 1100 pupils on school roll. From 1998 to 2003 the Drilllands High School has had a GCSE A\* to C pass rate lower than that of Birmingham's LEA average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science is considerably lower than Birmingham's LEA averages. In 2003 31% attained Level 5 plus in English, compared to the LEA average of 62%; 42% achieved Level 5 or above in Maths, compared to Birmingham's LEA average of 62% and 34% attained Level 5 or above in Science, compared to Birmingham's LEA average of 59% (DFES Secondary School Performance Tables 2002 and 2003). This school's GCSE examination performance is relatively poor compared to the Birmingham and National schools' average figures even more so.

### **Cultural population**

Drilllands High is composed of a rich multicultural population. The majority of pupils are White with African-Caribbean pupils constituting the subsequent most significant group. Sixty-four percent are White pupils; nineteen percent are of an African-Caribbean descent, five percent Indian, four percent Pakistani, one percent Bangladeshi with the remaining seven percent constituting a group labelled 'Other' (LEA categories). Using categories utilised by the LEA carry the problem of differentiating exactly what ethnic groups constitute 'other', yet the LEA's calculations are deemed the most accurate, since the schools have a lot of missing data.

### **Staff hierarchy**

The school had a male Head Teacher who announced his departure during the fieldwork. The staff are organised via a pyramid order of responsibility, primarily regulated by the head, deputy head, followed by heads of years and heads of departments. The staff consist of classroom teachers who possess specialised subject knowledge; classroom assistants; a school counsellor and behaviour support team. The school has a truant officer or 'wag man' and administrative staff. The Head Teacher, deputy and various other senior staff compose the senior management team who hold responsibility for suspending and excluding pupils.

### **School day structure**

The school day begins at 8.40am. Pupils attend registration or assembly until their first lesson. Year assemblies occur once a week. Six, fifty-minute periods constitute the day, some of which comprise of double lessons. There is a twenty-minute morning break and a forty-five minute lunch break. The school day finishes at 3.00pm.

### **Subjects**

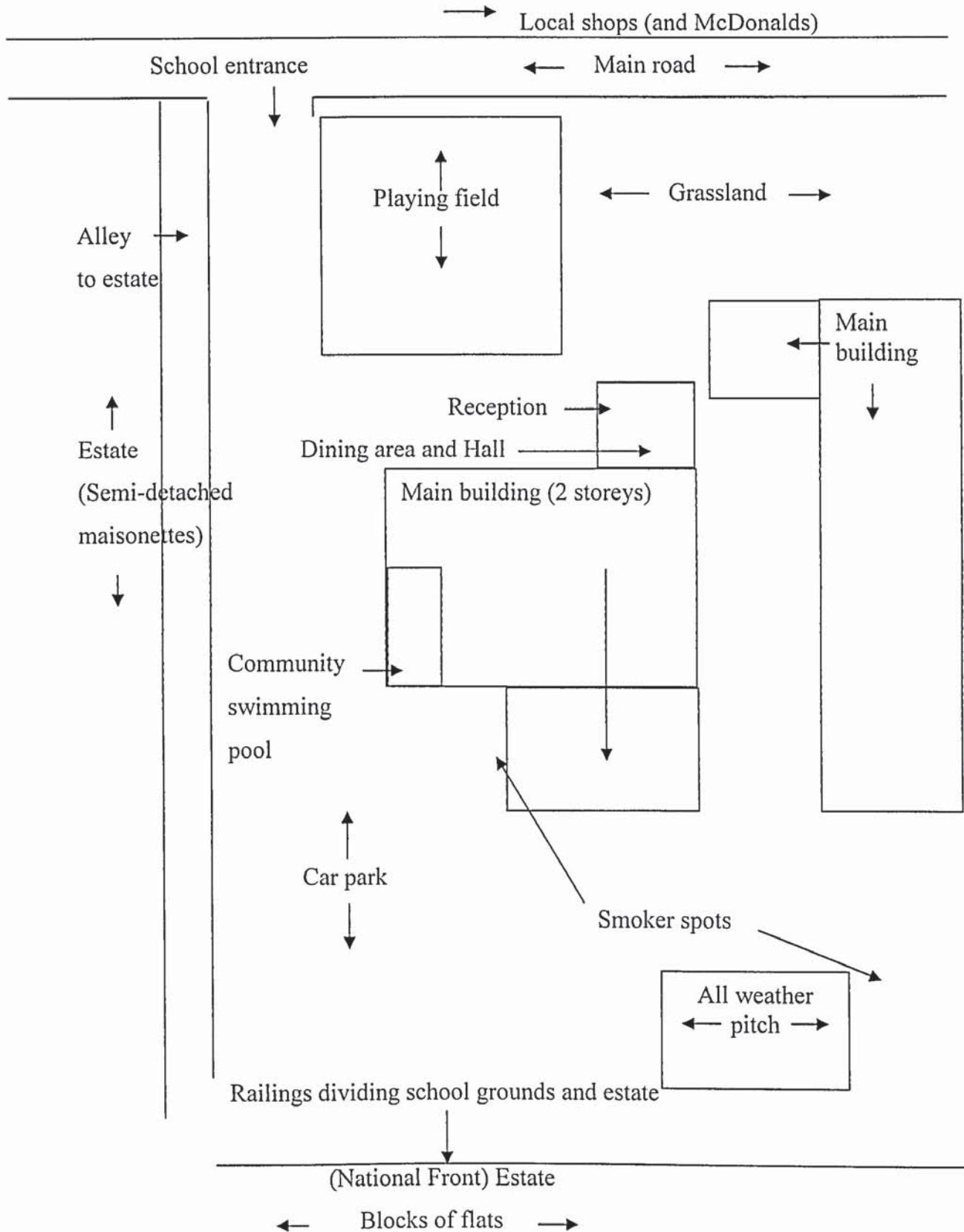
In addition to the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, Languages, Drama, Information Technology, Geography, History, Music, Personal and Social Education, Design and Technology and Physical Education are offered. The 'you chose two thousand' award and 'ASDAN XL' award are also accessible to pupils as pastoral courses. Some pupils go to nearby colleges to attend vocational courses such as Painting and Decorating, Childcare and Brick Laying. It's the year ten and year eleven pupils who have been identified as disruptive in some way that attend such courses and apply for the awards. Pupils who have been thrown out of certain classes use this time to complete the vocational and pastoral programme work.

### **Physical characteristics**

The brick built school has a large grassland playing field situated at the front. The school's outside, as well as inside, appearance is relatively old and in need of some brightening up and repairs. Paintwork flakes and broken windows are evident. The main building is all physically connected but divided up into five blocks (A-E); each of which is affiliated with certain departments. Long, narrow, daunting corridors and stairways connect the departments. Most classrooms are traditionally set out with school desks and chairs, usually situated in rows facing the teacher's desk and board. Laboratory rooms exist for science classes. Many classrooms lack complete working curtain and blind sets and classroom equipment is usually locked away in a room cupboard. The reception desk and senior staff offices are together. Pupils are not permitted to enter this area at any time without permission. It is here where visitors are welcomed. The line of chairs is backed onto a wall scattered with school trophies. The school has a community swimming pool and an all weather sports pitch.



Figure 5.1 The Drillands High School physical outlay



The school doesn't have lockers or cloakrooms; consequently pupils are expected to carry their materials and possessions needed for the day. However many pupils didn't have a school bag worthy of transporting books, paper and writing utensils, this was even more apparent with the older pupils. Some girls did sport small handbags, but these reflected the fashion of the time and tended to obtain personal items rather than school materials. Most classroom teachers kept textbooks and exercise books in the classroom in the hope of keeping them safe. Many of the pupils I was with lost their books and textbooks if they took them from the classroom.

### **Formal rules and regulations**

Pupils are expected to wear full uniform, which consists of a blazer, white shirt, school tie, school jumper, black shoes and dark coloured trousers or skirt. Caps are not allowed and females are not permitted to wear make-up, although many of the year tens and elevens (aged fourteen to fifteen years) do. Coats, sports/non-school jumpers, hats, gloves and scarfs are not to be worn in class. Pupils who don't wear the school tie or an appropriate jumper without any valid reason are singled out. Many lads wear sport type jumpers with hooded tops, giving them an older appearance while masking their face. The uniform for males and females is similar, both genders fashion their uniform by wearing non-school jumpers and shortening the school tie so only a short, rather than the traditional long tie piece is showing.

School policy posters are on show in most classrooms, they include the following rules.

All pupils should:

- 1) Be punctual to lessons
- 2) Enter the classroom in an orderly manner
- 3) Remove outdoor coats, scarves etc
- 4) Listen to instructions
- 5) Answer or ask questions by putting up your hand – do not shout out
- 6) Remain in your seat – you are not permitted to wonder around the classroom or to leave the room without permission



- 7) Leave other peoples property alone
- 8) Eating, chewing or drinking is not allowed in the classroom

The classroom and corridor rules that are part of the schools behavioural policy are as follows:

#### Classroom Rules for pupils

All pupils are entitled to a good education and the opportunity to learn. Therefore it is essential that all pupils behave in a way that helps others to success. Behaviour which prevents anyone else from working hard is unacceptable, behaviour which means teachers have to waste time in sorting it out is also unacceptable.

#### Corridor Procedures for pupils

Our corridors are very narrow – you should move around the school quietly, calmly and safely. Show consideration for others at all times.

- 1) Keep on the right in corridors and stairs
- 2) Do not run along corridors or up and down the stairs
- 3) Walk in a single file at changeover or lessons
- 4) Obey any one-way system
- 5) Line up outside the classroom quietly and in single file
- 6) Keep the corridors tidy and free from litter

Different teachers more stringently follow the rules and procedures to varying degrees. In reality a minority of classes manage their classroom discussions via pupils putting up their hand and being asked to contribute; most pupils shout out answers, this works better in some classes than in others. Many (not all) teachers do remind pupils to take off any clothing that isn't school uniform based and are told not to eat, chew or drink if caught. I didn't see much evidence of any of the above corridor procedures being put into practice. I wasn't aware of any one-way or single file system, the pupils I was with often took their time getting to class, some roamed the corridors during lessons and none queued outside a room quietly and in single file. The corridors were chaotic bustling areas especially during class changeover time. Pupils ran, shouted, talked, gathered and greeted one another in

the corridors. Many teachers would fight for space and get jostled while walking down the corridors. I (even more so) got crushed, shoved and pushed around, sometimes losing the pupil(s) I was with that day in the corridor mayhem.

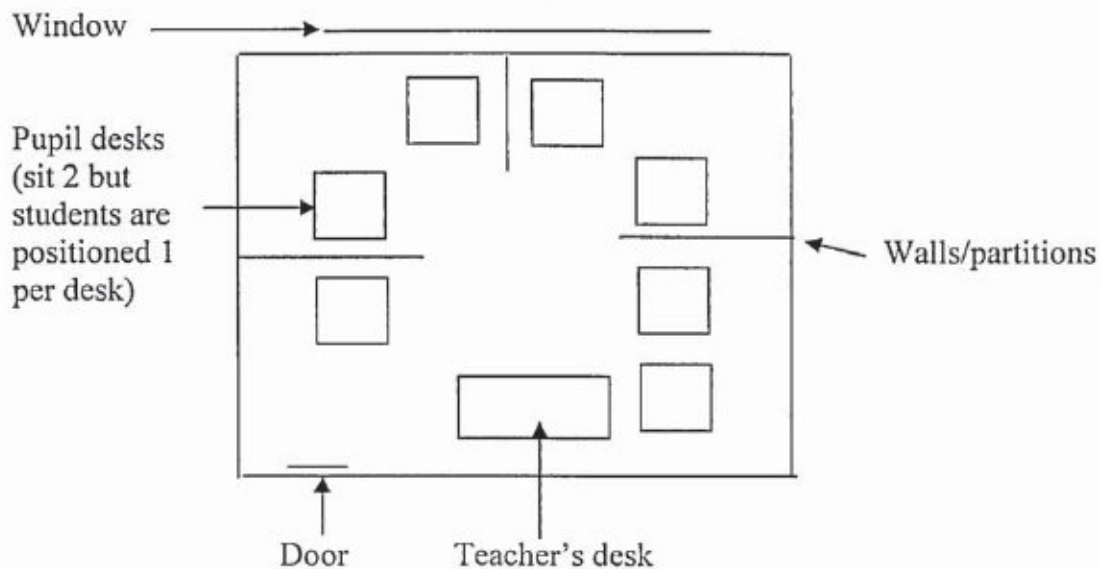
### **Reward and discipline structures**

The Discipline for Learning (DFL) system forms the main discipline structure utilised by the school. Each pupil starts with a baseline of twenty DFL points. A paid trip to Alton Towers at the end of the year rewards pupils who manage to keep their twenty DFL's. Pupils lose DFL's for a number of reasons; teachers are able to use their own discretion. Examples include the following; one point may be deducted for low levels of disruption such as chewing or eating in class. Two points may be deducted for being caught smoking. Loss of four points constitutes a half hour detention. Pupils may lose four points at once for displaying higher levels of disruption such as refusing to follow staff instructions. Pupils who lose DFL's are placed on report and monitored in all classes. Heads of year deal with the monitoring of each pupil on report first, failing this, senior management monitor the pupil's report. A pupil who loses all twenty DFL's is put in 'Time Out' for the entire school day. Pupils placed in 'Time Out' remain in one room, where one pupil is allocated to one desk. Usually the pupils are asked to follow their normal timetable and thus carry out work that they would be doing under normal circumstances in class. The pupils have no break or dinner break, each pupil is given a lunch sheet, which they complete, and their lunch is brought to them. Pupils are expected to work all day in silence. How strictly the silence rule is followed depends on the teachers present at the time and on the composition of the pupils in the room. If friends are present in the room simultaneously games such as passing notes over and under the partitions are used for communication and passing the time purposes.

The 'Time Out' room door is labelled 'Time-Out'. It's a tiny room that has six to seven cubicles dictating where each pupil sits. Partitions separate the pupils. There are various official (word processed) posters on the wall that read warnings such as 'lose all of your DFL points and be in time-out'. Some posters are made by pupils and display drawings and captions such as 'time-out is boring'.



**Figure 5.2 The 'Time-Out' room set-up**



Continual disruption and/or one serious incident plus failure of the 'Time Out' system to have an effect may lead to exclusion for a few days. Permanent exclusion is the final resort.

Merits are given to pupils who display good work, not behaviour. Merits achieved are rewarded via certificates and end of term trips. Although good behaviour isn't rewarded, negative behaviour is punished since the loss of any DFL point's bans pupils from any excursions.

There is a difference in staff opinion concerning the effectiveness of this DFL system. The teacher (Mrs. Tetch) who is part of the senior management team and runs the DFL point system gauges the systems achievement via the increase in number of school buses that are needed each year to transport the pupils who have lost no DFL's to Alton Towers.



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The discipline and reward structure in this school worked most effectively with the high achieving, well behaved pupils, for those who have experienced 'Time Out' on several occasions the threat had disappeared. These pupils knew what to expect and although they tried to avoid 'Time Out' they would have a laugh and a joke when they were placed in there, especially if their mates happened to be in there on the same day, which was probable since many of the disruptive pupils shared classes and hung around with one another outside of lessons.

The Lodgelands Comprehensive School's characteristics are detailed and compared to the Drillands High School's, formal organisation, reputation, physical layout, formal rules, regulations and reward and discipline structures.

### **5.11 The Lodgelands Comprehensive School's characteristics**

#### **School type and academic reputation**

Lodgelands Comprehensive secondary school is located in the outer-ring of Birmingham's city circle. Like the Drillands High School it is a community school that caters for males and females aged eleven to sixteen years. It has just over 500 pupils on school roll, making its pupil population less than half of the Drillands High Schools. From 1998 to 2003 the school had a GCSE A\* to C pass rate lower than that of Birmingham's LEA average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science is noticeably less than Birmingham's LEA averages. Twenty-nine percent achieved Level 5 or above in English compared to Birmingham's LEA average of 62%. Fifty-two percent gained Maths at Level 5 or above which is ten percent below the LEA's average and forty-four percent attained Level 5 or above in Science compared with the LEA figure of 59% (DFES Secondary School Performance Tables 2002 and 2003). This school's GCSE academic achievement levels are relatively low. In comparison to the Drillands High, this school attains lower pass rates in English but higher in

Maths and Science, but both schools perform below LEA average in all three core subjects.

### **Cultural population**

The school caters for a variety of ethnic and national cultures. The ethnic composition is similar to the Drillands High's in that the majority are White (65%), with African-Caribbean pupils constituting the next predominant group (20%). Over 2% are Indian, and 8% constitute the LEA's 'Other' category with the remaining percentage of pupils being Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Chinese.

### **Staff hierarchy**

Members of staff take a pyramid formation with the Head at the top holding most of the responsibility for the management of the school, the deputy, heads of year and heads of lower and higher school. The heads of lower school hold responsibility for years seven, eight and nine and the heads of higher school manage the GCSE years ten and eleven. With the high turnover of staff heads of years were becoming increasingly difficult to find, so heads of lower and higher years groups were formed in the hope that the pupils would gain some sense of stability. There are classroom teachers who possess specialised subject knowledge, classroom assistants who assist children with disabilities, learning difficulties and those who find the English language difficult to follow, such as refugees whose first language isn't English. There is an intervention team that consists of the attendance officer, mentors, heads of year, the deputy and Head. They mainly deal with years ten and eleven to help manage those who are at risk of exclusion or are having difficulty at school for one reason or another. There are also heads of departments and administration staff.

### **School day structure**

The school day begins at 8.40am, pupils are expected to attend register to catalogue their presence. If pupils are late they're to register their attendance at reception and/or with the attendance officer in her office. The day is divided into five, one-hour periods with a twenty minute morning break at 11.10am and a fifty minute



dinner break starting at 12.30pm. Lessons commence at 9.10am and the school day finishes at 3.15pm. Year assemblies take place once a week.

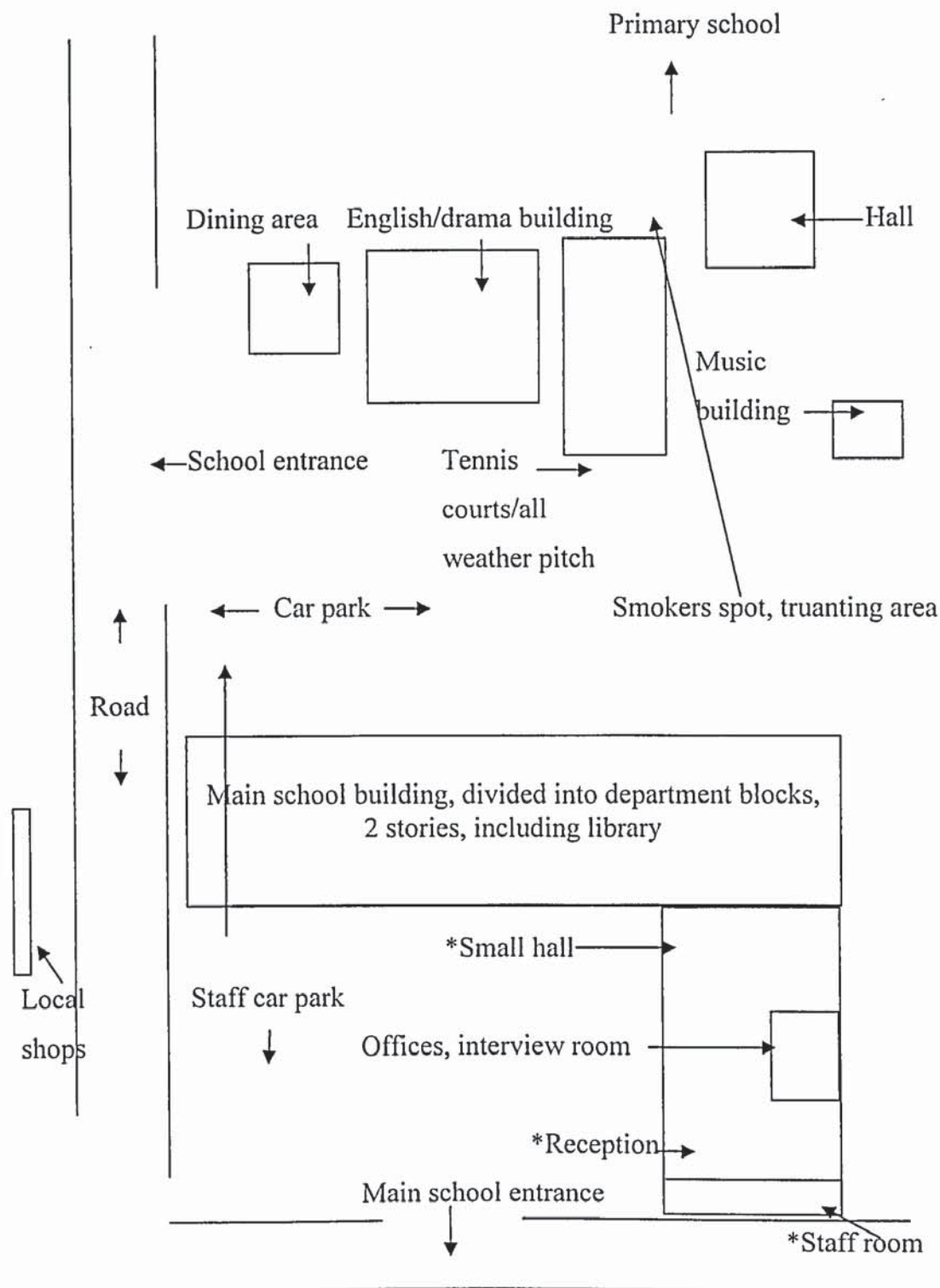
### **Subjects**

Supplementing the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, Languages, Drama, Information Technology, Religious Education, Geography, History, Music, Personal and Social Education, Design and Technology and Physical Education are offered. There are various pastoral programmes available. The main one offered to years ten and eleven being the Princess Trust. The learning mentor (Mr. Bids) holds responsibility for placing pupils thought to be more suited to vocational practices on placement. The construction workshop that neighbours the school is used for Brick-Laying courses. Other courses such as Painting and Decorating, Hair and Beauty are also organised. Mr. Bids is sometimes able to set up individual work placements such as giving pupils the chance to work in a nursery providing it has been agreed with the school during intervention meetings. Most pupils who chose or have been advised to take part in such programmes tend to spend their Wednesday afternoons completing them.

### **Physical characteristics**

The school comprises of one main bricked building that is divided into several blocks via departments. The reception, senior staff offices, staff rooms and visitor's interview rooms are all located at the entrance of the school. There is a behaviour support department too that caters for those pupils who've been taken off full-time timetable and pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties. The school has a separate block where Drama and some English classes are taught and a separate block for Music. The school has very good music equipment; the music block has its own studio. There is the school hall that is separate from the main building; it is here where school assemblies and examinations take place. The school canteen eating area also occupies a segregated building. Some blocks appear more decayed than others depending upon age. Blocks are separated via grassland. The school has a sport all weather pitch. There is a primary school and construction workshop that neighbours the secondary school.

**Figure 5.3 The Lodgelands Comprehensive School physical outlay**



**KEY**

\* = Ground floor. Above the ground floor is another floor of classrooms where lessons take place



The school buildings are somewhat disconnected due to the school's history. The main school building was originally an all girls' school, with an all boys' school nearby on the same grounds. The two schools amalgamated in 1971 and became one larger school. The school had a sixth form. A few years later the sixth form section was lost and the school began to shrink in terms of the numbers on roll. When parents were given the option of selecting which schools their children went to, many opted for other schools that were achieving better examination results. The school suffered, partially due to its location on the edge of Birmingham. Parents that were used to a single sex school set-up sent their children to other near-by single sex schools. Consequently the school's intake declined and the examination results suffered. Subsequently the school was no longer considered a local school, the Head Teacher at the time needed to pull in pupils from other areas, outside of the surrounding community. As a result the school has a very large catchment area. Pupils travel from all over the city to attend this school. The fact that the school attracts pupils from all over the city is viewed as negative by many staff. Pupils who travel long distances create problems for pupils wanting or having to stay after school hours and pupils often turn in late for school. Furthermore the fact that a significant proportion of the kids that do travel long distances to get to school are African-Caribbean influences the racial atmosphere of the community. When I drove to school in a morning I would often see busloads of Black pupils coming into the school and (school) busloads of White pupils being shipped out of the schools locality, going to other schools.

### **Formal rules and regulations**

The schools culture, as stated in their mission statement, is focused around the need to celebrate the 'full range of achievements of all students'. The mission statement emphasises new beginnings, the importance of preparing their pupils for the workforce and providing them with the necessary self-esteem and life skills needed to become valuable members of society. The mission statement is based around raising academic and other life skill standards for all pupils. The school has suffered from a lot of negative press in the past and is slowly improving its GCSE rates. The school is especially proud of how well their African-Caribbean pupils are improving and achieving in their GCSE's.

Some of the school rules include coming into school on time and attending, wearing full school uniform and obeying teacher's instructions. The following are the school's written 'classroom rules' that are up in many, but not all classrooms.

#### Classroom rules

- Enter and leave classroom quietly and sensibly when told by your teacher
- Be on time and bring the correct equipment
- Follow instructions at all times
- Stay in your seat unless given permission to leave it. Raise your hand if you need attention and wait
- If your teacher or a pupil is talking to the class, listen in silence
- Complete your work in the set time and do it well. Let others do theirs
- Do not eat or drink in lessons

Like in the Drillands High School the above written classroom rules were rarely stringently followed and varied in how strictly they were adhered to depending upon the teacher and type of lesson. Sometimes pupils did make noise, forget equipment, arrive late for class, disobey instructions, move seats, shout out answers and consume drink and food in lessons.

The school holds a strong intolerance to racist and sexist attitudes and behaviour. One of the most important rules stipulated by the school that becomes especially apparent during out of school activities such as theatre trips and geography field trips includes the notion that pupils must present themselves as well mannered, well behaved individuals when interacting with visitors (in or out of the school) and when out of school grounds. It is emphasised that they are representing the school and must do a good job. This is of particular importance to the school as it is desperately trying to improve its status and reputation to the outside locality. Mr. Bids describes the importance of this rule in the following extract taken from an interview, when I ask whether the teachers need any special qualities to work successfully in this school; he explains the 'Lodgelands way'.



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### **Reward and discipline structure**

The reward and discipline structure has a number of elements. An interim report structure is used. Pupils from every year have an interim report assessment conducted concerning their academic performances, behaviour and effort. These reports are done on an annual basis and are kept throughout the pupil's school career. This head of English explains how the pupils are scored in the following extract taken from interview data.



Bronze through to Gold awards are rewarded to pupils who perform well in their interim reports. All those who have gained an award are granted the chance to go on a trip and to attend an awards ceremony. Gold awards (the best) are difficult to attain and thus few pupils gain them, but those who do are rewarded generously.

The school also has a Cadbury Award system in place. Cadbury's sponsor their positive reward system. At the back of the pupil's planner (school diary), there's a progress chart, each time a pupil receives a Cadbury award the teacher ticks and signs the chart. When the pupil receives twenty Cadbury awards they are given their first certificate; there's a second certificate for forty, and a third for sixty, a fourth for eighty and a fifth for a hundred. Any pupil that actually reaches a hundred is given a special award such as an all expenses weekend away paid trip. A select few actually achieve this.

Most teachers value their reward structure highly and compliment its effectiveness, although some do complain that they wish they could spend more effort rewarding achievements rather than condemning the negative conduct of some pupils. Staff



believe that the rewards structure is effective because it's transparent; pupils know what they need to do and know what rewards they will reap if they achieve and the structure has credibility, some pupils do strive to gain the awards, as the awards are worth having. The interim report and Cadbury award system tend to reward and focus on academic achievement rather than good behaviour, but because the reports act as a sort of tracking system, pupils who are having some kind of difficulty either academically and/or emotionally at school are identified.

The discipline system concerning the management of disruptive behaviour isn't as clearly structured in terms of written documentation. There is a report system but not many teachers utilise it since the school believes that putting pupils on report for monitoring purposes disrupts lessons, too much time is taken filling them out and chasing them up. In theory the classroom teacher first deals with discipline issues. Should the issue require it, there is a referral system where teachers write reports to the heads of department. If the problem persists then it is passed onto the heads of year and onto the deputy and then Head if need be. Classroom teachers and heads of department typically felt as though this structure needed improving, the main difficulty being that feedback information was not effectively communicated. If a classroom teacher completed a referral report and passed it on to the head of department or head of year, that was the last they'd hear about the incident. Classroom teachers weren't effectively informed about what discipline measures were put into place concerning individuals and specific incident. The head of RE articulates this typical reaction.



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Although teachers at the grassroots level may sometimes feel left out of the intervention system, issues do get dealt with in the weekly intervention meeting. The intervention meetings discuss and decide what course of action to take with individual pupils together. The heads of years comment upon the academic issues of the pupil, while the mentors can offer more personal insight into their dilemmas. Thus a holistic picture of particular incidents and specific pupils is developed and discussed with different members of staff who have assorted levels of insight. Critical decisions concerning whether pupils should be put on part timetable, whether they should be encouraged to engage in more vocational work, should a meeting be arranged with the pupils parents/guardians or if pupils ought be excluded are made and discussed during these meetings.

Both the Drillands High School and the Lodgelands Comprehensive School have similar attributes in terms of their formal, informal and physical layers of the school. Both attain below Birmingham's LEA average in their GCSE performances. Both have cultural populations that roughly reflect the population composition of Birmingham. Both schools have significant proportions of African-Caribbean pupils, but in the Lodgelands Comprehensive this is visible to community members via the school busloads entering their community, with the Black kids being shipped in and many of their White kids being shipped out. The main differences between these schools are the size of school population and how explicit the code of conducts and written down rules and regulations are. Drillands High has more than double the number of pupils on its school roll compared to Lodgelands Comprehensive. Drillands High has a more comprehensive, explicit reward and discipline structure written down (even if not followed as such) in

comparison to the Lodgelands Comprehensive. The same components of the Spotsworth High School are now discussed and compared to the two Birmingham schools.

## **5.12 The Spotsworth High School's characteristics**

### **School type and academic reputation**

Spotsworth High School is a co-educational comprehensive community school situated in a Western suburb of Sydney (Australia). Unlike the two Birmingham schools selected, the Spotsworth High School caters for eleven to seventeen year olds, since in Sydney pupils take their HSC in years eleven and twelve. Specific figures indicating the schools academic performance are not so readily available in Australia compared to England. NSW statutes prevent the publication of information that ranks or otherwise compares schools in terms of test or examination results. The only publicly available information is through the school's annual report. Thus data is utilised from the 2002 Spotsworth High annual report (the latest report available) and interview data. Spotsworth High is a 'Priority Schools Funding Program' (PSFP) school, which indicates that the government has identified the school as disadvantaged. This initiative is a federally funded programme that was formerly known as the 'Disadvantaged Schools Program' (1973-1996). Schools that are part of the PSFP have been identified by the government as being located in communities that are in the lowest eighteen percent of Sydney communities in terms of socio-economic status. The school is located in an area identified as deprived via this government initiative. Special literacy and numeracy initiatives have been supported by the PSFP, since the school perceive these to be specific concerns for the school given that approximately 72% of the pupil population have a non-English speaking background (NESB).

The learning behaviour support staff describes what Spotsworth High intend to do with the rest of the PSFP allowance during an interview.



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The school intend to implement a proactive welfare system. This decision is influenced by the fact that a significant proportion of their pupils experience personal and emotional difficulties outside as well as inside of school. This is the schools way of attempting to address this issue.

Results for the Year Ten School Certificate are reported in six bands; band six represents the highest achievement and band one the lowest. The annual report states that in 2002, out of the forty-nine pupils presented for the School Certificate, twenty-four percent in English Literacy scored in the top three bands, ten percent in Mathematics and twelve percent in Science, indicating an increase in the average percentage of pupils scoring in the top three bands compared with the 2001 results. Of the pupils who scored in band one (the lowest achieving) in English Literacy, Mathematics and Science, sixty-three percent had a record of poor attendance and thirty-seven percent had started their education at Spotsworth High in year ten. Although Spotsworth High's Year Ten School Certificate results have improved since 2001, less than a quarter of those that took the external exam achieved scores in the top three (highest attaining) bands. This indicates that the school has a record of relatively low Year Ten School Certificate examination results concerning the three core subjects.

In 2002, sixty-eight pupils completed the HSC. The HSC was measured in a similar way to the Year Ten School Certificate, performance was measured against pre-determined standards and reported in bands one to six (as well as marks), with band six representing the highest level of attainment. Twenty-six percent of pupils achieved band four or higher in at least one subject, and of the fourteen pupils who studied English advanced, ninety-three percent achieved band three or above. A comparison of overall HSC results with state averages indicates a higher

percentage of pupils attaining bands one and two (for both males and females). Thus their HSC results fall below state average. Seventy-four percent of those pupils who gained band one (in any course) had high rates of absenteeism. The report emphasises what many of the staff felt, that for many of these pupils, receiving the HSC credential at all was a significant achievement. Like the two Birmingham schools, Spotsworth High School's academic reputation and performance levels can be viewed as below the state average; their examination results are comparatively low.

It has the smallest school population out of the three researched schools. It caters for approximately 400 pupils, consisting of over half Australian born pupils, just under a fifth of Lebanese pupils, with the remainder constituting a number of nationalities including pupils from Afghanistan; Bosnia; China; the Cook Islands; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Korea; Kuwait; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Qatar; Samoa; Somalia; South Korea; Sudan; Syria; Taiwan; Tonga and Vietnam.

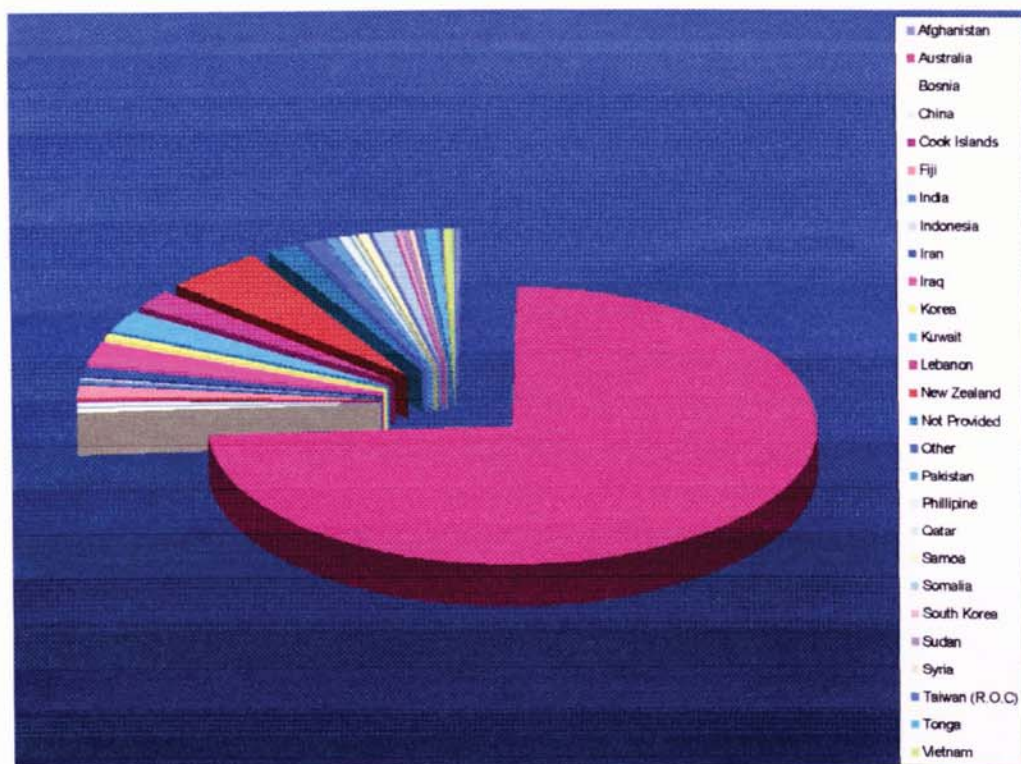
### **Cultural population**

Over seventy percent of the school population are from non-English speaking backgrounds. The pupil population reflects the cultural diversity of the schools community. Pupils from over forty different nationalities are represented. Over 60% of the school population are female. Debbie a member of the learning behaviour support team describes the predominant cultures present in the school as the following,





**Figure 5.4 Spotsworth High School country of birth for all pupils pie chart**



School mobility rates are high with a significant proportion of pupils leaving and enrolling throughout the year. The school's annual report states that there were 121 new enrolments at the beginning of the year in 2002, including 77 Year Seven pupils and a further 52 that enrolled during the year. 86 pupils left the school throughout the year meaning that one-third of the school population changed. The high migration rates reflected in the city and local communities are reflected in this school and influence the school's cultural population. The high pupil mobility rate is thought to have a negative impact upon the consistency of learning, particularly if pupils leave or enrol towards the end of the academic year. The retention rate of pupils from School Certificate to HSC was 57.3%, signifying an improvement compared with 2001 figures and approximates the statewide rate of 57.7%.

The 2002 annual report indicates that 65% of pupils exiting in Year 12 continued their education at university or TAFE. With approximately 30% engaging in full-time or part-time work and five went on to complete traineeships.

### **Staff hierarchy**

The school has a female Head Teacher who is viewed by many staff to have improved the standards of the school since her appointment three years previous. The 2002 annual school report found that staff had a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of their Head Teacher (77% indicating 'very confident' or 'confident'), but less confidence was found in the school executive with 94% indicating an overall 'confident' or 'sometimes confident' response. The school has a history of negative press via newspapers and radio, both staff and pupils are aware of the school's negative reputation, however many express the unjustness of the school's negative status. The school staffing also compose of executive staff, a male deputy head, year advisors, who equate to the UK's heads of year. Year advisors stay with their year group throughout the pupils' schooling. There are heads of departments; classroom teachers; support teachers; administration staff and support personnel. The learning support team consist of a librarian, school counsellor, ESL (English Speaking Language) teacher, support teacher learning difficulties, support teacher learning and behaviour, careers advisor and support teacher integration and learning behaviour support staff. There are numerous support staff, many of who tend to assist the non-English speaking pupils.

### **School day structure**

The school day starts with roll call at 8.40am. The day is then divided into eight periods of thirty-five minutes. Many pupils have double periods throughout the course of the day. There is a thirty-five minute lunch and a twenty-minute recess after lunch every day. Many pupils complained of the long mornings, not being able to break until coming up for twelve o'clock. There are approximately two assemblies each week. Assemblies tend to include all years simultaneously. Home time is at 3.05pm except on Thursdays when the school day finishes earlier at 2.40pm.

### **Subjects**

The school offers academic and vocational courses. In years nine and ten, electives include Commerce; Computing Studies; Drama; Food Technology; Languages; Metal Technics; Music; Sports Science; Studies in Society; Technical Drawing;



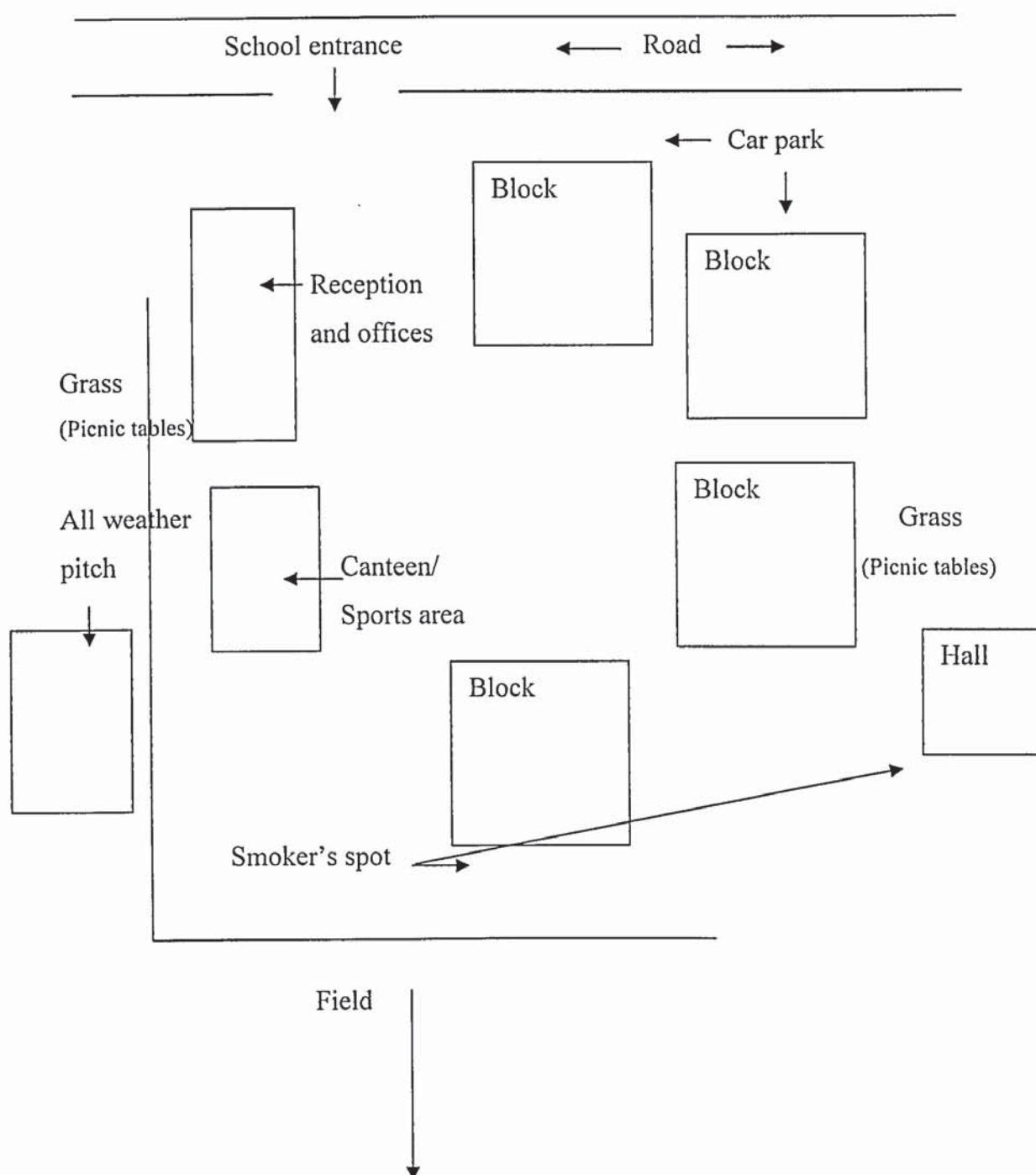
Textiles and Design; Visual Arts and Wood Technics. In years eleven and twelve vocational courses offered include Information Technology, Hospitality, Business Services, Administration and Construction. In addition the school supports pupils studying a variety of other subjects through distance learning, TAFE and Saturday school as part of their individual pattern of study for the School Certificate and HSC. TAFE courses can be difficult to get on, there is always a long waiting list and only a limited number of pupils are allowed to go from each school.

Parents/guardians are supposed to pay fees for subject equipment, such as food for the Food Technology classes; some of which goes to the general upkeep of the school too. In reality many of the pupil's parents don't pay this fee.

### **Physical characteristics**

The physical organisation of the school includes five main blocks, blocks A-E that are roughly divided into departments. There is a reception area; chairs that face the reception window are provided for visitors. The walls surrounding expose numerous photographs of Spotsworth's pupils on various outings and school balls. The senior staff offices and interview rooms are located in the same block. The warmer climate of Australia influences the physical structure of the school. I was struck by the amount of open, free space the school has. There are outdoor stairways and corridors that surround the floors of each block. Each block is two stories high. Some of the outside walls purposely display creative graffiti like images that former pupils have drawn. The canteen is roofed but can be accessed via outside grounds both at the front and back. Picnic tables are scattered around the school's green. Pupils tend to eat their lunch outside, no formal indoor canteen arrangements or benches are evident. Outdoor water taps are scattered around the grounds. The school gym was established in 2002, there are computer rooms and a library that pupils may access (with permission) during recess. There is a large field and tarmac playing area that is often occupied by lads playing football (rugby) games such as 'touch' or cricket during recess.

**Figure 5.5** The Spotsworth High School physical outlay



Pupils were often found sitting at the back of the field smoking/truanting. Access to local shops here.



### **Formal rules and regulations**

The school's mission statement includes the motto 'sicut aliis'. This is a Latin phrase meaning 'unto others'. This school motto is intended to represent the caring nature of the school and to encourage pupils to develop positive skills and attitudes so that they can contribute to society.

The school code is aimed to mirror Spotsworth's 3 R's; 'Rights, Responsibilities and Respect'. The code is evident around the school and in most classrooms in poster format.

#### **Rights and responsibilities**

b E positive

Success

Participation

Engage in learning

Care for each other

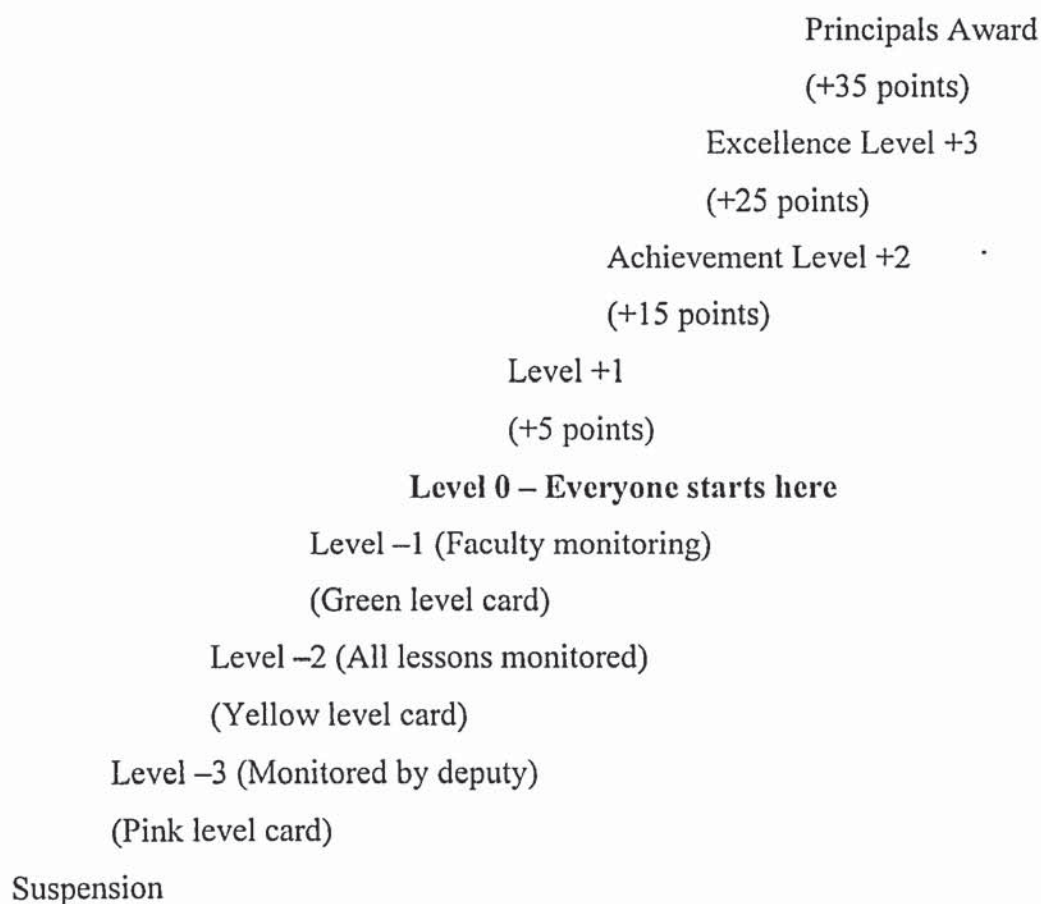
Teamwork

Spotsworth is a uniform school. All pupils are expected to be in uniform at all times. Pupils who don't wear the full uniform should report to E block with a signed note from their parent or guardian. Staff either pick up pupils who don't wear the complete uniform during the school day or in the assembly. Both males and females tend to wear trousers and shirt. Black shoes or trainer type footwear are permitted. Girls are allowed to wear headscarves (for non-religious purposes) and pupils are permitted to wear head garments related to their religion. Lads are not allowed to wear caps in classrooms. Girls may wear a suitable amount of make-up. Most pupils do wear their uniform.

### **Reward and discipline structures**

The 'level system' is part of the welfare and discipline system of the school and it incorporates both reward and punishment procedures.

**Figure 5.6 Overview of level system**



Every pupil starts at Level 0, this is the baseline. Points (parallel to merits) are rewarded to pupils for good behaviour, turning in good work assignments, representing the school, good attendance and more general actions such as picking up litter without being asked and wearing school uniform every day. Teachers have a certain amount of discretion when choosing what to reward their pupils for. Although many members of staff complain that they have too little time to reward points to pupils as they spend the majority of time disciplining negative behaviour. The points are taken to the pupil's year advisor, the more points the greater the achievement and the higher the level of certificate rewarded at the end of the school year. Very few pupils gain the principal's award. Thirty-five points or more points are required, the pupil has to have shown achievement in all faculties, never to have had an afternoon detention or truanted. The pupil cannot have been absent for more than ten percent of the year. Many teachers believe that the merit system works better with years seven to nine (eleven to fourteen years). Pupils in year ten,



eleven and twelve (fourteen to eighteen years) don't bother taking their merits to their year advisor and don't try as hard to gain the points in the first place.

Points can be taken away from pupils too (the minus 1, 2 and 3 level). These negative levels are colour coded, green means the pupil is monitored for a set period for one faculty (one class); a pupil who has regressed to a yellow level card is monitored throughout all their lessons and the blue level represents the pupil's final chance before suspension, senior members of staff monitor the pupil at this level. Reasons why points are taken away from pupils vary depending upon the teacher. They are supposed to be given out when a pupil displays continual disruptive behaviour, such as constant truanting, not doing their work or following staff instructions. Pupils may be given level cards for being caught smoking, swearing, not bringing equipment into class or behaving poorly in class. Once a pupil is on a level card they are monitored by teachers in four areas; following teacher's instructions, completes work for the lesson, allows others to work uninterrupted and brings equipment. Teachers score the pupil between 1 (represents unsatisfactory, the goal is never met during the lesson), 2 (the goal is **rarely** met during the lesson), 3 (goal is met **some** of the lesson), 4 (goal is met **most** of the lesson) to a possible 5 (which represents excellence; the goal is met **all** of the lesson). All pupils who are on level cards are not eligible to attend school activities and excursions, they may not represent the school, they should not be involved in any 'incident' and their parents/guardians are contacted if the pupil fails to reach the appropriate scoring. Pupils who fail to come off the blue level card get suspended.

All three schools studied are co-educational, state governed schools, located in or around a city. All three schools are viewed and tend to view themselves as working with people from 'difficult' or 'deprived' backgrounds, reflecting the nature of the communities they serve. All three schools qualify for extra government funding and have thus been identified as being located in lower socio-economic areas, and are identified as being in need of some additional assistance with the hope of raising (academic) standards. All schools have negative reputations; all have suffered from negative local press stories at one point or another.

All schools have multicultural populations that roughly mirror their cities. The Drillands and Lodgelands schools have similar ethnic and national population compositions, both have a predominantly White populace with pupils who are African-Caribbean constituting the next most prominent group. Both Birmingham schools cater for years seven to eleven (ages eleven to sixteen); the Spotsworth High School, like many NSW secondary schools caters for years seven to twelve (ages eleven to seventeen). Spotsworth High School represents the most culturally diverse school. It has a majority of Australian born pupils, but has significant proportions of Lebanese, Tongan, Turkish, Arabic, Samoan, New Zealanders and Vietnamese pupils.

All schools have similar staff hierarchical structures, school day arrangements and subject choice. The physical building of all three school showed some need of repair, but the Spotsworth High School's physical set-up was much more spacious in terms of its physical school building structure and outdoor recreation space. All three schools have multicultural populations, but the Spotsworth High School is the most multicultural and has greater issue with the high levels of pupil population turnover. Both Birmingham schools have a number of pupils who attended their school on a temporary basis, such as those with refugee or traveller status; this was more of an issue for the Lodgelands Comprehensive compared to the Drillands High School.

The formal rules, regulations, reward and discipline structures worked via similar policy guidelines, but how closely these were adhered to differed depending upon the teacher(s) present and circumstances in all schools. All three schools typically felt that they would like to spend more time rewarding the 'good' pupils rather than allocating so much of their time with the more disruptive pupils. The Drillands High School DFL system was more effective concerning the younger, more 'model-like' pupils rather than the delinquent resister pupils. Staff expressed mixed feelings concerning its effectiveness. The Lodgelands utilised a more varied, implicit reward and discipline approach, combining interim reports, intervention team meetings, a referral report system and Cadbury Awards scheme. Although this was considered to be a holistic, effective approach by members of senior



management and the intervention team members, classroom teachers felt that communication links between their referrals/giving of awards wasn't adequate. The Spotsworth High's positive and negative level system was typically viewed as effective by teachers, but as was the case in all three schools it was felt that the reward structure predominantly benefited the younger pupils, since the older, more senior pupils took a more of a blasé attitude towards receiving awards. Furthermore in all three schools the more severe the resister, the lesser impact the discipline structure had upon them, with permanent exclusion being the final measure of discipline in all schools.

### **5.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has described the characteristics of each school, the communities they serve and their national demographic and education context. All researched schools are located within similar communities. All are situated within low socio-economic areas. All three state governed, co-educational schools have a multi-ethnic and multinational population, and qualify for extra government funding due to their deprived status. All three schools have had a negative reputation within their cities and have suffered various negative local press attention. They all have comparatively low examination results relative to their city or national/state average.

The schools have been located within their local, regional and national milieu since the school environment, as well as the community and national context influence the way the individuals work, behave and interact within the school. The cultural composition of each community was roughly mirrored in each school population and influenced the workings of individuals within the school. Racism was evident in all three schools and surrounding communities, but it was more apparent in the Birmingham schools. The relatively high levels of unemployment, crime and illness in the communities impact upon the pupils' (and teachers') perception of life prospects, actual life opportunities and general attitude towards education. The following chapter positions the pupil's cultures and the selection of pupils within each of their schools to place the pupils in the wider social structure of their schools, community and national context. Each of the school's peer group

formations and selected pupils who participated in the research characteristic's are outlined, developing understandings into how the demographics of each school's national, regional and community context, influences the behaviour, attitude and actions of the pupils.



## **6 The pupils**

### **6.1 Outline**

The Drillands High School and Lodgelands Comprehensive School (Birmingham) peer group cultures are described and compared to the Spotsworth High Schools' (Sydney) peer group structures. Characteristics of the pupils who form the focus of this study are described. The pupils' personality; age; school year; gender; ethnicity; birthplace and first language; duration of time at school; attendance and academic levels and their family background are outlined. Each pupil is located within his or her school's peer group culture. The pupil's individual features are placed within the schools culture since the pupil's distinct characteristics and the features of the groups together influence the pupil's school experience.

### **6.2 Introduction**

Having described the wider social structure of the pupils' individual schools, their community and national context in the previous chapter, there's a need to outline the features of the groups of selected pupils. The characteristics of the pupils, school environment, community and national context all influence the way individuals work, behave and interact within school. The interaction and relationship between macro social processes and structures and micro, individual ones help explain how and why resistance occurs. This chapter describes the pupil's characteristics and their location within the school (culture) since these influence how different pupils construct various relationships with their school, teachers and other pupils.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of schools as organisations is the massive concentration of young people (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett; 1982). The world of the pupils constitutes one of the informal layers of the school. To understand the pupils and their experience of schooling, the pupil's personality; class; gender; ethnic and national identity; family background; affiliation with peer groups and how they are viewed by staff must all be considered.

Other ethnographers working within this tradition have described how pupil youth cultures and their relation to peer group life influence pupils' schooling experience, (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1989; McRobbie, 1991).

There are many ways of being a school pupil; some remain more 'invisible' or 'visible' than others. Perhaps the most two visible and familiar distinctions between pupils and how staff and pupils perceive them are the differences attributed to the 'good student' and 'the troublemakers' (Connell et al 1982). Both teachers and pupils are usually readily able to name members of both groups. As in Walker's (1988) investigation, some teachers held a 'soft spot' for some of the resisters.

In accordance with the literature I found a peer ordered hierarchy of groups in all three researched schools. Pupils tended to segregate along gender (Willis, 1977; McRobbie, 1991), ethnic (Walker, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1989) or nationality positions; with pupils considered by teachers and the pupils themselves as delinquent and disruptive tending to segregate from those who were not (Connell et al, 1982). Like Walker (1988), those pupils who were good at sport gained prestige in the pupils and some teacher's eyes.

The peer group formations are outlined for all three schools in terms of the specific years that the selected pupils belonged to at the time of fieldwork. Year ten (age fourteen to fifteen years) peer group cultures are described for the Drillands High School; year ten through to year eleven formations (age fourteen to sixteen) for Lodgelands and years nine and ten (age fourteen to sixteen) for the Spotsworth High School.

Peer group formations followed similar structural patterns in both the Drillands High and the Lodgelands Comprehensive School in Birmingham. Although parallel in terms of how gender, ethnic and national background and ones school reputation influence how peer groups organised, the Spotsworth High in Sydney had different ethnic and national cultural peer groups that reflected the different multi-cultural population of the school, the communities and the nation.



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### **6.5.1 The Drillands pupil's academic ability**

The information gathered is from the schools academic records. The number below indicates the teacher's assessment of the pupil's key stage SAT level. SAT levels were the most recent academic overview I could obtain from the school. These SAT results are from the pupil's year nine SAT results. Research began during the first term of these pupils year ten. Level 5 (Key stage 3) is the level that the government look for in all subjects, thus the pupil's academic abilities are predominantly below what is expected for their year group. All of the pupil's reading and spelling ages are below what would be expected; since these should more closely equate to their actual ages of fourteen and fifteen years.

There are a number of reasons why some data isn't available. Information not have been passed down from previous schools attended. Or the pupil in question may not have sat the appropriate test for a variety of reasons such as being absent on the day of the test.



**Table 6.1 Teacher's assessment of the Drillands pupil's year 9 key stage 3 SAT level**



### **6.5.2 The Drillands pupil's attendance records**

All information is taken from the pupil's attendance certificates obtained from the schools administration department. Attendance data for each pupil concerning 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 attendance levels are indicated, plus the pupil's percentage of attendance for the first term of the academic year 2002/2003 has been collected. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September up until November 2002 is the latest data available, since this is when the fieldwork took place in this school. Their authorised and unauthorised absences are also recorded.

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### **6.6.1 The Lodgelands pupil's academic ability**

The information gathered is from the schools academic records. The number below indicates the teacher's assessment of the pupil's key stage year nine SAT level in

the priority subjects of English, Math's and Science. SAT (Key Stage 3) levels were the most recent academic overview I could obtain from the school.

Data not available may be due to the pupils' previous secondary school not passing on relevant information.

**Table 6.8 Teacher's assessment of the Lodgelands pupil's year 9 key stage 3 SAT level (in core subjects)**



**KEY**

- No data available

### **6.6.2 The Lodgelands pupil's attendance records**

All information is taken from the pupil's attendance record obtained from the school attendance officer. The report date range is 02/09/2003 to 04/11/2003. This was the latest attendance information I could obtain, it relates to the 2004 first term data, during which fieldwork was being conducted. The number of absences relates to the number of days from a possible 78 the pupil didn't attend school. A summary of lates is also available.

**Table 6.9 The Lodgelands pupil's attendance**







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### **6.7 The Spotsworth pupils**

The school selected ten year nine and year ten (aged fourteen to fifteen) pupils for the research; seven girls, including three Anglo-Australian; one whose mother was Aboriginal and whose father was Anglo-Australian; one Vietnamese; one Lebanese and one Samoan. Three lads including one Anglo-Australian and two Islanders (one originating from New Zealand and one originating from the Cook Islands) were identified.



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C = Substantial achievement  
D = Satisfactory achievement  
E = Elementary achievement

Although a straight comparison between the Australian grading system from A to E and the KS3 level grading system (Levels N to 8 depending upon subject tier) isn't possible. One can roughly equate KS3 Level 5 to a C/D since this is the level that the UK government believe all pupils should be at in all subjects. Level 4 may be approximately equated to grade D/E Level 2 to grade E and N as a fail. Level 5 may be roughly equated to a grade C/B, with Level 6 through to 7 as a grade A/B. The higher the KS3 Level the better the achievement.

### 6.7.2 The Spotsworth pupil's attendance records

All information is taken from the pupil absence reports obtained from the schools administration department. Attendance data for each pupil concerning 2000/2001 attendance levels are indicated.

Attendance levels from the 31<sup>st</sup> of January to the beginning of April 2003 are presented below. These were the latest figures available as this was the time fieldwork was conducted in this school. The total absences are the numbers of days out of a possible 62.

**Table 6.11 The Spotsworth pupil's attendance**



All have comparatively low attendance records; Jason, Caz, Joshua, Carl, Nat, Radiah and Juls have particularly low attendance level records. Pupils from a range of nationalities predominant within this school were selected from years nine and ten for a number of reasons, ranging from truancy issues that have led to two pupils being kept back a year, behavioural and discipline problems ranging from the extreme to the not so extreme. A broad spectrum of resisters were identified.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has described the characteristics of the pupils selected by each school as not being able to cope either academically and/or emotionally within school. The pupils form the main focus of the study and thus deserve in-depth attention. In order to position them within their school structure, regional context and national societal environment, their individual characteristics in addition to the schools, communities and national milieu have been outlined and contextualized. A broad range of pupils have been investigated for a variety of reasons, some displaying more extreme disruptive behavior than others. All three schools identified pupils for a range of interacting reasons, including poor academic ability, a weak attendance and punctuality record, a negative attitude towards education and/or school. Some pupils had issues outside the school that interfered with their schooling experience, some suffered from low self-esteem and others were overtly disruptive and/or easily led by their peers. A variety of resisters have been researched, enabling an understanding into the different types and explanations for resistance to be analysed. The next chapter describes the forms pupil resistance takes with examples taken from the fieldwork.



## **7 Forms of pupil resistance**

### **7.1 Outline**

Resistance has been defined and explained in various ways in the educational literature, with some investigations emphasising some components over others making it difficult to understand the precision of how pupil resistance manifests itself (Fernandes, 1988). This chapter aims to unravel and describe the different forms resistance can take within school. There are various factors that influence a pupil's resistance response, but before an explanation as to why resistance occurs an account of what forms pupil resistance takes is described. Having read the literature on forms of pupil resistance, I've developed a conceptual framework of four continua that map the dimensions of pupil resistance.

### **7.2 Introduction**

Varying degrees of overt, covert; individual, collective; intentional, unintentional; engaged and detached forms of resistance occur simultaneously in a classroom. What is interpreted as resistance by one party (the teachers) may not be interpreted, or intended to be interpreted as such by others (pupils or parents).

Pupil resistance has been described in varying ways in the literature, with different dimensions of resistance being emphasised and contradictory descriptions given. There is a lack of conceptual rigour; there is no body of precisely defined concepts available which give 'resistance' analytical capacity (Fernandes, 1988). A more concise conceptual apparatus that helps map resistance is required. Different authors have focused on specific dimensions of resistance and have neglected to adequately consider others. A consideration of previous explanations of forms of resistance has been looked at in the literature review.

Various attempts have been made to categorise forms of resistance. Resistance can be viewed as occurring at either global or partial levels or as potential, virtual or effective in its influence and property's, or as latent or manifest (Fernades, 1988) or as overt or covert (Quigley, 1987). Individual and collective forms have also been

identified (Fernades, 1988). Contradictions are still apparent when trying to unravel what constitutes pupil resistance. Playfulness is sometimes misinterpreted as resistance (Grahame and Jardine, 1990) and the description of similar forms differs according to different authors. Previous research tends to focus on either pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988) or engagement (Woodward and Munns, 2003). With the resister being defined as the 'outsider' and the engager the 'insider'. Resistance and engagement shouldn't be viewed as mutually exclusive, a pupil may exhibit varying degrees of engagement and/or detachment and still be resisting.

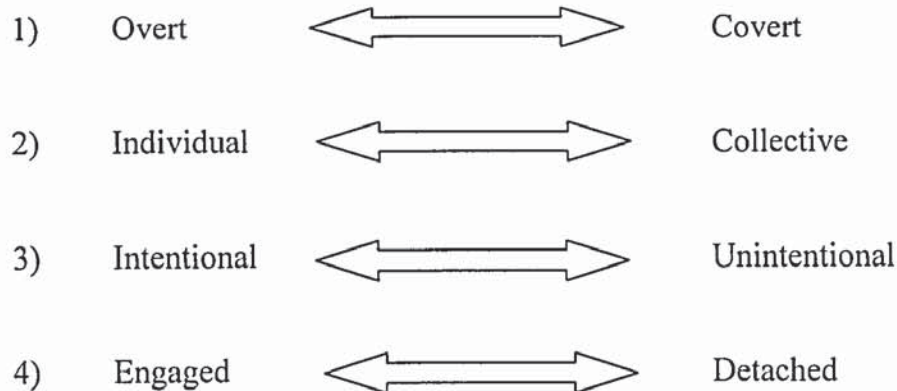
One of the reasons why pupil resistance has been described in numerous and sometimes contradictory ways is because resistance is mainly defined within schools and differs within and between schools. Resistance may be viewed as a social construction; it varies depending upon context and is construed differently from one individual and environment to the next. What constitutes pupil resistance alters depending upon whom, where and under what circumstances it is being defined. Thus what is considered to be resistant behaviour(s) in one context may not be defined as such in another. Nevertheless it is a real phenomenon, resistance occurs in the classroom and school context and it can be observed and defined, but resistance isn't a static phenomena, it shifts and repositions in form and thus requires a conceptual apparatus that takes this into account.

This research aims to build upon, and refine these categories by taking greater consideration of the flexibility and volatile nature of resistance. Rather than stringently categorise forms of resistance, an attempt is made to depict the various ranges of resistance and place them along different continua. Resistance is mapped by developing a conceptual apparatus that takes into account various dimensions of resistance and allows resistance to shift in its location and definition. The continua are developed via considering past attempts at categorising resistance, trying to unravel the contradiction evident in the literature and interlinking the different dimensions of resistance while adding more novel typologies that help further understanding and refine knowledge of dimensions of resistance.



### 7.3 Continua of pupil resistance

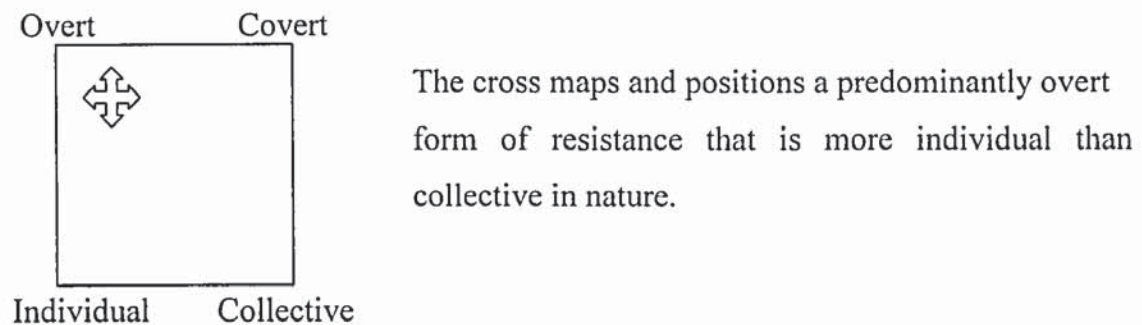
Pupil resistance forms may be viewed as falling within and between the following continua.



Resistance is a variable phenomenon; a resistant incident(s) can move along these continua and be located to more than one at any one time. The two extremes of each continuum (overt and covert; individual and collective; intentional and unintentional; engaged and detached) are distinct in their nature, but the grey areas in-between the two extremes are not so perceptibly different. Resistance can be viewed as existing and moving along and between these continua.

In principle what is deemed resistance can be plotted along all four continua; for example resistance can be overt, individual, intentional and engaged simultaneously, but in practice only two to three dimensions may be appropriately utilised to understand resistance. For visual aid purposes two continua can be placed along different two-dimensional square diagrams allowing one to plot specific resistance events, behaviours, attitudes and/or actions in relation to two continua (Appendix 5). Three-dimensional square diagrams could be used (Appendix 5) but this further complicates the hands-on use of the dimensions. There is a tension between the logical theoretical parameters of the dimensions and the practical use of them.

**Figure 7.1 Example of a two-dimensional square map**



The dimensions of resistance are described and analysed with reference to direct incidents taken from observational and interview data. Examples will be explained, analysed and illustrated in the above two-dimensional map format to further understanding into the workings of each continuum and relationship to other continua dimensions.

#### **7.4 The overt - covert continuum**

Two extremes of resistance can be viewed to exist and operate along one continuum, with overt at one extreme and at the other covert. Overt forms are done and shown openly, they are more readily apparent and are not secret or hidden. They tend to involve official rule breaking (Alpert, 1991) such as attendance and truancy problems, physical aggressiveness and vandalism. Schools and individual teachers may view such overt forms as personal insults; the classroom teacher feels personally rejected if a pupil continuously fails to turn up to their lesson; the attendance officer feels unsuccessful if they fail to help improve a pupils attendance and punctuality records. Acts of vandalism and aggression within school are sometimes viewed as direct attacks on the school and individuals within it. Like Alpert (1991) and in contradiction to Quigley's (1987) thoughts I found overt forms more likely to involve a degree of rebellion and disrupt academic achievement (of pupil(s) involved and others around them). Overt forms are thus increasingly likely to lead to exclusion from school.



The more covert forms aren't so candidly acknowledged or displayed, they don't necessarily involve any official rule breaking and are therefore more difficult for teachers to manage. Covert forms are less likely to disrupt academic success (Alpert, 1991). They involve behaviours such as daydreaming, limited participation in classroom discussions (Alpert, 1987) or criticism of the teacher over instructional procedures and regulations. They're more common behaviours evident in many classrooms. They may indicate rejection and challenge toward the school without being revolutionary (Alpert, 1991).

Resistance is complex and contradictory (Willis, 1977); some forms of resistance may be viewed as being positioned in-between the continuum's two extremes. Arguing with a teacher for example may be considered overt as it may become physically confrontational or this could be viewed as covert if a pupil asks irrelevant questions to direct attention away from the learning material and pass time. Covert forms of resistance are common elements in every classroom, they are considered to be familiar, legitimate responses that are less likely to lead to school failure (Alpert, 1991).

The following extract taken from fieldwork conducted at Lodgeland's Comprehensive illustrates a number of overt and covert forms of resistance and how acceptance and oppositional behaviours work simultaneously in one chemistry class. It also demonstrates how covert forms are harder for the teacher to spot and thus deal with.



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individual. Divided the pupils are more likely to fall, working together within the 'safety in numbers' mentality gives pupils more influence and control. Potentially more disruptive, collective forms can be more difficult for the teacher(s) to manage since there is more than one pupil to deal with and directing blame or placing discipline measures to try and appease the resistance is more complex as there is more than one party to attribute the blame to. Moreover not all members of the collective resistance incident or behaviour(s) may be equally responsible. Thus in accordance with Fernandes (1988) view, collective resistance has greater potential to possess emancipatory and transformatory strength than individual.

Collective forms include talking and joking around in class when asked not to, assisting friends with their work and passing paper messages in class. Some forms of resistance can be both individual and collective depending upon whether an individual exhibits it or two or more pupils. For example a pupil may truant from school or be late to class with no influence from their peers, a situation in the home, outside of the school setting may have caused this to occur. On the other hand, truanting and arriving late to class may be a group manifestation, peers may encourage one another to truant or arrive late so they have someone to truant or arrive late with. Thus where individual resistance involves one pupil, collective resistance concerns more than one. An individual resistance response may promote collective resistance.

Resistance can move along the continuum, from an individual to a collective or from a collective to an individual, with the former being more difficult for teachers to manage. Resistance isn't static, its very definition and typology can change thus denoting its complexity. What may begin as individual resistance may transform into collective resistance, and what initially was considered collective resistance may convert into an individual resisting a teacher, a certain rule or the school and/or education.

The following vignette demonstrates the complexities of the individual - collective continuum; it shows the shifts that can occur within one incident and how blame is shifted from one pupil to the next making it difficult for the teacher to catch the

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perpetuated, since once a pupil starts to segregate themselves from school, they are increasingly likely to become and feel disconnected, alienated and detached from their school and learning experience.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

A significant number of attempts have been made to explain forms of pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Fernandes, 1988; Alpert, 1991). Some of these descriptions are contradictory and fail to interlink the different forms (Fernandes, 1988). The 'manifest' (Fernandes, 1988) categories of overt, covert (Alpert, 1991), individual and collective (Fernandes, 1988) have been built upon and developed into continua. The more innovative dimensions of intentional, unintentional, engaged and detached have been added to this conceptual framework to act as an apparatus to help position and take into account the multifaceted nature of resistance. Where as overt, covert, individual and collective forms have been identified before, intentional, unintentional and engaged and detached represent more novel dimensions and thus contribute to further understanding into the theoretical knowledge of dimensions of resistance.

Resistance is viewed as operating and shifting between and within each continuum, from covert to overt or vice versa; from individual to collective or vice versa; from intentional to unintentional and vice versa and from engaged to detached and vice versa. Within one act there are varying levels of overt and covert; individual and collective; intentional and unintentional; engaged and detached resistance. In addition to changing and different degrees of variance within each continuum, such shifts operate between each continuum continually repositioning the form. Both overt and covert forms can be individual, collective, intentional, unintentional, engaged or detached in their manifestation and can shift within and between continua during any one incident, class, school day or whole school experience. Previous research has insufficiently linked the dimensions of resistance and account for its dynamic nature. While Fernandes (1988) identified individual and collective forms, he didn't incorporate the notion that both can occur at once with the same individual, rather he viewed individual and collective forms as mutually exclusive. The use of a continuum allows for an appreciation of the flexibility of resistance

and its ability to shift in position and meaning, allowing resistance to be viewed as capable of shifting within and between continua.

All forms exist in most classrooms and schools. Moreover resistance doesn't tend to operate alone, resistance and acceptance are evident in most classroom settings, even though the extremities of both differ depending upon context.

Overt, intentional and detached forms are more likely to lead to school discipline measures being used to manage resistance, thus the consequences tend to be more serious. While collective, covert and engaged forms tend to be more difficult for the individual classroom teacher and the school to deal with. Collective forms have the potential to hold more emancipative and transformative power for the pupils.

The intentional and unintentional continuum incorporates past attempts at distinguishing between 'resistance' and 'play' (Grahame and Jardine, 1990) or 'resistance' and 'coping mechanisms' (McFadden, 1993), as it integrates the intent, purpose and meaning behind the resistance response. The engaged and detached continuum acknowledges the extent of emotional, psychological, mental connection and participation involved in the form of resistance.

Traditionally pupil resistance and engagement have been viewed as mutually exclusive with previous research tending to centre on either resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988) or engagement (Woodward and Munns, 2003). The engaged – detached continuum attempts to refine this view by providing a continuum that allows resistance to be engaged and/or detached in form depending upon context. Pupils are viewed as being able to display engaged forms of resistance.

This chapter has described the various forms pupil resistance can take by using a conceptual apparatus that maps the different dimensions of resistance. Resistance can be viewed as operating along and between various continua. The continua are a conceptual apparatus that help position and understand the multiple dimensions of resistance and how they operate. This framework contributes to knowledge since it incorporates novel dimensions and allows for an understanding of how resistance



shifts in its meaning and can reposition itself according to context. Resistance isn't defined as a static phenomena being positioned at either one dimensional extreme or the other, but can be viewed as shifting in-between two extremes, operating along different continua and incorporating more than one dimension at once.

The next chapter outlines the factors that influence patterns of resistance and the forms that they take. These continua operate within and are mediated by class, gender, ethnic and national identity and the surrounding local and nationwide context, all of which shape pupil resistance.

## **8 Factors that influence pupil resistance**

### **8.1 Outline**

The interacting macro and micro influences that shape pupil resistance are outlined. The state context, the schools' surrounding communities, the formal, informal and physical features of each school and individual characteristics of the teachers and pupils are analysed in terms of how they affect patterns of resistance.

### **8.2 Introduction**

In all classrooms there exist relationships of resistance and acceptance. All pupils resist and accept their schooling experience to varying extents. The pupil's personality; academic ability; how they are perceived by teachers and other pupils; their home life and family composition; culture; gender; ethnicity and nationality all influence resistance. The teacher's personality, professional status, gender, ethnic and national background in addition to the pedagogical procedure and discipline rituals used by teachers shape resistance. The physical shape of the classroom and school environment, the official school rules; ethos; culture; reward and discipline structures; state of affairs and status of the school at any one point in time shape resistance. The surrounding community and state milieu also have an impact. All these characteristics interact and influence resistance.

Different investigations that help explain resistance emphasise varying and sometimes contradictory or incomplete explanations. Some recognise that the individual characteristics of the pupil (McFadden, 1993) or teacher (Alpert, 1991) have an influence, while others focus on how the school plays a significant part (Cullingford, 1999). Others appreciate the relevance of factors outside of school; how the local community (Walker, 1988; Munns and McFadden, 2000) or wider societal hegemonic ideologies and practices concerning class (Willis, 1977) gender, (McRobbie, 1991) and ethnicity (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) shape resistance. Explanations should account for the interacting relationship between how pupil and teacher features, the schools characteristics and the community and national milieu shape culture(s) of resistance.

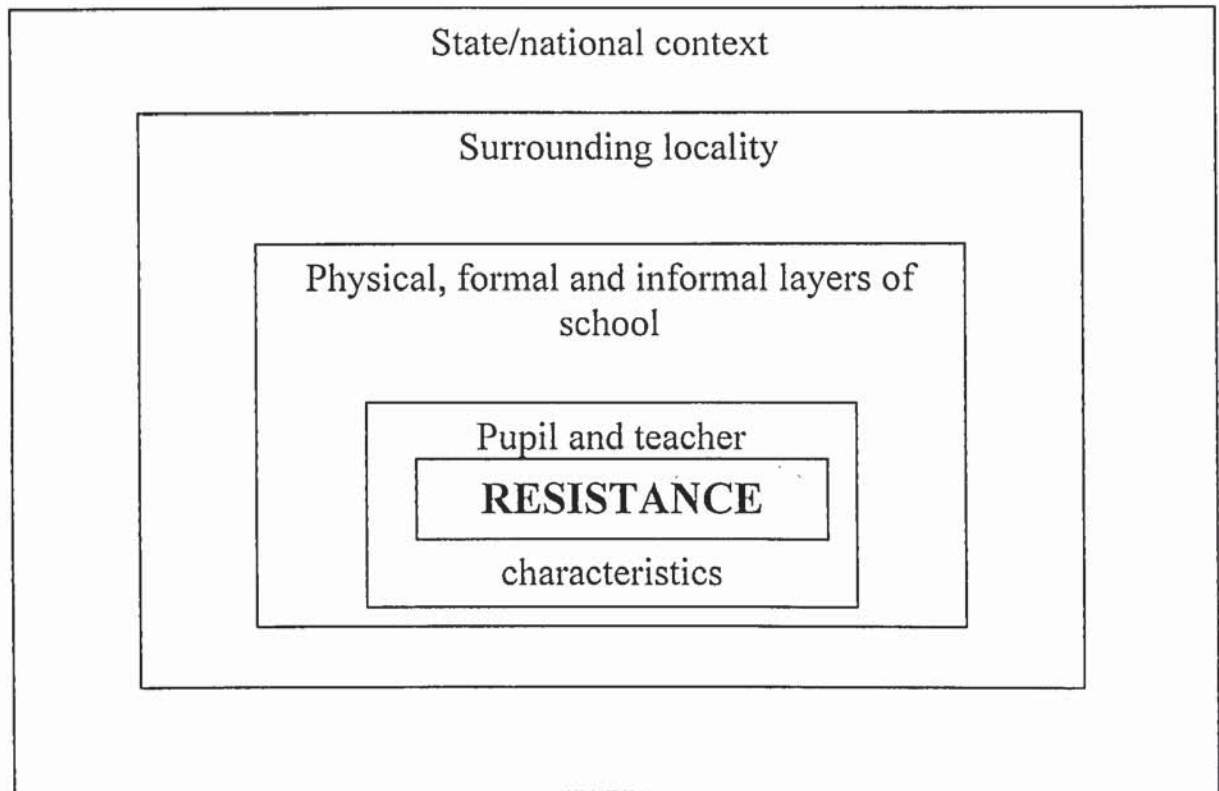


In accordance with reproductive (Bowles and Gintis, 1976), resistance (Willis, 1977) and structuration theoretical accounts (Giddens, 1991), schools are viewed as contributing to the maintenance of the status quo, by reproducing the existing relationships between social groups (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) and between their cultures (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a). Schools are viewed as organisationally, symbolically and culturally implicated in a reproductive process. Although structures exist and influence resistance, pupils are sometimes able to actively challenge their schooling experience (Willis, 1977). Some pupils help reproduce and/or struggle against dominant ideologies and practices including capitalism, sexism, racism and homophobia, within which and reproduced in the structure of the school. Resistance is the outcome of that contestation.

Pupils manage enabling and constraining structures (Giddens, 1991). Structures that exist amongst social groups and those ideologies dominant within society are the medium and the outcome of pupils (and teachers) practices and attitudes within schools (Giddens, 1991). School structures are managed and utilised by pupils, they can but don't always determine pupils' behaviour. Pupils are consciously able to influence social events; they're adept at working societal and school structures. There is an interaction between societal structures at the international, national and local level, the school structures, social group and power relation structures and the individual pupils (and teachers) power(s) of agency. Pupils are actors that are knowledgeable about their school experience and environment, of which they form an essential part. Like 'the lads' in Willis's (1977) '*LTL*' study; sometimes the pupils' resistance to their schooling experience have unintentional and even involuntary consequences for their future life paths and opportunities. Pupils can resist but still reproduce the status quo. Resistance reproduces existing hegemonic ideological frameworks and social relations dominant in capitalist societies. Structure and agency interact, pupils aren't passive recipients; rather they manage structures, sometimes in an enabling way and sometimes in a constraining manner. To explain this interaction and how it influences resistance, the interrelated macro and micro structures of society and the individual features of the pupils and teachers

need to be recognised. The pupils resist within a set of structures that are always present but not always operational.

**Figure 8.1 Factors that influence pupil resistance**



### **8.3 State/national context**

The wider societal environment impacts upon national education systems, what the state views as the purpose of education, what the state offers as education and what it hopes to achieve from it. Education (and employment) policy are shaped at the national level and are influenced by the nations economic status and cultural make-up. Details of England's and NSW's education systems and wider societal context have been discussed and compared in Chapter Five.

What constitutes national education policy and how it is implemented and utilised at the school level impacts upon a pupils schooling experience. For example at the Spotsworth High School in Sydney, pupils were more likely to be encouraged to repeat academic years, in comparison to the two schools in Birmingham. The English education system permits pupils to participate in years/classes that don't represent their age but in England this would only occur under extreme



circumstances, where as in Sydney this practice is more common. Education policy and how it's implemented and utilised at the national level influences pupils' schooling experience.



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Dominant ideologies and practices at the national and community level infiltrate and reproduce within schools, this is discussed in further detail at the surrounding locality level.

#### **8.4 Surrounding locality**

The class and cultural composition within the communities, the level of deprivation, type of housing, family make-ups, crime rates, (youth) unemployment figures and local job market prospects of the communities which the schools serve affect a pupils schooling experience. These factors influence how pupils view education, what they see as getting out of their education and their life path opportunities. Detailed information with regards to each surrounding locality and the communities served by each school have been compared in Chapter Five.

All schools were located within lower socio-economic areas. High levels of social deprivation within the community have a number of knock-on effects that influence resistance. Poor quality housing and diet habits have a negative impact upon a child's capability to do homework and concentrate in class. It wasn't uncommon for pupils to arrive at school without having had breakfast. A number of the pupils (in all three schools) didn't come from a nuclear family make-up. Some came from large extended families, others from single-parent families; a significant proportion had suffered family break up in the form of divorce, imprisonment or death of a family member. Some pupils were described as coming from an unstructured (family) background, which disrupted their schooling success and made it difficult

for them to cope with the structure of school. Debbie (learning behaviour support staff) reiterates this point in the following interview extract.



Some pupils don't appreciate the point of their education; they don't believe they can get themselves out of the cycle of deprivation. They don't think that school is working for them (Munns, Cole, Callow and Zammit, 2003). These are usually the extreme, detached resisters, they see people around them in their family's and community struggling and can't imagine getting a highly paid job with good prospects, especially in light of the local job market conditions and high (youth) unemployment statistics. Some do turn to crime, escape or build social networks through the use of drugs. Some females date older men with the hope of securing some kind of future. Many females (in particular) arrive late for class, not turn into school and find it difficult to focus when at school due to their heavy domestic responsibilities looking after the home, younger siblings and other family members.

Other pupils respond differently. African-Caribbean pupils in the two Birmingham schools and Islanders pupils from the Spotsworth High School tended to recognise the struggle their parents, loved ones and community members face(d) more so than their White counterparts. They more readily admitted to wanting a different life; a way out. A significant proportion of the pupils described how their parents and significant others had drummed into them that they must succeed at school in order to get a good job and not repeat the life they had. Jabrole, a Jamaican lad



from the Drillands High School in Birmingham explains how his mother supports him through his schooling years in the following interview extract.



implies that staying at home looking after the house and not having an official job role means you're lazy. The research shows that those from an African-Caribbean or Mixed Race background in the two Birmingham schools and those from an Islander upbringing in Sydney felt they needed to achieve, and work harder than their (White) counterparts. Furthermore this feeling of needing to achieve was slightly more evident amongst the females across all ethnic origins in both national contexts. The interaction and relation between gender, ethnicity and nationality influencing pupil resistance is investigated further in the next chapter.

The working-class culture evident in all communities surrounding each school has an impact upon the workings of the school and the individuals within them. Hegemonic ideology's concerning sexism, racism and homophobic attitudes evident in the national and community culture reproduce and are reflected within schools. Ways of being a White, African-Caribbean, Samoan male or female and so on are learned and supported by the community and family.

Both Birmingham schools were located within predominantly White working-class environments. Racism was evident in both schools and sometimes occurred as a direct consequence of racist ideologies and behaviour evident within the community. Fights would occur due to racial tension between families from different races/gangs from the surrounding locality. Stu a White lad from the Drillands High School explains why one fight occurred near the school, involving White (including Rick) and Black pupils from the school.



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This fight was caused by family feuds, brothers sticking up for their younger brothers quarrels. Like Willis (1977) and Walker (1988) this research shows that working-class males continue in the 2000's to try and act tough and macho. Brothers supporting and standing by their younger siblings exhibit this in this instance. The fight had racist undertones; pupils made racist comments over the next few days, with the White lads trying to acclaim their strength over the Black lads fighting capabilities and vice versa. Both sides claimed they had a 'bigger' and 'stronger' network or 'gang' to beat the other down. Racism was prevalent in all three schools, however it was more overt in the two Birmingham schools compared with the Spotsworth High in Sydney.

The following Drillands High School interview extract demonstrates how homophobic attitudes can infiltrate a classroom, influence pupils' behaviour, disrupt classroom content and affect pedagogy. I ask Mrs. Tetch, (senior management team member) what she thinks about



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In addition to how 'outsiders' perceive the school; the teacher, their level of authority and seniority, in addition to the context of the school day influence what is defined as resistance and how severely punished the pupil will be if caught. For example a pupil caught smoking in the toilets by the Head Teacher showing an inspector around may have more severe consequences for the pupil if caught under different circumstances by a different teacher.

### **8.5 The formal, informal and physical characteristics of the school**

Lahelma and Gordon (1997) investigating the first school day of four groups of students starting secondary school in Finland via ethnographic research discuss how a pupil's behaviour is influenced via three layers of the school. The official school refers to formal school facets such as the written curriculum, formal hierarchies, the pedagogical processes and disciplinary systems. The informal school includes informal hierarchical relationships of pupils and teachers, application and interpretation of rules and social interactions during and outside of lessons. The physical school refers to spatiality and embodiment. Lahelma and

Gordon claim these three layers are intertwined, and by making distinctions between them an analysis of features that are often hidden expose the workings of a school and the individuals within them. Applying this analytical framework to identify factors that explain pupil resistance is helpful. Schools are complex organisations composing of a multiplicity of different layers and practices that interact and influence resistance.

Details concerning the formal features of each school have been outlined in Chapter Five. The formal layers of the school including the staff hierarchy, the head, the school day schedule, subjects and curriculum taught, and formal rules, regulations, reward and discipline structures implemented and used influence pupil resistance.

Most schools operate along hierarchical staffing structures, with the Head occupying the top position. How the staff, pupils and parents/guardians perceive the Head is very important to how effective the school is managed, operated and received. Heads are often held responsible for the schools discipline (un)success.

How the school day is organised and the length of the school day, breaks and lessons impact resistance. ( ) from the Spotsworth High School explains why she hates the mornings during the following interview.

**LR:** Is there any other reasons why you don't like the morning?



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Many of the informal features of each school have been outlined and analysed in Chapter Five and Six. The informal hierarchical relationships of pupils and how they are structured have been described. How pupils fit into their peer group hierarchy, the role they adopt and who they socialise inside and outside of school influence how teachers and pupils interpret behaviour.



As well as the formal structure of staff hierarchy's, how staffs relate, interact and support one another influence teacher's conduct within school. The Drillands High School in Birmingham was the most disrupted school out of the three investigated. Staff moral was lowest in this school. Teachers were visibly tired and exhausted; some didn't see the point of trying to engage those pupils who showed no will to participate in classroom content and general school life. Some staff held a feeling of hopelessness, the general ambiance of the school was one of teachers feeling worn out, worked too hard for too little a reward. How teachers feel influences their behaviour within school and classrooms, which in turn affects pupil behaviour and resistance. Pupils respond to how they are treated and reacted to; if a teacher is feeling negative about the school in which they work and the job that they do, pupils will be able to pick up on that and respond accordingly.

Furthermore how individual teachers apply the formal rules differs. This is also related to the type of lesson being taught. For example one written rule displayed in classrooms in all three schools was that each pupil should bring appropriate equipment with them to each lesson. Pupils may get told off for not having a pencil or pen to work with during their maths class and then during their English class a different teacher may simply give the pupil a pen/pencil from their spare pen/pencil pot. Thus what is deemed resistance in one lesson may not be perceived as severe in another. How the teacher relates to the pupils, reacts to and understands their behaviour are all informal ways of behaving and interacting between the teacher and pupils that influence what is deemed resistance, what happens as a consequence of resistance and how the pupil(s) respond. Pupils become very adept at working out how to manage the varying (in)formal rulings and ways of different teachers. Radiah describes the difference between her sports teacher and previous year advisor (Mr. Yarm) and her food technology teacher (Miss Perrins) and how this influences what she can and cannot get away with during their lessons.

**LR:** What's the difference between the two teachers, how come you get along with Mr. Yarm but not Miss. Perrins?



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In addition to the formal and informal layers of each school the physical structure also has an impact upon pupil resistance. As Chapter Five describes, the physical outlay of the Spotsworth High was more spacious. Outdoor corridors linked departments and classrooms. Linked to the warmer climate this physical structure of the school buildings and surrounding land influenced the type of rules and regulations the school drew up and the pupils behaviour. Class change over time in the two Birmingham Schools was chaotic, pupils scramble through the corridors like sardines caught in a fishing net. Fights broke out, pupils ran down corridors to



greet friends; the hustle and bustle of the corridor jungle in the Birmingham schools shaped different forms of resistance. Shouting off blocked corridor walls as opposed to outdoor ones amplifies the volume of the shout and thus is more likely to gain teacher attention.

The type of lesson influenced where the lesson was conducted and thus the physical outlay of the room. Lessons such as PE and Drama tended to be more flexible concerning their talking and moving around rules. Pupils could stand on the woodwork top desks and play the radio during Textiles class. Pupils could get together to work and chat intermittently in their Drama and PE classes. The formal rules shifted depending upon the type of lesson being conducted; related to which is the teacher's manner and ways of dealing with situations. The Drama teacher may allow laughing; pupils making a loud level of noise and moving from one end of the room to the other, where as the Maths teacher may not allow this as it doesn't fit with the lesson content or their pedagogical style.

## **8.6 Teacher characteristics**

In addition to the pupils personality, belief system and disposition the teachers' also have an impact, as does their subject taught, knowledge and pedagogy. Stricter teachers may enforce formal rules and regulations as written in official school documents more so than more flexible teachers. How different teachers manage resistance varies depending upon their knowledge of the pupil, the pupils personality, tendency's and knowledge of their home life and outer school activities. The teacher's formal position within the school, their personal beliefs, pedagogy and personality and subject being taught inter-relate to influence resistance. Radiah describing Mr. Yarm in the previous interview extract illustrates how a teacher's disciplinarian style related to their personality type shape pupil behaviour.

Behaviour considered disruptive constitutes one of the main forms of pupil resistance. Like resistance, what is considered disruptive varies from one situation to the next. Within the official school layer formal documentation specifies what constitutes disruptive behaviour, individual classroom teachers and indeed the

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Where as other pupils recognised that it wasn't necessarily particular teachers that made them feel angry, alienated and upset but it was something else, something could have occurred amongst their peer group, at home or in another lesson that causes a pupil to vent their upset.



The pupils own individual facets, and their circumstances within and outside of school impact upon pupil behaviour.

### **8.7 Pupil Characteristics**

The pupil's personality, culture, gender, ethnic and national identity, the community from which they derive, their home and family circumstances in

addition to their academic ability and how they and their peer group are perceived by teachers at school shape resistance.

Loud, boisterous pupils who stand up for themselves don't readily fit into schools; pupil's who dance and sing during lessons, swing on chairs, laugh, joke and confront teachers, stand out like a sore thumb in schools. Pupils fight to try and retain their identity. Some do fight the system; they don't wear full school uniform, they adapt it to suit the latest fashion trends, feel more comfortable, to exhibit their identity, or to fit in with their peers (McRobbie, 1991); they don't follow school rules (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988), especially those they feel interfere with their identity and those they don't understand the point of. Male and female pupils from all ethnic and national cultures exhibited jewellery, make-up and trainers when against school rules.

A pupil who struggles with the work set will easily become bored and subsequently engage in resistant behaviour. Likewise the pupil who finds the work too easy will start to direct their attention into resistant responses. Resistance is used as a mechanism to inject humour into the school day (Willis, 1977). Resistance can be misinterpreted, what appears to be resistance may indeed be a cry for help and support (McFadden, 1993) or just be 'play' (Grahame and Jardine, 1990). It's also used as a way of using and directing the pupil's time as they wish. Resistance is sometimes a pupil's attempt at engaging in a preferred activity (Corrigan, 1979). In accordance with Mac an Ghail (1989) resistance is sometimes a 'survival strategy'; either adopted to get through the mundane routine of school life or to contest wider hegemonic ideologies and practices.



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## 8.8 Conclusion

The characteristics of the pupils and teachers, the school features and context in addition to the out of school structures interact and shape pupil resistance. There are various explanations for pupil resistance, each of which alters depending upon the interaction of structure and agency within specific instances in particular points in time. International, national and local community structures, events, ideologies and practices are reproduced within schools and influence a pupil's schooling experience. Kids resist within a set of macro and micro structures, these influencing factors are always there, but are not always operational and/or used by the pupils (and teachers).

Resistance is volatile and dynamic. It manifests itself within the classroom and school setting in a multifaceted way because of the many inter-related factors that shape it. National and local community contexts, school features and individual



teachers and pupils characteristics interact to contribute to the formation and manifestation of different patterns of pupil resistance. Although influenced by structures at the global, national, local, school group and individual level, pupils can and do inject agency; they are adept at working the school system (some are better than others) and do manipulate structures in an attempt to satisfy their own needs and spend their time as they desire.

The next chapter more closely analyses the significance and relation between the pupils class, gender, ethnic and national identity in the construction of resistance. Further tensions between the pupil's school and out of school life, identity and culture are outlined.

## **9 The virtual schoolbag**

### **9.1 Outline**

This chapter outlines the significance and relation between a pupil's class, gender, ethnic and national identity in the manifestation, construction and explanation of pupil resistance. All these factors are part of the pupil's 'virtual schoolbag' (Thomson, 2002) and interrelate to shape resistance. An understanding of the relation and interaction between them shows how different pupils respond to their schooling experience. Pupils face different tensions between their home; family; community; peer group and school pupil identity. Class, gendered, ethnic and national cultures and their positions all mediate these tensions.

The chapter begins with a vignette to show how class, gender and ethnicity operate within the classroom to shape resistance. Working-class relations and resistance are analysed, followed by a consideration of gender, ethnicity and national identity. Sydney and Birmingham share similar types and explanations for resistance, the two nations and cities' culture's help explain this.

Resistance is a legitimate response to tensions faced within classrooms and school. How the pupil manages these conflicts influences whether the pupil accepts, accommodates or rejects their schooling, related to powerful societal ideologies and practices (capitalism, sexism, racism and homophobia). Structures aren't simply imposing forces operating above and beyond the pupil's control. Pupils operate within them, being constrained by them to some extent but also possessing the power to contest both schooling and the wider society. Pupils use a range of resources to help shape their own life opportunities, but ironically this can reinforce the subordinate position of the pupil during and after their school days (Willis, 1977).

### **9.2 Introduction**

Resistance is mediated by class (Alpert, 1991), gender (McRobbie, 1991), ethnicity (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) and the societal and cultural environment (McFadden,

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## **10 Conclusions**

### **10.1 Outline**

The conclusion summarises the main findings of the research and outlines the theoretical, methodological and substantive contributions made to educational research. The implications these findings have for policy are summarised. There is a discussion of issues and problems experienced during the research and recommendations on how this research can be built upon and further developed in the future.

### **10.2 Introduction**

The research explores the nature of pupil resistance, how it is constituted and explanations for its occurrence. The significance and relationship between class, gender, ethnic and national identity and context at the pupil; teacher; school; community and wider national level have been examined. These questions were investigated via studying a particular set of pupils within three schools located in two societal settings. Ethnographic research was conducted in two schools in Birmingham and one in Sydney. Exploring these questions in this way the research makes a contribution to theoretical, methodological and substantive knowledge.

### **10.3 Theoretical contribution**

The theoretical framework of this research has been one that has drawn upon reproduction theory (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977a); resistance theory (Willis, 1977, Munns and McFadden, 2000) and structuration theory (Giddens, 1991). Previous attempts at defining and explaining resistance have offered contradictory and confusing accounts due to their adherence to one perspective over another. All these theories can contribute to the findings of this research when they are taken together. This research applies theories that have previously been separated; it contributes to an understanding concerning the application of integrated theories. It develops insight into the application of how theories can be integrated and drawn upon to develop understandings of pupil

resistance. In understanding the school experience of these resisters there is a need to acknowledge the interplay between the micro and macro and agency and structure levels of analysis to explain pupil resistance.

These theoretical propositions have consequences for how the research was conducted. There has been a conscious attempt to locate the micro level of interaction and power of agency within the wider school, community, regional and national structures. The reaction, responses and interactions of the pupils (and teachers) need to be understood within the organisation and material structures of the school, community and wider societal context. The historical, ideological, cultural climate and organisational elements of each school, community and nation all impinge on pupil resistance; they help shape its form and explanations for its occurrence. These resisters must be understood in relation to their peer group networks; family and community structures; school and national context. To understand pupil resistance the macro as well as the micro is needed, an analysis of the interplay between the pupil's power of agency and the constraining and sometimes enabling influence of varying structures is required.

The research contributes to theoretical knowledge by developing present definitions and explanations of resistance, by taking into account the interacting impacts of micro and macro, local, regional and (inter)national structures in addition to the pupil's power of agency. The research contributes to the agency versus structure debate in terms of understanding how reproduction, resistance and structuration theory can together be applied to pupil resistance.

Resistance is viewed as a legitimate pupil response to tensions faced within the classroom and school context. How the pupil manages these conflicts influences whether the pupil accepts, accommodates or rejects school, related to powerful societal ideologies such as capitalism, sexism and racism. In accordance with structuration theory, structures aren't perceived as imposing forces operating above and beyond the pupils control rather pupils are viewed as constituting them, operating within them, being constrained by them to some extent but also possessing the power to influence their schooling experience and societal



frameworks. Pupils utilise the resources given to them to help shape their own activities and life opportunities but ironically this can (but not always) reinforce the subordinate position of the pupil during and after their school days.

Resistance has been defined and explained in various ways in the educational literature, with many investigations emphasising certain forms and specific explanations for pupil resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988; Fernandes, 1988; Alpert, 1991). Some of these forms are contradictory and fail to connect the different forms (Fernandes, 1988), and thus fail to account for the volatile nature of resistance. A gap in the literature has been identified; the literature review shows that a better definition of resistance is needed. Present understandings of resistance ineffectively account for its volatile nature and many connected factors that impact upon the manifestation and explanation of resistance. I respond to these absences by developing four continua of resistance. The continua are an attempt to refine present definitions and categories of resistance. The continua may be used as a conceptual apparatus that provides analytical and descriptive capability to the study of resistance. The continua unravel some of the contradiction evident in past attempts at defining resistance; interlink the different dimensions of resistance; allow resistance to be viewed as variable phenomena, and add novel typologies that contribute to refining present understandings of resistance.

While overt, covert, individual and collective forms of resistance have previously been identified (Fernandes, 1988; Alpert, 1991), an appreciation of the volatile and complex nature of resistance has been insufficiently recognised. Past attempts have tended to view the forms as mutually exclusive and so haven't incorporated the notion that more than one type of resistance can occur simultaneously with the same individual or group. The use of the continua allows for an appreciation of the precarious nature of resistance. Resistance is viewed as being able to move within and between continua. The development of the continua contributes to the theoretical knowledge by providing useful dimensions of resistance.

The research has identified the more innovative dimensions of intentional, unintentional, engaged and detached forms of resistance. The intentional and



unintentional continuum incorporates past attempts at distinguishing between 'resistance' and 'play' (Grahame and Jardine, 1990) or 'resistance' and 'coping mechanisms' (McFadden, 1993), as it integrates the intent, purpose and meaning behind the resistance response. The engaged – detached continuum acknowledges the extent of emotional, psychological and physical participation involved in the resistance manifestation. Traditionally pupil resistance and engagement have been perceived as two mutually exclusive categories. Previous research has tended to focus on resistance (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988) or engagement (Woodward and Munns, 2003). The engaged – detached continuum attempts to refine this view by providing a conceptual apparatus that accounts for resistance being engaged and/or detached in its form depending upon the context. Pupils are viewed as being able to exhibit engaged forms of resistance.

The continua are a conceptual apparatus that help position and understand the multiple dimensions of resistance and how they operate. This framework contributes to knowledge since it incorporates present dimensions in a new form and allows for an understanding of how resistance shifts in its meaning and can reposition itself according to context. These continua are viewed as operating within and are mediated by class, gender, ethnic and national identity and the surrounding school, local and national context.

#### **10.4 Methodological contribution**

The research aims resulted in the use of a wide range of methodologies and data collection techniques utilised within the ethnographic format. A substantial amount of time was spent hanging around, doing observations and interviews in each school to conduct the ethnography. I spent ninety-eight hours in the Drillands High School; ninety-five at the Spotsworth High, and a hundred and five hours plus an extra nine hours during the Alton Towers end of year school trip at The Lodgelands Comprehensive School. Furthermore the Lodgelands Comprehensive School fieldwork followed a group of year ten pupils through to their first term as year eleven pupils; few ethnographies occur within this transition period, especially 'compressed ethnographies' (Walford and Miller, 1991).

Many different types of data have been collected and analysed. A fuller picture of the resisters experience to their schooling experience was obtained via crosschecking, validating and triangulating data from different sources. The different methodologies informed one another, data gathered via one methodological approach meant that other data collection techniques were better informed and better able to precisely explore areas of crucial significance. For example document analysis of the schools league table information confirmed much of the teacher interview data; that these schools struggled with keeping up or maintaining their performance levels. Reliance on one data gathering technique would have resulted in a loss of insight. This research offers further support to research that is child-centred. Focusing on the subordinate party and giving them a voice is a fruitful research ideology and technique that provides valuable insight.

The research's aims and the way in which the research was conducted contribute to how the research is experienced by the researched and the researcher. As a relatively young, novice, female, White, northern English ethnographer investigating the sensitive topic of pupil resistance in my home and in another country, specific dilemmas and challenges were faced. There are particular implications involved when investigating pupil resistance. The importance of how the researchers personal dispositions influence the research process has been highlighted. The significance of the role the researcher adopts in the school and the related predicaments an ethnographer can find oneself in when trying to balance the trust relationship between pupils and teachers contributes to methodological knowledge (Russell, 2005).

My novice experience of conducting ethnographic fieldwork with disaffected youth within schools, together with my investigating the complexity of class, gender, ethnicity, nationality and locality meant that specific predicaments were experienced. Investigating the sometimes controversial and sensitive topic of resistance meant siding to a greater extent with the pupils. My age and related to that, lack of experience as a researcher and teacher meant that specific issues were experienced with a certain degree of innocence. While this sometimes acted in my favour, allowing me to gain privileged information from delinquent teenagers, at



other times it contributed to my feeling vulnerable. Unlike researchers before me, I lacked insider teacher and researcher knowledge. This made gaining access to information from teachers more problematic, but it simultaneously acted as a benefit when gaining rapport with pupils, as they could more readily identify with me and differentiate me from teaching staff.

Siding with the pupils meant specific problems were faced. One key issue was maintaining an objective space between the pupils and myself. Like many fellow qualitative researchers I faced the danger of becoming too emotionally involved. To maintain objectivity and prevent becoming 'native' a distance was developed and certain ground rules followed. In addition to spending long periods of time with the pupils and within each school a reflexive attitude was employed to understand how the interaction between myself and the researched and how my autobiography influenced the data collected and the ethnographic process.

Engaging in cross gender, ethnic and national data collection has been a notable feature of this research. The tendency with research in the past has been to focus on just one gender, from one or a few ethnic and national identities in one national environment. By adopting an exploratory approach that allowed the schools themselves to identify their resisters a more meaningful sample (for the school and research) was obtained, allowing for an analysis that could consider the interaction of class, gender ethnic and national identity in two societal settings. This permitted an examination of micro and macro levels of analysis. Incorporating this interaction and significance between class, gender ethnic and national identity via a multi-methodological approach are definite ways forward in educational research.

### **10.5 Substantive contribution**

Previous research has outlined some ways in which class (Willis, 1977), gender (McRobbie, 1991) and ethnicity (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) influences the manifestation and explanation for resistance. No other research has attempted to analyse the significance and relation between class, gender, ethnic and national identity in two different national contexts to explain the manifestation, construction and explanation of pupil resistance to formal education systems. Prior accounts have



tended to focus on one dimension to the relative neglect of others. Several of these investigations have alluded to the notion that resistance can be perceived as a positive, rational reaction against dominant structural ideologies such as capitalist (Willis, 1977), patriarchal, sexist (McRobbie, 1991), racist (Mac an Ghail, 1989) and homophobic ideologies, but previous attempts fail to adequately link the significance and overlapping importance of all these dominant ideologies and how they play out in the classroom and school context and impact upon the pupils schooling experience. An examination of the relation and interaction between them enables clearer understandings into how and why different social groups positioned within different school, local and national environments respond differently to their schooling experience.

Pupils face different tensions between their home, family, community, peer group and school pupil identity mediated by their class, gendered, ethnic and national cultures and positions. How a pupil manages the interacting tensions between competing cultures within the school influences the manifestation and explanation of resistance. Class, gender, ethnicity and nationality play a pivotal role in the creation of diasporic identities, a source of which may lead to conflicts between the pupils home/family, community, peer group and school identity and culture. These tensions can be challenged, resisted, accepted and accommodated to (thus reproducing the status quo) or contestation and re-adjustment can occur simultaneously. Resistance occurs as a legitimate response and result of a number of inter-related tensions between the various cultures and identities each pupil has within their different spheres of life.

Resistance varies in its form, intent and rationale depending upon the class, gender, ethnic and national identity of the pupil in addition to the school, family, community and national structures. The interaction of each of the pupil's features (the contents of their virtual and actual schoolbag) and the macro structural elements help explain why resistance has varying manifestations and explanations, as this interaction isn't always the same. Pupils are the product of and help actively reproduce these interactions.

Resistance alters in its form and rationale depending upon the class, gendered, ethnic and national identity of the pupil. This research has indicated that females as well as males display overt, candid forms of resistance. In contradiction to much of the previous literature concerning resistance and gender relations, this research indicates that in some instances (groups of) females cause higher levels of disruption and exhibit overt forms of resistance. All three schools acknowledged a growing trend of overt, aggressive behaviour amongst their female pupils. Furthermore in all three schools females were seen as more likely to operate in groups and thus display collective forms of resistance when compared to their male counterparts. Males and females do exhibit different forms of resistance and this can be explained via the different societal (and school) ideologies that they're conforming to or opposing. Males and females experience different difficulties at school. Male forms and explanations of resistance in this research support previous investigations' findings (Willis, 1977; Walker, 1988), but many female manifestations of resistance do not. Like McRobbie's (1991) research, sometimes girls did resist in assertion of their femininity but their form of resistance was much more up-front than traditional literature suggests. Females are much more aggressive in their tone, visibility and prominence within schools, this growing trend was evident in all three schools.

There has been a wealth of research concerning how a pupil's ethnicity influences pupil resistance; many of which explain resistance in terms of a legitimate reaction related to the wider societal framework of racism (Mac an Ghaill, 1989; Chen, 2002). However many of these accounts focus on only one or two ethnic minority groups within one national context (Mac an Ghaill, 1989) and so fail to gain understanding into how and why working-class male and female pupils from different ethnic and national backgrounds resist school. In the Sydney context, although there is research concerning Greek, Anglo-Australian and Aboriginal pupil responses to their schooling experience (Walker, 1988; McFadden, 1995b; 1998), research concerning pupils from an Islander, Vietnamese and Arabic background is scarce. This research offers some insight into their experiences of school in Sydney and how this compares to White and African-Caribbean pupils' experiences of school in Birmingham.



In accordance with the literature overt forms of resistance were recognised to exist among some ethnic minority pupils in all three researched schools. In both Birmingham schools some teachers (mis)interpreted some African-Caribbean mannerisms as overt resistance. Likewise Islanders (more so than Malaysians or Vietnamese pupils) were viewed in a similar way by some teachers in the Sydney school. African-Caribbean girls in Birmingham and Islander girls in Sydney in particular tended to be perceived as overt, domineering forces in the classroom.

In both of the Birmingham schools it tended to be the White males and females who displayed the more detached forms of resistance compared to the African-Caribbean pupils who tended to exhibit more engaged forms of resistance. When comparing resistance in the Spotsworth High School in Sydney, the relation between gender and resistance was similar. Females were increasingly likely to exhibit overt, collective forms of resistance. However some females (more evident in Australia when comparing Anglo-White pupils) tended to exhibit more engaged forms of resistance while some males displayed more detached forms. A pupil's class, gender, ethnic and national identity and social position help shape resistance.

The differences in form and explanation for resistance especially evident amongst the White pupils in the two Birmingham schools compared to the school in Sydney is explained in terms of the different multi-cultural make-up and culture of the two schools populations and related community and national populations. African-Caribbean pupils in Birmingham and those from an Islander background in Sydney tended to be perceived as loud, dominant forces visible within the classroom and school context. The similarities between the two ethnic minority groups' types and explanations of resistance can be linked to their reaction and accommodation to dominant racist and gendered ideologies. Some ethnic minority groups tended to exhibit engaged forms of resistance due to the importance they placed on education passed on from their family and community members.



## **10.6 Policy implications**

From this research it is evident that policy initiatives should centre a greater focus on the White working-class female pupils, in addition to concentrating on males, and those pupils from various ethnic minority groups. In both England and NSW attention has been given to the 'gender gap' over the last ten years or so. Rather than viewing the females achievements as a cause of satisfaction, they're presented in the media and in popular discourse as a widespread problem of failure among boys, about which the educational community in general and teachers should concern themselves with (Osler and Vincent, 2003). The improvement of GCSE and HSC examination results of (some) females has drawn attention to the notion that males are underachieving in school and thus require attention. Likewise those from an African-Caribbean background, in particular boys in England and those from an Islander and Arabic background in NSW have been the focal point of media attention and policy initiatives. In England for example schools are given extra government money for supporting schools and LEA's to meet the needs of minority ethnic pupils in the form of initiatives such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). Although such initiatives are a positive development this research implies that specific groups such as African-Caribbean males in the UK shouldn't be given precedence at the expense of other groups such as White working-class females. Continuing research is needed, in national and international terms to investigate the significance and relation between the intersection of ethnicity and gender in order to understand different social groups responses to their schooling experience and their achievement.

Policy makers and practitioners such as teachers have much to learn from pupils about their understandings and experiences of school.

## **10.7 Limitations and future research**

This research can be seen as an example of an in-depth, explorative investigation that examines pupils' resistance to their schooling experience. The research responds to the need for research to focus, in detail, on the teenager's perspective as identified by other educational researchers (Furlong, 1991). Like many in-depth investigations, this research has provided a detailed and accurate account of pupil

resistance from the resisters' perspective but may have difficulty in generalising the findings from these few select pupils identified in three schools to all groups of pupils in other schools in the English and NSW contexts. Although Anglo-White pupils and in particular females were perceived in all three researched schools as representing a growing problem in terms of their behaviour and response to their education this may not be the case across Birmingham or England, nor Sydney or NSW. However via my own practical experiences working with females as a Learning Mentor in Birmingham inner-city secondary schools, in addition to taking into account recent literature and media attention that suggests a growth in a ladette culture evident among some female pupils that has been linked to White working-class culture (Jackson, 2004), perhaps females' becoming more assertive and aggressive in their tone and manner at school is a national if not international phenomenon that requires further research. However stereotypes aren't fixed but are socially produced in specific contexts, thus more research is required to test the findings in this research; to see if females and those from an Anglo-White or African-Caribbean background in the English context or Anglo-White, Islander, Malaysian, Arabic, or Vietnamese pupils in the Australian context should constitute a concern for practitioners, policy-makers and all concerned with education.

The SDQ II data gave an additional set of insight into the psychological state of the resisters and helped to validate the qualitative findings. However the questionnaire was too lengthy for these pupils, some of who struggled with literacy skills. Many pupils commented on the irrelevance of the questions and found the procedure of completing them tiresome. The SDQ II data offered little fresh insight into the lives of the resisters and their experiences of school but it did validate some of the observational and interview data. The intent of this research was to use the SDQ II as an extra source of insight into the resisters feelings about themselves; use of the SDQ II may better serve large-scale investigations that aim to quantitatively distinguish different facets of self-concept.

This research would have benefited from spending a greater amount of time in the field. The adoption of 'compressed ethnographies' (Walford and Miller, 1991) was



utilised due to time constraints. Spending up to six months in each school would have provided richer detail concerning how pupil resistance can change over time. This research provides a snapshot in time and is thus unable to account for the volatile, changeable nature of resistance over a prolonged period of time. Furthermore, researching another secondary school in Sydney would have allowed for a more balanced account of how national as well as individual school cultures and ethnic and national school population compositions help shape different forms of resistance and facilitate different explanations for its occurrence.

The research was unable to determine the significance and relation between sexuality (homosexuality), in addition to class, gender, ethnic and national identity in the manifestation and explanation of resistance. During the fieldwork sexuality appeared to be one of the vital inter-related factors in helping to explain pupil resistance for some pupils in all three schools. Further research into this may prove fruitful. Furthermore a comparison of middle or upper class pupil resistance with working-class resistance may be beneficial to more clearly reveal how a pupils' and a schools' socio-economic status helps shape different patterns of resistance.

Use of videoing, photographic diaries, or written diaries compiled by the pupils and teachers may also have proved an insightful source of data that may have facilitated how the pupil's perceived their experiences of school. However issues of confidentiality must be retained when investigating the sensitive topic of pupil resistance.

Understanding pupils' resistance to their schooling experience is no easy task. Resistance is an integral part of some pupils' school experience and may have some impact on the pupils' future life path occurrences. An understanding of what is resistance and explanations for why it occurs is imperative for the pupils themselves; teachers; parents and all concerned with education. It is hoped that this research has given voice to some of the resisters experiences and in doing so has contributed to the understanding of pupil resistance.

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## Appendix 1

Pupil Interview Schedule

Teacher Interview Schedule

## Pupil Interview Schedule

### The pupil and the school

- 1) Could you describe life at school for you?
- 2) Can you finish this sentence for me . . . I think school is . . .
- 3) You've probably had some interesting experiences at school, does any one-event/time stick in you mind? Can you describe it to me?
- 3) What do you enjoy about school? – Why?
- 4) What do you not enjoy about school? – Why?
- 5) Which subjects do you like/dislike and why – what is it about these subjects that you like/dislike? (E.g. what is it that you like about art class that you don't like about maths?)
- 6) What are the day-to-day activities you go through at school? Take me through a typical day from when you wake up to go to school to the moment you go to sleep
- 7) Can you think of anything else you might do on a typical day at school?
- 8) At the start of a new term are you glad to be coming back to school? – Why do you feel that way?
- 9) What's your favourite part of the school day?
- 10) What's your least favourite part of the school day?
- 11) Do you think you are treated with respect at school?
- 12) Do you think you are treated fairly at school?
- 13) What do you think about the way in which your school reacts to/deals with bad behaviour?
- 14) What do you think about the way in which your school reacts to/deals with good behaviour?
- 15) How would you like to be treated at school? Would that make a difference to your behaviour in the school?



### **The pupil and the teachers**

- 16) Can you finish this sentence for me . . . I think teachers are . . .
- 17) How do you get on with the teachers?
- 18) Do you get on better with some teachers more so than others – Why?
- 19) What is it about these teachers that you like/dislike? (E.g. what is it that you like about Mrs X that you don't like about Mr G?)
- 20) What do the teachers think of you?
- 21) Does going to different classes with different teachers affect the way you behave? – Why?

### **The pupil and other pupils**

- 22) Do you have a group of friends?
- 23) Who is this group? Tell me about your group
- 24) Do you spend a lot of time with this group in school/out of school with this group?
- 25) What are the important things about being in your group?
- 26) What sort of things do you and your group do?
- 27) What do your friends think of school?
- 28) Do your friends influence what you think and do?
- 29) Are there any people you don't like at school? Why?

### **The pupil and the home**

- 30) What do you usually get up to when you're not at school?
- 31) What is life at home like for you?
- 32) What does your dad/mum/guardians do?
- 33) What does your parents/guardian think of school? Do they think it is important for you to go and get good grades? Do they think it is important to help you get a good job?

34) Do you prefer to be at home or at school? What's the difference between life at home and at school?

**The pupil and the social structure**

35) Do you think this area is a good place to live?

36) Do you think school is important/useful in helping you get the job you want?

37) What would you like to do when you have finished school?

38) If you didn't have to go to school what else would you do with your time?



### Teacher Interview Schedule

- 1) Can you tell me about your role(s) in this school?
- 2) How did you come to work here as a teacher?
- 3) Can you tell me about year 10, how do you see them as a year?
- 4) How does this year 10 compare with previous year 10's?
- 5) Do other teachers view year 10 in a similar way?
- 6) Do you think teaching is or can be a difficult job – why and in what ways?
- 7) What do you think makes a good teacher? – What qualities do you think a teacher needs to work in this school?
- 8) How do you deal with/what is the best way to deal with disruptive behaviour in the classroom?
- 9) What do you think about the way in which this school reacts to/deals with bad behaviour?
- 10) What do you think about the way in which this school reacts to/deals with good behaviour?
- 11) Can you tell me about the merit system here? What is the purpose of it/ is it effective?
- 12) How would you explain pupils who are not coping too well in the classroom/school environment? Are there any fairly typical factors/criteria involved or is each case unique?
- 13) Why do you think some pupils find it difficult to cope in the school environment?
- 14) How would you describe Bernie? (What is he good at, what is he not so good at, in what ways does he misbehave?)
- 15) Why do you think Bernie has been identified as not coping too well in the school environment? – Why do you think he sometimes misbehaves?
- 16) How would you describe Matt? (What is he good at, what is he not so good at, in what ways does he misbehave?)
- 17) Why do you think Matt has been identified as not coping too well in the school environment/ - Why do you think he sometimes misbehaves?

- 18) Do you see any differences in the way the girl's (mis)behave at school and the way the boy's (mis)behave? – Do you think they experience different difficulties? – Why do you think that way?
- 19) Do you see any differences in the way students from different ethnic backgrounds (mis)behave at school? – Do you think pupils from different ethnic backgrounds experience different difficulties? – Why do you think that way?
- 20) What do you think about the area in which the school is located? – Do you think it is a good place to live? – Are there differences between the estates?
- 21) What are the kids like in this area?
- 22) What are the parents like in this area?



## Appendix 2

Field note extracts (Birmingham)

Field note extracts (Sydney)

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The teacher asks the pupils to copy the pH scale from the whiteboard. As the teacher turns her back to help another pupil Stu moves to the teacher's desk and steals the teacher's markers. The teacher looks up and has noticed Stu looking suspicious, she asks him what he has in his pockets; Stu says "nothing". The teacher realises her markers have gone; she asks Stu if he has them and he says a lad behind him has them. The teacher tries to get to the bottom of it, she knows her markers have gone, but Stu denies knowing anything. Stu has pinched the markers.

(OC meanwhile I'm feeling very uncomfortable, I know Stu has the markers, what if the teacher asks me what I've seen? I don't want to be put in a position where I'm asked to grass on Stu, as this will compromise the aims of the research and my relationship with Stu and the other kids. Luckily she moves on to the next class task without pursuing Stu or me).

The teacher passes an old science examination paper and textbook around the class (foundation tier), the class are asked to answer the first few questions. She instructs the class not to mark the actual exam paper as she re-uses them with other groups.

Stu copies the pH scale from the board on a piece of paper.

Stu explains to me that he has music today; he tells me that he enjoys music even more than drama. Stu tells me that a pupil must take both music and drama as an option or none of them.

Stu starts to answer the exam question on the exam paper. The teacher had instructed the class not to mark the paper (OC I don't think Stu heard this instruction as he was too busy chatting, making jokes trying to impress the girls) I tell him he's not supposed to mark the paper; he asks the teacher, the teacher confirms what I have said, consequently Stu swaps his exam paper with another pupil's from behind, he now has an unmarked paper.

Stu uses the textbook to help him answer the exam questions.

The girls sat near us pass around notes with secret messages on them; Stu takes it from one and passes it to a lad behind. The girls manage to grab their note back before Stu and the other lad make their secrets public. Stu and the girls settle and so a bit of writing.

Stu talks to the girls about wanting to get a good report today. He explains that he wants a good report so that he can come off report. He informs me that you need all 1's or 2's in the sections of the report for a whole week in order to come off report.

**10.30am** Stu has answered question 1 and 2 from the exam paper. The teacher comes over and marks question 1, she explains to Stu that she will make her way around the class before marking his question 2. Stu stops working.

The teacher comes back round to Stu a few minutes later to mark question 2, Stu has got the question a little wrong, although the teacher explains that his reasoning

behind the mix up makes sense, Stu knows that hot air rises and this is why he has got muddled up.

**10.35am** Stu asks the lad sat behind “what time does the bell go? Does the bell go at quarter to?” The lad nods yes.

Stu puts his head down and attempts to answer question 3, again he uses the textbook to help him answer the question.

**10.40am** Stu notices the time, realises its nearly break and starts to tidy his work away.

**10.45am** The bell goes for break.

Break (Notes written up in evening)

We went to a corner spot, where Stu and his mates smoked. They shared their fags between them; they claimed “two’s” or even “three’s” on each other’s fags. (Going “two’s” means sharing the cigarettes between two; going “three’s” means sharing the cigarette between three people).

(OC As always I felt uncomfortable with the lads smoking in front of me; hoping that a teacher wouldn’t pass by and see us!)

One of the lads had a load of poppies; he gave me one.

(OC I took it reluctantly as I suspect it was pinched from somewhere in school. I put it in my bag – out of sight!)

I noticed how small (for year 10’s) and young some of the boys were; two of the lads were year 8’s. I wonder if this has anything to do with the fact that Stu himself is small? Stu’s older; year 11 brother was present too. All of the four lads were White.

Stu and the lads had a bit of a kick around in the football playing area.

When it was time to return to class, the lads saunter back slowly.



### Radiah and English class

**10.30am - English (Periods 3 and 4; Double lesson)**

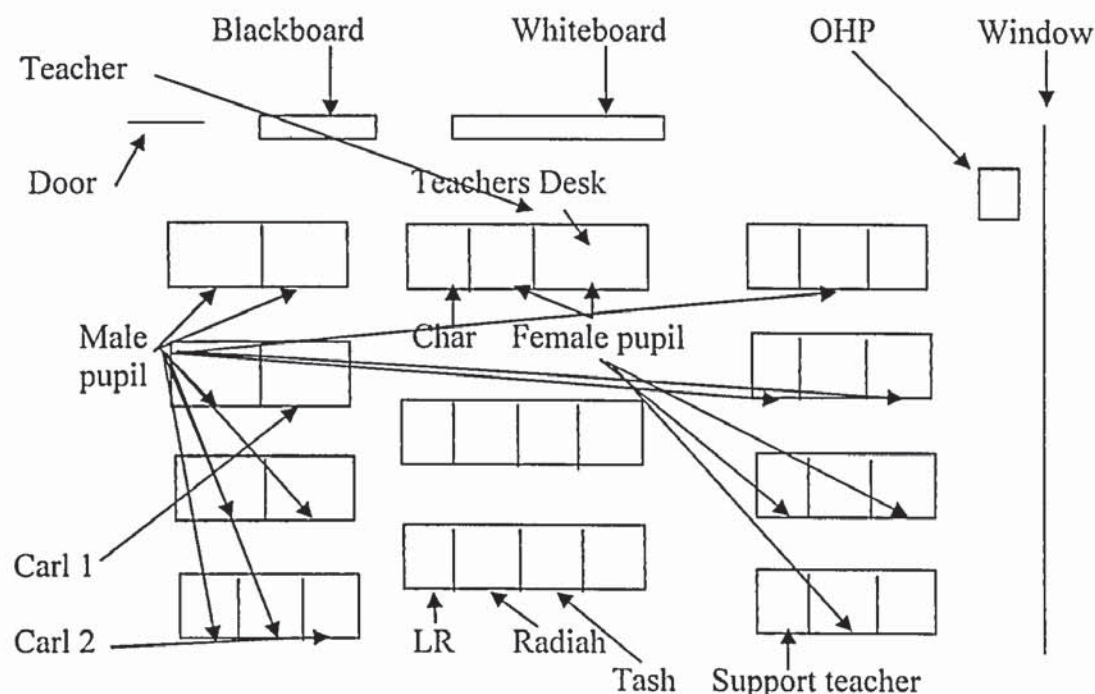
(One of Radiah's least favourite lessons)

**10.30am** As we line up to enter the class Radiah shows me her school photos. Radiah is the last to enter the classroom. I speak with the male teacher and female support teacher and explain a little about what I am doing. The teacher asks me how do I do the research if I don't take notes, as in his last class I didn't take notes, I say I take notes in most lessons but in some I don't as I take a little rest.

Radiah is quite vibrant today, she's laughing a lot in class.

Radiah passes the teacher her level card.

### Classroom set-up



## KEY

Carl 1 = Carls original position

Carl 2 = where he moves to

Radiah is still giggling with her female classmate who is sat by her. A FOB lad walks into class a few minutes late. The teacher asks him where he has been, he says he has been with a teacher, so the teacher asks him for a note, he says he hasn't got one, so the teacher asks him to go and get one, the lad sits down. The teacher says he has been lying, and Radiah shouts, 'april fools'. The teacher says the lad must stay behind 10 minutes after class; but this never occurs.

The teacher describes what a synonym is, meanwhile Radiah is busy chatting, the teacher looks up to her and shouts, ‘Radiah!’ And she momentarily quietyens down.



Classroom activity - Synonym's – similar word. The pupils are asked to fill in the gaps from an OHP worksheet.

The teacher shouts as Radiah starts to chat again, 'Radiah don't waste your life and open your book...you too Tash' (girl sat next to her).

Radiah replies under her breath, 'I'm not wasting my life'; she opens her exercise book up.

Radiah says to Tash 'I've got art next oh my god'. Radiah continues to chat with her Tash as the teacher manoeuvres the OHP to get a clearer picture.

**10.35am** Carl enters class late, but the teacher says nothing. He sits down (Carl 1).

(OC this is unfair since the other lad who was late but earlier than Carl got a grilling).

The teacher leaves the room to find a replacement OHP as the one that is in the room does not appear to work. Carl moves his table next to the FOB lad's at the back (Carl 2). He spits some red food out at Charlie and the supply teacher tells Charlie off for shouting across the room, Charlie says, 'what do you want me to do catch it with my mouth like a baby? He's spitting food at me!' The supply teacher doesn't respond and the teacher walks back into the room/

**10.37am** Radiah shouts, 'what's the heading sir?'

The female support teacher says, 'it's synonym, similar words,'

Radiah says, 'arh it actually works' (talking about the OHP that the teacher has just brought into the room).

Radiah continues to chat about the school photographs as she writes down the title.

The teacher asks the class to copy the passage from the OHP, some of the pupils move from their seats so that they can see the OHP better. Radiah shouts, 'if anyone sits there I'm going to scream' pointing to the seat in front of her.

The passage is taken from a novel; the passage has gaps that the pupils are asked to fill with a synonym that makes sense to the sentence.

Carl turns to talk to me (he is now sat right by me on my left), 'Lisa would you like a cup of tea?' in his attempt at an English accent. I say 'no' and he says, 'Lisa would you like a lolly?' and he offers me some of the red food (OC My lack of cultural understanding prohibits my knowledge of what this red food actually is) he has been eating. I refuse kindly.

Radiah copies the passage down, she sighs, 'orh' after she's copied the first sentence down. As she writes '1' in the gap they are supposed to leave she sighs again, the support teacher comes around the back of her (she has been walking around the class) and tells her that it doesn't matter as she can put the word above the number.

Radiah says, 'oh no here I go again' – she has done the same for gap '2'.

Charlie turns around from the desk in front and asks Radiah, 'are you Kurdish?'

Radiah replies, 'no'

Charlie says, 'are you Kurdish?'

Tash says, 'she said no'

The teacher shouts, 'Charlie'. He walks over to Charlie and tells him that he 'is incompetent not unintelligent', and he puts his head down to do some work.

Radiah laughs at this as she continues to copy from the OHP. She speaks the words from the OHP out loud as she writes it. Tash sat next to her says, 'shut up man', but Radiah continues for a few more minutes.

Radiah talks to Tash about a member of staff finding out some information about the canteen incident (it was burnt down over the weekend), she says, 'he found out who burned down the canteen'. Before Tash really gets chance to respond, Charlie turns around to the girls again and says, 'her (Tash) house is so ugly man'.

Radiah says, 'what an arse man, no it isn't'.

Charlie asks Tash, 'do you live in a normal house?'

Tash asks, 'what's a normal house?'

Charlie, 'not a holy house' (referring to Radiah's)

The teacher shouts, 'Charlie' as he walks over to him again.

Radiah continues to write from the OHP as the teacher goes through some possible answers for the gaps in the passage.

Carl chats; the teacher shouts at him, 'I'm sick of kids chatting when I'm trying to teach'. Carl falls momentarily silent while Radiah continues to read out loud from the OHP. The teacher says, 'that's you Radiah too', Radiah insists, 'I'm reading', the teacher says nothing in response.

A girl comes in the doorway with a blue slip, Radiah turns in her seat to the door and says, 'who's that for?' (OC Radiah is easily distracted). The teacher walks over to her and says, 'can I give you a tip...(couldn't hear what else he said)' and some of the pupils say, 'give it to the teacher' expecting him to say it. The teacher takes the relevant girl from the room and talks to her outside. Char and another female go outside the classroom.

Charlie turns around to speak with Radiah and Tash again, they argue/chat about how ugly one another are, Radiah giggles. The teacher comes back into the room and writes 'Radiah' on the blackboard and 'Tash' with a '\*' next to it, without explaining why. This makes Radiah giggle even more.

The teacher continues to discuss gap 2 on the OHP.

Radiah shows her classmate Tash where the class are up to by pointing on her sheet, as the class shout out possible answers for gap 3.



**10.58am** Char and another female return to class; and then Tash is given a blue slip to leave class, Radiah sighs, 'orh' as she leaves.

**11.00am** Bell goes.

The teacher returns to helping the pupils fill in the gaps from the OHP. Radiah shouts out, 'mmm a clear view' the teacher writes 'got' on the board, Radiah repeats 'got' and the teacher says, 'I got that very good'.

The teacher moves on to the next gap, Radiah offers another word, she asks, 'what is a verb?' and the teacher and support teacher say together, 'a doing word!'

Radiah continues to engage with the lesson from that point.

Teacher says to class, 'ok let's go to number six,'

Radiah repeats, 'number six,'

Teacher continues, 'so the finches where *something* from the water'

Radiah answers, 'they were *drinking* from the water'

Teacher asks, 'drink drank?'

Radiah replies, 'drank from the water, only a small flock of brightly coloured finches drank from the brackish thread of water' (repeating passage sentence from OHP).

Teacher asks, 'what do you do with the tap?'

Radiah states, 'you over flow...turn it on,'

Teacher says, 'yeah could be,'

Radiah says under her breath, 'I should know' as she taps her ruler on her exercise book.

**11.05am** Radiah says, 'right that's it,' she puts her pen down and spreads her ruler across her book.

Radiah asks another female if she has a spare smoke, the girl says no.

The teacher continues to address the class, 'he would *something* for a response,'

Radiah replies, 'he *waited* for a response,'

The teacher repeats another pupil's answer, 'he would get,'

Radiah continues, 'receive a...'

The teacher writes her answer on the board and says, 'good ok lets move on,'

Radiah continues to try and answer the questions, the teacher continues, 'he would meet', then shouts at Carl for talking, Radiah shouts to sir, 'he- would- meet.'

Carl says to me, 'orh stop giving her the answers,'

I say, 'I'm not!'

Radiah confirms, 'she's not.'

(OC I think Carl is trying to stir trouble with Radiah and the teacher. Note my presence on Carls behaviour).



## Appendix 3

SDQ II Questionnaire

SDQ Scoring And Profile Booklet

Pupils' Individual Raw Scores Table

Pupils' Total Self Concept

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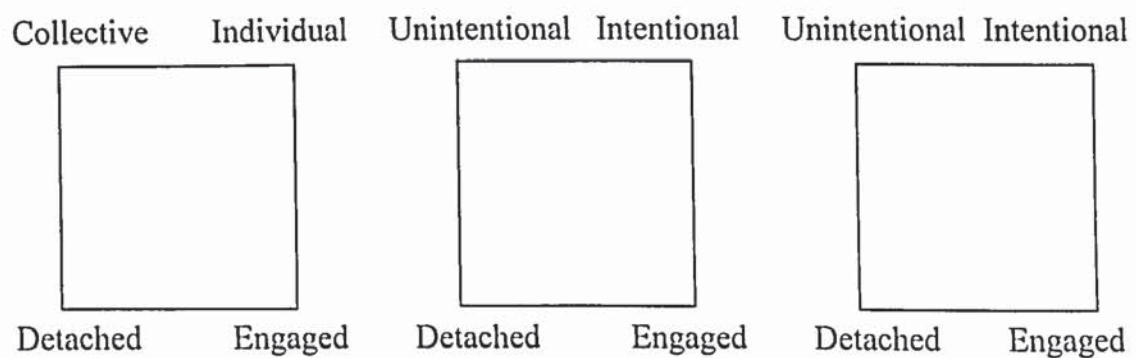
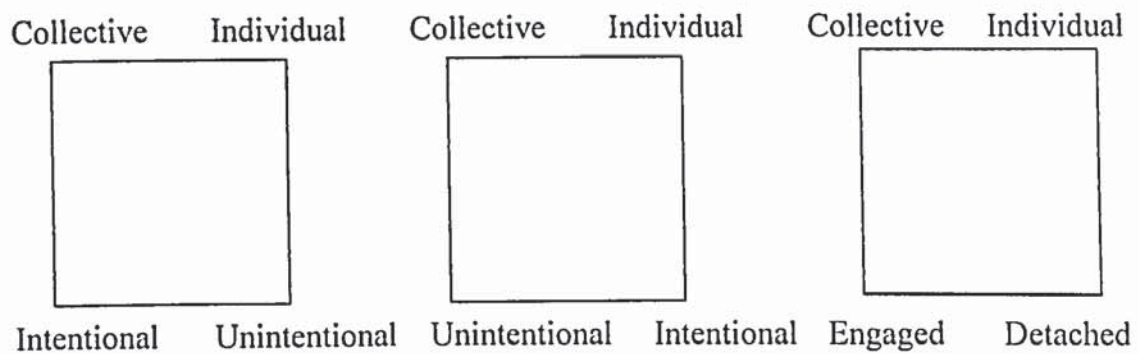
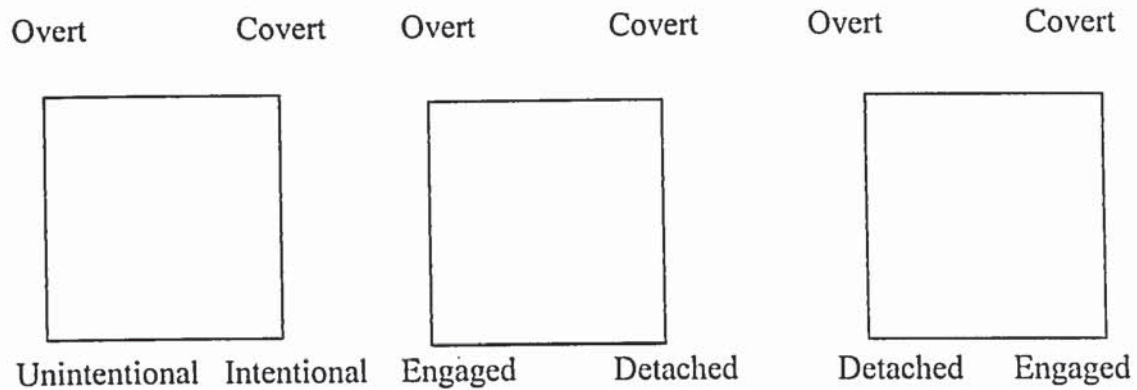
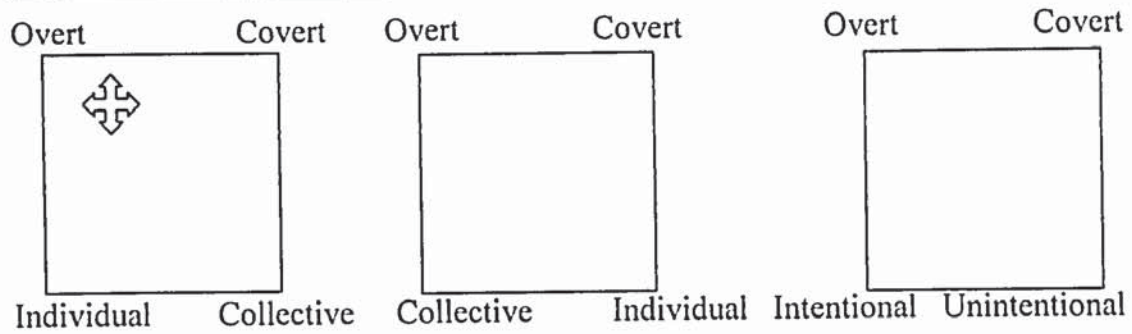
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## Appendix 4

All possible two-dimensional maps using 4 continua

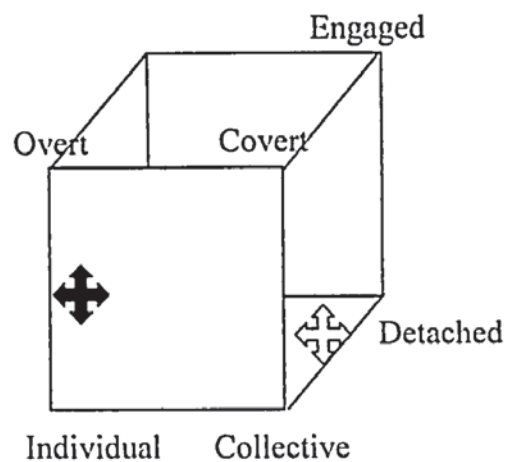
Three-Dimensional map of resistance example

All possible two-dimensional maps using 4 continua





### Three-Dimensional map of resistance example



#### KEY

⬞ = Plots a collective, detached form of resistance.

⬞ = Plots an individual, overt form of resistance.

In theory all four continua dimensions (Overt, Covert; Individual, Collective; Intentional, Unintentional; Engaged and Detached) can be used to plot forms of resistance, the above just shows one example of a three dimensional diagram that uses three continua dimensions.