SOME PROBLEMS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS
FOR WORKING CLASS STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

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FOR WORKING CLASS STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

By

GEOFF PAYNE, B.A.(ECON)

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AUTHOR: Geoff Payne, B.A.(Econ) (Manchester University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Franklin J. Henry

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

This thesis is concerned with a sociological analysis

of the educational problems of lower class students. The

study concentrates on one public school. Failure and mis-

conduct are related to the different value orientations of

staff and students. Occupational goals are indicated as imp-

ortant, and it is suggested that many students are unable to

understand the role of student.

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The school is both a community and a bureaucratic organization.
For most children it is the first social system in which they
systematically participate outside of the family, and as such it has
a key place in the process of socialisation. The young student
approaching school has a limited experience with which to conceptualise
and structure the process that will involve him: he has a set of
values and social habits learned at home, and a model of social
relationships based on the unique ascribed qualities that define his
father and his mother as members of his family.

With these tools, he must make sense of a new order of things:
he must learn what the role of student entails, and he must play that
developing role for ten years or more. The starting point of this
study is to consider how a group of students did make sense out of the
educational process. To explain this, the staff and the day-to-day
life of the school became of interest as it is not meaningful to
isolate the students from the power structure of which they are a
part.

At its simplest, the argument is that most of the problems
of education, whether those of academic failure or misconduct, arise
out of the social system of the school. More specifically, that all
education entails change on the part of the educated, and that school
automatically sets up stress and tension in the individual. Because
school exists as a middle class institution, children from middle class
homes experience less tension than children from working class home
who have more to change in order to fulfil the demands of the school

system. In particular, the value orientation is seen as being a crucial determinant in how the students react to the school. Misconduct is a product of differences in value orientation and the stress that is inherent in education: once a student is defined as bad, and starts to "misbehave" then this in itself becomes a major factor in his failure.

By observing the day-to-day life of a school, and by interviewing both staff and students, an attempt was made at understanding how each approached the system of action that mutually involved them. In particular, we tried to discover what means and ends the actors saw in education, what was the nature of misconduct, and how did this relate to the values which defined the system of action for the participants. The "family" values of the student were contrasted to the values of the staff, which resembled those of the "organization" (universalism, achievement, performance, etc.); the importance of education to the lives of the actors was also a focus of interest. A new school was chosen mainly in the hope that the clash of values would appear more clear-cut.

We considered the following propositions as the structure of the study. Firstly, that the lower class students are more often rated as "problem" students by the teachers (who hold middle class values). Students who had bad conduct records would also have bad academic records: these students would come from semi- or unskilled working class homes in which study was hard to complete and not encouraged. "Bad" students see education as a means to an end (getting a job), whereas "good" students see education as an end in itself, as well as a means to an occupation. This means "bad" students

feel education is less important - especially as they have lower occupational ends as well. Lower class students resent the middle class norms of polite conduct presented by the staff. Finally, poorer students see the staff as people, not as role players, and fail to understand the universalistic demands entailed in their role as students.

The study does not set out to test the above as hypotheses: rather we are interested in understanding the nature of events observed and their meaning in terms of this orientation. The first chapter locates the study in a context of literature on factors affecting academic success, which in part will explain our theoretical orientation and certain assumptions made in the course of the study. We then analyse events in the life of the school to show the part played by values and stress, in chapters 2 and 3. The next two chapters report the interviews with the staff and students and the final chapter codifies the findings of the study. An appendix discusses the methods used in the collection of the data.

CHAPTER 1

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To understand the events which together comprise the life of a school, it is necessary to consider a very wide range of data, including those aspects of life experience which lie outside, but are carried over into, the school. Unfortunately there is no coherent sociological theory of education and while many studies exist, there has been little attempt to integrate them. Before we can proceed it is therefore necessary to organize some of the existing literature under a number of headings for discussion.

This will throw into relief the events that make up the school life, and offer complementary explanations to our observations; it will enable the selection and definition of the chosen problem areas; make explicit certain theoretically-based assumptions about our subjects, and show how the research integrates into the body of knowledge on education. This includes studies based in psychology, sociology and educational theory, but the major problem presented by educational systems for the sociologist, the psychologist, and the professional educator has been differential performance by those undergoing education. While success and failure can, in part, be explained in terms of "native ability", the sociologist has looked elsewhere for explanations. An initial question in this search is therefore the meaning of success and failure in academic terms, before a discussion of the various theories can be undertaken.

Clearly success and failure are relative. The standards of the school - high marks and education continued beyond the legal minimum being success - need not be those of the parent or student, whose aim is to obtain the basic paper qualification for entry into a job that does not require highly specialised training. For the purpose of this study, the standards of the school are what is meant by academic success, but the existence of alternative definitions of success by the students is what will interest us.

The most important variable in educational research of this kind has been social stratification, to the extent of becoming a commonplace. It does, however, present a convenient starting point towards understanding the problem. The nature of modern industrial society, with its high level of division of labour due to the diversity and complexity of the technological tasks to be performed, causes a social class system tied to the occupational system. Certain skills are in short supply; those persons providing these skills generally receive greater rewards in material and status terms than those whose skills (physical force, for instance) are in plentiful supply. The reasons for shortages of skilled personnel are many; not least important is the prolonged training and high intelligence needed to master the skills in question - for example, the doctor and the lawyer. We need not become further embroiled in a Marxist/Functionalist argument at this stage; it is sufficient to consider Weber's definition of the class situation as

> the typical chance for a supply of goods, external
> living conditions, and personal life experiences,
> in so far as this chance is determined by the amount
> and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of
> goods or skills for the sake of income in a given
> economic order.[1]

1.   Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, "From Max Weber:
      Essays in Sociology", New York, O.U.P., 1946, p. 181.

Now, in so far as persons sharing similar occupations
will have similar skills and power over them, and hence similar
class situations, they will tend to associate and interact, and
hold similar attitudes and values. While they may not experience
a "class consciousness" in the Marxist sense[2] they will be more
likely to share common norms of conduct. Because of this, it is
argued that occupations form a valid basis for separating a modern
society into units of relatively discreet interaction, each of
which has relatively high value consensus.

That parental occupation influences education in the child →
is generally accepted. In discussing the literature for America,
Cloward and James refer to

> the generally direct correlation between socio-
> economic position and academic achievement (which)
> ... tends to hold for very large aggregates of the
> population.[3]

Girod makes a similar point for France where he claims the
educational system continues to act as a reinforcement of social
stratification.[4] An example from Canada is Hall and McFarlane's

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2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, ed., "Selected Works",
   Vol. 1, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing, 1955, p. 363.

3. Richard A. Cloward and James A. Jones, "Social Class:
   Educational Attitudes and Participation" in Harry A. Passow,
   ed., "Education in Depressed Areas", New York, Bureau of
   Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University,
   1963, p. 190.

4. Girod concludes that the system has worked
   > former les enfants des couches superieures dans un
   > college constituant les classes preparatoires de
   > L'universite et a envoyer les enfants de la masse
   > dans des ecoles tout a fait differentes, ou ils
   > apprenaient un peu de lecture, d'ecriture et de
   > calcul avant de passer au travail.

   Roger Girod, Milieu Social et Orientation de la Carriere
   des Adolescents", C.R.F.. .S., Universite de Geneve, 1961, p. 4.

study of a one-year cohort in a small city, which showed 45% of

Grade IX and X drop-outs had manually working fathers, as compared

to 24% from non-manual homes. 15% of children of manual workers

obtained senior matriculation, whereas 35% of non-manual families

reached that level of success.[5]

While occupationally defined classes will be used in this

study, it should be noticed that this research does not make use

of social classes as monocausal explanations; frequent use of

'middle' and 'lower class' should be seen as shorthand. As

Charters suggests, we need to consider ethnicity, ecological

distribution, and size of community as well as occupational

positions.[6] Gross is more stringent in his criticism:

> Social class typing of children, in short, may
> obscure more than it may reveal regarding influences
> operative on children,[7]

but it was felt that in this research using occupational classes

was an advantage, because differences between classes would be

greater than differences within classes, for the reason given on

page 3   Gross' point that a child who has a certain class

background need not necessarily share the values of his background

was seen as being strictly true, but very unusual.[8]

The vast mass of literature on socialization points to

the conclusion that while a very small number of isolated cases

may deviate, the over-whelming majority, through intense early

5.   Oswald Hall and Bruce McFarlane, "Transition from School
      to Work", Ottawa, Department of Labour, 1963, pp. 16 - 18.

6.   W.W. Charters, "Social Class Analysis and the Control of
      Public Education", Harvard Educational Review, 23; 4,
      Fall, 1953.

7.   Neal Gross, "Social Class Structure and American Education",
      Harvard Educational Review, 23; 4, Fall, 1953, p. 316.

8.   Ibid., p. 321

socialization and day-to-day interaction with the family (and later) with the peer group) accept the values of their socio-economic background; this is the continuity of culture. The interviews were designed in part to discover how the children in this study perceived the values of their parents. An additional advantage of using occupations is that it makes this research easier to integrate with the bulk of other work, which has used occupational groupings. However, we shall deal with "good" and "bad" students in the main, and consider how these relate to occupational classes.

This existing literature can be grouped under five categories ranging from almost purely psychological to almost purely sociological. There is first of all the literature on native intelligence as put forward by Robbins, and Klineberg for instance. Then there is the work of Berstein, Miller and Swanson, and Siller on psychological skills, as contrasted to McClelland and Atkinson and their school who have demonstrated the importance of motivations. Fourthly, we shall group together the work on values and influence external to the school; this is the largest group, including such key works as those of Kahl, Hyman, Empey and Hollingshead. Finally, there is the literature on the results of all these inside the school, headed by Becker, Douglas and Himmelweit.

Intelligence

General intelligence as a variable in educational success has had a wider acceptance among psychologists and professional educators than among sociologists. At first sight, high intelligence (the ability in Binet's words "to judge well, to comprehend well, to reason well"[9]) appears to be a cause of success. Smith and Hudgins

9.   Quoted in Goodenough, F.L., "Mental Testing", New York, McGraw-Hill, 1949, p. 48.

note the correlation between intelligence and marks, school retention
and drop-out, and point out that

> the general intelligence concept has had such wide
> success within education that some make it synonymous
> with academic or school aptitude.[10]

It will be noticed, however, that social class has been shown
to correlate to education success, and also to intelligence →

> Although for Canada the evidence on the relation
> between social class and measured intelligence is
> meagre, there is enough from other industrial
> societies to suggest that it may be ... characteristic.[11]

Robbins, in a relevant study of Ottawa Public School children,
found that the higher the socio-economic background, the greater
proportion of high I.Q's.[12] This association has prompted
sociologists to argue that the tests used to determine intelligence
in fact measures other factors, and that rather than intelligence
quotient being the causal variable, it is also a dependant variable.[13]
As Bendix and Lipset conclude, the role of intelligence (in social
mobility) must remain a mute point because the

> evidence does not permit any definite conclusions...
> largely because of the difficulties in isolating
> "native intelligence" from the effects of social
> class and educational environment.[14]

10. Louis M. Smith and Bryce B. Hudgins, "Education Psychology",
    New York, A.A. Knoft, 1964, p. 71.

11. John Porter, "Social Class and Education", in Michael Oliver
    (ed.), "Social Purpose for Canada", Toronto, University of
    Toronto Press, 1961, p. 129.

12. John E. Robbins, "The Home and Family Background of Ottawa
    Public School Children in relation to I.Q's," Canadian
    Journal of Psychology, 2; 1, 1948.

13. See for instance Allison Davis, "Social-Class Influences Upon
    Learning", Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1948.
    Frank Reissman, "The Culturally Deprived Child", New York,
    Harper and Row, 1962, pp. 50 - 62.
    Kenneth Eells, et al, "Intelligence and Cultural Differences",
    Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951.
    Otto Klineberg, "Race and Psychology", Vol. III of "The Race
    Question in Modern Science", Paris, UNESCO, 1961.

14. Reinhardt Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset, "Social Mobility in
    Industrial Society", Berkeley, University of California Press,
    1963, p. 235.

While the problems presented in school work can best be
solved by the skills which most tests measure (verbal, numerical,
spelling abilities, abstract reasoning, sentence usage, etc.,)
students particularly in the middle range vary in performance
despite identical I.Q. scores.[15] I.Q. is clearly too crude an
index, obscuring as much as it reveals, and being little more than
another way of marking academic performance, as Tylor points out.[16]

A study which helps to clarify the problem is that of
Doppelt who found that in two non-academic subjects - auto mechanics
and machine shop, general intelligence was a poor predictor of
success, whereas tests of mechanical reasoning, abstract reasoning,
and space reasoning were good predictors.[17]

Unfortunately, there was no analysis of results by social
class, but the study does suggest that certain occupations (auto
mechanic and machinist) demand certain "intelligence skills". If
occupational groups are relatively homogenous and self-contained
then these skills are positively valued, and children are socialized
into acquiring and developing them, at the expense of others. Thus
the manager's son is not encouraged to be 'mechanically-minded' nor
is the laborer's son encouraged "to keep his nose in a book".

Once again we find ourselves looking at the early
environment to explain the child's school (and post-school)
experience. Riessman goes to great length to explain the "hidden
I.Q." of working class children who through lack of general

15.   Joseph Kahl, "Education and Occupational Aspirations of
        Common Man Boys", Harvard Educational Review XXIII,
        Summer 1953, pp. 186 - 203.

16.   Ralph Tylor, "Can Intelligence Tests be used to Predict
        Educability", in Kenneth Eells, op.cit., p. 43.

17.   J.E. Doppelt, "Validation of the Differential Aptitude Tests
        for auto mechanics and machine shop students", Personnel
        Guidance Journal, 37, 1959, pp. 648 - 656.

experience, practice, motivation and rapport, score badly on intelligence tests.[18] The implications of this low scoring for the educational system are considerable. A child who is defined as being unintelligent because of his I.Q. score, is treated as such and is likely to take on the role of being dull, as Goffman suggests for total institutions.[19] The narrow goals of the school do not accommodate the child's potential abilities in other fields, so that neither teacher nor pupil can value the other's goals or work, as each displays and values different skills. We will return to this point later.

These different skills have been the subject of important developments by Swanson and Miller. They note that there are different styles of learning and problem-solving;

> Some people can think through a problem only if they can work on it with their hands. Unless they manipulate objects physically, they cannot perform adequately. Other people (symbolic learners) feel more confortable if they can get a picture of the task and then solve it in their heads. They may be handicapped in attacking problems that require a motoric orientation.[20]

They suggest that lower class children develop a different expressive style from middle class children, a style characterized by a motoric or physical approach to problem solving, as opposed to a conceptual or abstract style. Goldberg describes the motoric style as "thing-oriented", non-verbal, concrete, while the conceptual style is "idea-oriented", verbal and abstract-symbolic.[21]

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18. Frank Riessman, op.cit., pp. 49 - 60.

19. Erving Goffman, "Asylums", New York, Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1961 and
     Kenneth B. Clark, "Educational Stimulation of Racially Disadvantaged Children", in A. Harry Passow, op.cit. pp. 142-16.

20. David R. Miller and Guy E. Swanson, "Inner Conflict and Defense", New York, Henry Holt, 1960, p. 397.

21. Miriam L. Goldberg, "Factors Affecting Educational Attainment in Depressed Urban Areas", in Harry Passow, op.cit., p. 80.

Miller and Swanson associate styles with child rearing patterns;
psychological discipline, symbolic reward and maternal self-control
in the middle class home is contrasted to the physical discipline,
tangible rewards and limited maternal self-control of the working
class home.[22]

Indeed, the lower class environment, in toto, lays greater
emphasis on physical expression. The use of physical force in the
father's manual occupation leads to a positive value being placed
on strength by the father and his friends. Emotion is not controlled;
open embracing is commonplace in the family, and so are anger and
raised voices. Religious expression is often through clapping and
vigorous hymn-singing, instead of the staid sermon. Conflicts in
street games and in the peer group are solved more often by fighting,
and we have already noted the tendency for manual skills to be
encouraged.

The result of this is to produce a child whose problem-
solving style in Reissman's terms is physical and visual, spatial,
inductive, content and problem centred, externally oriented and
slow and careful. The middle class child, however, is aural,
temporal, deductive, form and abstract centred, introspective,
fast and flexible.[23] Siller reports significant class differences
in the selection of abstract explanations and definitions, as
opposed to concrete ones. However, the major part of the difference
in his study was due to a small number of very low scorers in the

22.   Frank Riessman, op.cit.,p. 73.

23.   Frank Riessman, op.cit., p. 73.

low status group.[24]

As examples of this motoric style, Riessman points to
the use of fingers in counting, moving the lips when reading, and
the positive response to physical education that lower class
children exhibit.[25] Miller and Swanson go so far as to suggest that

> if the teacher enables them (lower class pupils) to
> express themselves with the large muscles of the
> torso and limbs, her students may make surprising
> educational progress.[26]

It should not be interpreted from the above that the
lower class children are incapable of symbolic learning. Miller and
Swanson demonstrate that given suitable guidance, each group can
use the other's style well. The motoric approach will remain the
same, however, unless considerable pressure is put upon them to
change.[27]

Because of this physical style, the pupil finds it harder
to adapt to the conceptual style of the teaching he receives in
school and is thus slower to learn. Riessman suggests that there
may be a need to "warm-up" physically which takes longer as well.
This would account for his short attention span but tenacity and
concentration once he is involved in a problem. It would also
explain the middle class child's quickness in studying, but
slowness in "role-playing" exercises which entail the use of all
the body.[28] But both these phenomena can be explained in terms
of the nature of the expressive styles functioning, and adjusting

24. Jerome Siller, "Socioeconomic Status and Conceptual Thinking", Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, 55;3, Nov. 1957, pp. 365 - 371.

25. Frank Riessman, op.cit., p. 67.

26. Daniel R. Miller and Guy E. Swanson, op.cit., p. 397.

27. Frank Reissman, op.cit., p. 68.

28. Frank Riessman, op.cit., p. 68.

to a different style from the one that the student "instinctively" uses.

Deutsch lays the blame for the poor school performance of the lower class child on the pre-school experience. He suggests that rather than such a child having a "different" style of problem-solving ability, the slum child has a poorer ability.

> The urban slum and its overcrowded apartments offer the child a minimal range of stimuli ... The sparsity of objects and lack of diversity of home artifacts which are available and meaningful to the child, in addition to the unavailability of individualized training, gives the child few opportunities to manipulate and organize ... and discriminate the nuances of that environment.[29]

Following Piaget, he suggests that the more varied the experience of the child, the more aware and interested in his environment the child becomes. In short, the slum child has had less experience and so is less mature when he starts school. Added to a training in which curiosity has been discouraged, and there has been little structured rewarding of tasks successfully completed, this means that the lower class child is not prepared for school. These perceptual disabilities diminish with age; however, language disabilities persist.[30]

Berstein's work suggests that verbal ability is the crucial variable in academic performance. His study of 370 working class children matched for occupation and education showed markedly depressed scores on verbal I.Q. tests as compared to non-verbal, whereas in a second study of middle class children, this relationship did not hold true. His findings and those of others he

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29. Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process", in A. Harry Passow, op.cit., p. 170.

30. Ibid., p. 176.

reviewed led him to write that

> linguistic skills may be independant of the
> potential I.Q., certainly of the measured non-
> verbal I.Q., and grossly different environments
> affect aspects of language structure and
> vocabulary.[31]

He suggests that working class children learn "public language" whereas the middle class child learns both "public" and "formal" language. Apart from range of vocabulary, the middle class child is taught to respond to the organization of words, which leads to affect being differentiated, made specific and stabilized. Because of this, it is possible to control behaviour through verbal means, which maximises the possibility of rational ordering and manipulation.[32]

In this way, affect is not communicated directly and impulse is restricted. A further key difference is that through this rational ordering of behaviour, reason is differentiated from authority: whereas the working class child is told to do something "because I say so!", or "because I'm your father!" the middle class child will more often receive a rational answer.

Thus the verbal skills of the lower class child lead to a different content and perception of social relationships, neither of which is suited to the school system. The school, in teaching formal language, changes the child's conception of the world, the strain of which accounts for his poorer academic showing.[33]

Nisbet makes the point that differences may be found between classes and within classes. He found that children in

31. Basil Bernstein, "Some Sociological Determinants of Perception", British Journal of Sociology, IX, June 1958, p. 66.

32. Basil Bernstein, "Language and Social Class", British Journal of Psychology, 11, Sept. 1960, pp. 271 - 276.

33. Basil Bernstein, "A Socio-Linguistic Approach to Social Learning, in "Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences (1965)", Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965.

larger families develop poorer verbal skills, at least to the age of 11 and probably beyond.[34] This is due to the smaller amount of time available for participation between parent and child. A later study suggested that this difference is prolonged and pronounced.[35] However, the tendency for large families to be found more frequently in lower occupational groups reinforces the general handicap of the working class child.

This far we have considered the evidence of socio-psychological handicaps in education, and found them to be associated with certain occupational classes. Brief consideration of the operation of typical family, peer group and neighbourhood environments has shown why these handicaps are associated with occupational groups. Failure to succeed by passing grades and continuing education has been explained by four theories, which although derived, in some cases, from studies of extreme deprivation, and which may obscure some intra-class differentials, were felt to hold generally true. They were not seen as being contradictory. These theories stated that the failing child is less mature; his skills are motoric: he approaches school in a different way; and he has a low level of verbal skills which tend to resist efforts to change them. Schools demand a different combination of skills, a combination associated with middle class families.

It has been suggested that this lack of rapport not only leads directly to failure, it sets up tensions in the student which in turn cause new events within the school system which escalate his chances of failing; this point will be returned to

34. John Nisbet, "Family Environment and Intelligence", Eugenics Review, XLV, 1953, pp. 31 - 42.

35. E.K. Scott and John Nisbet, "Intelligence", Eugenics Review, XLV, 1953, pp. 31 - 42.

later. In all the above comparisons, it has been implied that the main differential is in skills and that the working class child tries to succeed as much as his middle class counterpart. This assumption is probably false; not only does the former have a lower level of internalized drives to compete and achieve, but he also receives less encouragement during his schooldays.

Motivation

These drives have been the subject of work by McClelland and his associates, which has been popular in studies of education.[36] According to McClelland's theory, certain personalities are oriented to achieve success; this is a drive, internalised in early childhood, which commits the high achiever to compete enthusiastically with others and to demonstrate certain risk-taking patterns. He has a high "need for achievement" (n.ach.) which is a generalised orientation; he derives greater pleasure from success[37]. A person demonstrating a low "need for achievement" tries to avoid competition and when forced into it, performs less well through anxiety over failure. But as Rosen notes in one example of this kind of study,

> In itself the achievement motive is not a sufficient
> cause ... in addition there are cultural values which
> ... provide a definition of goals, focus the attention
> of the individual on achievement, and prepare him to
> translate motive into action.[38]

In this study the theory of motivation - or as Atkinson puts it - "the most recent and complete restatement of the theory,

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36. David McClelland, et al, "The Achievement Motive", New York, Appleton-Century-Croft, 1953.

37. Marion R. Winterbottom, "The Relation of Need for Achievement to Learning Experiences in Independance and Mastery", in Motives in Fantasy, Action and Society", John W. Atkinson, ed., Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1958, pp. 437 - 453.

38. Bernard C. Rosen, "The Achievement Syndrom: A Psych-culture Dimension of Social Stratification", ibid, p. 500.

the tendency to achieve success" - is of little use despite the
need to take account of motivation. As Atkinson admits

> the theoretical formulation ... pertains to such an
> ideal achievement-related situation, which at best
> is only approximate ... in the course of everyday
> life.[39]

The school situation involves so many other variables
that the basic interaction of drive, subjective rating of success
probability, and incentive (defined as varying inversely to
subjective rating of success probability) must be affected.

Values

As value orientation is the medium through which motivation
must work, it was taken as being some indication of motive, as
Rosen suggests.[39] It was felt that in the school system, values
had more impact than motives. This position has flaws. A respondent
may dutifully claim achievement values but, in fact, lack any drive
to action; indeed it is suspected that this is a not infrequent
case in lower class respondents. But in the absence of a theory of
motivation which has been fully tested, value orientation was seen
as being sufficiently adequate for the purposes of this study to
preclude the need for developing a completely new theory of
motivation.

As it was suggested above, a value orientation is one's
subjective perception of and orientation to the world. Williams
suggests eight generalised orientations of high abstraction as being
typical of American culture. These are (1) active mastery of one's

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39.   John W. Atkinson and Norman T. Feather, eds.,
        "A Theory of Achievement Motivation", New York,
        John Wiley, 1966, p. 14.

39.a   Bernard C. Rosen, op.cit., pp. 504 - 506.

environment, rather than passive acceptance, (2) a concentration
on things external, rather than inner experiences, (3) a tendency
to favor change and adaption, not conservatism, (4) an emphasis on
the future and rationalism, rather than the past and traditionalism,
(5) a dimension of orderliness, not "unsystematic" ad hoc acceptance
of transitory experience , (6) universalism, not particularism,
(7) equality not hierarchy, and (8) individualism, not collectivism.[40]
Clearly there are affinities to the work of Parsons,[41] and also to
the theories of the Kluckhohns[42] and Strodbeck[43] to name but three.

What do we know about the value orientations of children
from lower class areas such as the one to be studied?

In this study the absence of any ethnic sub-groups made it
safe to attribute to the children the values of their elders
following the work of Carter[44] and Coleman[45]. These values were
not tested in detail, but were taken as being representative of a
lower class district of high homogeity of values. It is reasonable
to suggest that both parents and children lay a greater emphasis on
collectivity in both the form of the extended family, as Pineo shows
in his discussion of the same area,[46] and also through the importance

40.   Robin M. Williams, Jr. "American Society", New York,
      Alfred A. Knopf, second edition, 1960, pp. 469 - 470.

41.   Talcott Parson, et al, "Towards a General Theory of Action",
      Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1951.

42.   Clyde Kluckhohn, "Values and Value-orientations in the Theory
      of Action" in Talcott Parsons and Edward T. Shils, op.cit.,
      pp. 388 - 433.

43.   Florence R. Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck, "Variations in
      Value Orientations", Evanstone, Ill., Row, Peterson, 1961.

44.   Michael Carter, "Home, Work and School, " Pergamon Press,
      London, 1962.

45.   James S. Coleman, "The Adolescent Society", Glencoe
      Free Press, 1961.

46.   Peter C. Pineo, "The Extended Family in a Working Class Area
      of Hamilton", in Bernard B. Blishen et al, "Canadian Society",
      rev'd edn., Toronto, MacMillan, 1964, pp. 135 - 144.

of the peer group (Kahl,[47] Coleman[48]) both having more importance in working class life than in the middle class world.[49] They are less future oriented and place less emphasis on the strength of "the individual" and the need to achieve (especially via education) as Hyman[50] and more recently Sugarman have demonstrated.[51]

This study is more interested in precise and explicit values which, in addition to being examples of these generalised orientations, could also be seen in direct action.[52] But before we consider in greater detail these specific items, such as the belief in the importance of education, it is necessary to consider how these values are transmitted. This process of socialization is important at this stage for two reasons. It helps to explain motivation (even if we are to leave it implicit) and to show the link between action-drives and values, both specific and general. Secondly, the educational process is not simply formal; as has already been shown, knowledge of the family background helps us to understand the reaction and events in school, which is the next problem to be tackled.

47. Joseph Kahl, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys", Harvard Educational Review, 23, 1953, pp. 186 - 203.

48. James S. Coleman, op.cit.

49. For a good example of how these pressures are felt to be important and the effects of this, see Michael Young and Peter Wilmott, "Family and Kinship in East London", Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1962, pp. 104-118 and 174-185.

50. Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes ..." in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset, eds., "Class, Status and Power", Glencoe, Free Press, 1953, pp. 426 - 442.

51. Barry Sugarman, "Social Class and Values ...", Sociological Review, Vol. 14, 3, Nov. 1966, p. 287.

52. For an example of these values meant for teachers in training, see Dorothy Westby-Gibson, "Social Perspectives on Education", New York, John Wiley, 1965, pp. 79 - 91.

(a) Socialization in the Family

As far as child rearing goes, lower class children
have had a delayed start in learning, although this with a declining
differential. More important is the data on achievement training.
Despite conflicting evidence on independance training, there is
no study to challenge the basic finding that middle class parents
socialize in standards of excellence, as we see from Bronfenbrennar[53]
and the work of the achievement motivation school discussed above
(p. 14).

But socialization does not end at child rearing. We must
now consider how socialization continues, and in particular, the
part parents play in inculcating and reinforcing those specific
cultural values which will relate to the educational experience
of the child. In stages we are moving from socio-psychological
variables and the role of the parents towards sociological factors
which relate directly to the community as a whole.

Hoffman et al[54] reports that in young children, success
goes to those who perceive parents as coercive, and yet feel highly
autonomous. This suggests a few strongly sanctioned parential
guide lines with other, secondary, matters left to the child.
Second best performers came from highly coercive backgrounds.

But we have already noticed that lower class children
are less independant and more strictly controlled in a "non-rational"

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53.   Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Socialization and Social Class
        Through Time and Space", in Elanor Maccaby, Theodore Newcomb
        and Eugene Hartley, Readings in Social Psychology, 3rd Edn.
        New York, Henry Holt, 1958, pp. 400 - 425.

54.   Lois Hoffman, Sidney Rosen and Ronald Lippit, "Parential
        Coercivness, Child Autonomy and Child's Role at School",
        Sociometry, 23, 1, 1960, pp. 15 - 22.

(non-verbal) way. Why do they not succeed? As we shall see, the
coertion is not directed to the specific end of high school
performance, but is dissipated on other factors, such as control
of a large family in a small space.

The role of family size in I.Q. has already been shown.
Its other impacts are even more hindered by the fact that larger
families are more common in the lower classes. Thus other social class
factors are probably the reason for any differences correlating with
size. However, size will have a different meaning for the lower class
child than the middle class child. The atmosphere of home, active,
noisy, crowded with many children and other relatives, emphasise
horizontal interaction not vertical.

> Sibling rivalry and fear of a new baby brother seems
> to develop somewhat less here ... Perhaps this is
> because the children never have had much attention
> in the first place and have less to loose. Perhaps,
> also, the fact that the children depend so much on
> contact with each other, rather than being overly
> dependant on the parents, plays a decisive part.
> Whatever the reason, there does seem to be far less
> jealousy and competition.[55]

The data on "family atmosphere" is also confused. On the
one hand several studies, notably Warner and Abegglen

> show that upwardly mobile businessmen came from a
> spiritually bleak and physically depressed family
> atmosphere[56]

and Dynes et al hold that

> unsatisfactory interpersonal relations in the family
> of orientation were significantly related to high
> aspirational levels.[57]

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55.   Frank Riessman, op.cit., p. 37.

56.   W. Lloyd Warner and J. Abegglen, "Big Business Leaders
in America", New York, Harper Bros., 1955, pp. 59 - 83.

57.   R. Dynes, A. Clarke and S. Dinitz, "Levels of Occupational
Aspiration; some aspects of family experience as a
Variable", American Sociological Review, 21, 1956, 212.

Other studies have spoken of a warm permissive background.[58]
Elder found that low achievement was associated with dominant
fathers in all such studies (as opposed to "democratic" or
matriarchical centred)[59].

The above presupposes that the child does not come from
a "broken home". North reports that in 886 grade VII and VIII
students in Edmonton, students from broken homes attend school
less and have lower marks than students from "ordinary" homes,
and this data fits other studies.[60] A less degree of deprivation
has been suggested for families in which the mother works. Such
mothers need not necessarily disrupt the home-life so long as
parental roles are not disrupted; while both Wage and Belanger[61,62]
find such children under no handicaps at school, the complaints of
lay opinion to the contrary prompted a consideration of this in
the study.

(b) The Family and Attitudes to Education

How do social classes differ with regard to their
attitudes towards education? An old (1949) survey of 639 voters
in Connecticut by Terrien reported that whereas both high and low
income groups thought education through high school was desirable,
(over 80% of all respondents) only 16% (i.e. predominantly the

58. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset, op.cit., (1964)
    pp. 249 - 254.

59. Glen H. Elder, "Family Structure and Educational Attainment",
    American Sociological Review, 30, 1965, pp. 81 - 96.

60. Joseph North, "Performance of Children from Broken Homes",
    unpub. M.Ed., Thesis, University of Alberta, 1965.

61. Durlyn Wade, "School Achievement and Parent Employment",
    Journal of Educational Sociology, 36, 2, 1962, pp. 93 - 95.

62. Pierre Belanger, "La Perseverance Scolaire Dans la Province
    de Quebec", Association d'Education du Quebec, December,
    1961.

upper income groups) thought college was necessary.[63] Hyman reports similar findings; 42% of the lower class laid stress on the need for education, as compared to 74% of the wealthy and prosperous.[64] A replication by Cloward and Jones found that among respondents with children 57% of the lower class were content with just high school, but only 19% of the middle class were (1963)[65]

It would appear that while a differential exists, the lower class parent is increasingly aware of the importance of education. But this data refers to America, where well over 50% of the population enjoy some degree of further education. In Canada, we would expect a much greater differential would exist and persist, in view of the more "elitest" educational system in which a much smaller proportion go on to university.[66]

If the parents want education, do their children agree? It might be argued that the older they get the more independant they become, and that the school wins them over to desire to be successful; there is no direct evidence of this, and indirect studies suggest the latter part is incorrect. The data is confused; the manner in which parents affect their children's aspirations is unclear. The work of Kahl,[67] Morrow and Wilson,[68] and Youman[69] confirm our theoretical position that the generations tend to share educational

63. Fred W. Terrien, "Who Thinks What About Education", R.R. Bell, "The Sociology of Education", Helnewood, Ill., Dorsey Press, 1962, pp. 11 - 21.

64. Herbert Hyman, op.cit., p. 432.

65. Richard Cloward and James A. Jones, op.cit., p. 199.

66. Seymour M. Lipset, "The First New Nation", New York, Basic Books, 1963, Chapter 7.

67. Joseph Kahl, op.cit.

68. Robert C. Wilson and William Morrow, "School and Career Adjustment of Bright High-Achieving and Under-Achieving High School Boys", Journal of Genetic Psychology, 101, 1962, pp. 91-103.

69. E. Grant Youmans, "The Educational Attainment and Future Plans of Kentucky Rural Youth", Lexington, Kentucky Agricultural Experimental Station Bulletin, 1959, p. 644.

value-system; each study found parent-child agreement. When the parent and child placed a high value on education, that child was usually successful. The reverse was true of lower evaluations when shared.

Two English examples from interviews are worth quoting to show the fundamentally different attitudes of lower class respondents;

> His family was united against the scholarship (to special high school). It was not right they said, because "his family were a family of work people". Some said that I ought to be ashamed of myself.[70]

Carter's experience was similar; a youth said that

> he was very glad to have left school, and the assembled parents, brothers and sister, chuckled. When he was asked why he was glad, he replied, "I didn't like school", and the family laughed. The youth was asked whether there were any aspects of school he liked, whether he had ever thought he would like to be back at school, and whether he attended evening classes. The answers were greeted by increasingly loud laughter from the family, rising to a crescendo of guffaws. This part of the interview was concluded midst uproarious merriment which the family found almost unbearable.[71]

Kahl's study is representative of many others when he reported that

> an intelligent common man boy was not college oriented at high school unless he had a very special reason for so being.[72]

He cites lack of money, reluctance to compete, the problems of home conditions as the work load increases, resistance from the peer group and lack of encouragement as being reasons overcoming a desire for more education. Frankel reports more negative attitudes

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70. Michael Young & Peter Wilmott, op.cit., p. 177.

71. Michael Carter, op.cit., p. 73.

72. Kahl, Joseph, op.cit., p. 201.

to school in lower class students[73] and a recent study of Canadian highschool students found the expected class bias in aspirations for college education.[74]

What is the nature of the relationship between parent and child with regard to educational values? A summary article by Toby reports that the major variable in school performance was parental interest and encouragement.[75] Youmans stresses the mother as the key figure, and Wilmott and Young would agree; they illustrate with the case in which the extended family

> again were not pleased to hear the news ... The mother stood her ground against all attacks. "I said, "She's going as far as she can go".

This was, of course, in a culture that was mother centered.[76] Bene and Manino both found the mother to be more important also, but the latter claimed that a general interest in the child's well-being was more important than a high evaluation of education.[77, 78] In Douglas' nation-wide sample cohort encouragement to work hard, and an interest in the offsprings' education were listed as being two major contributions that parents make to their children's success in school.[79]

73. Edward Frankel, "A Comparative Study of Achieving and Under-Achieving High School Boys", Journal of Educational Research, 53, 1960, pp. 172 - 180.

74. Ronald M. Pavalko & David Bishop, "Socioeconomic Status and College Plans", Sociology of Education, 39, 3, Summer 1966, pp. 288 - 299.

75. Jackson Toby, "Orientation to Education as a Factor ...", Social Forces, 35, 2, 1957, pp. 259 - 266.

76. Michael Young & Peter Wilmott, op.cit., p. 177.

77. Eva Bene, "Some Differences Between Middle Class and Working Class Grammar School Boys".

78. Fortune V. Mannino, "Family Factors Related to School Persistence", Journal of Educational Sociology, 35, 5, 1962.

79. J.W.B. Douglass, "The Home and the School", London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1964, p. 63.

Brook found a negative attitude on the part of the parents was not listed frequently as a reason for dropping out of school; this may be because there is a difference between encouraging, indifference, and being actively antagonistic.[80] Certainly Larson reports 29% of the drop-outs he studied[81] listed resistance and we have the evidence of Kahl above as well (see p. 22) and that of Jackson and Marsden for Britain.[82]

The Family and Occupational Aspiration

The explanation for this low evaluation is not that these people simply display an ignorance about education. Cloward and Jones suggest that on the contrary, while lacking specialised knowledge, the lower class see the chain of education and occupation quite clearly. They do not value it because their occupational aspirations are low, and education, being purely utilitarian, therefore, has no worth for them. Support for this position comes from Mizruchi, and in English data Floud.[83] Mizruchi asked for different reasons why the people should value education; he concludes

> Our middle class respondents tend to see education
> not only as a means of achieving a better occupation
> or income but also a source of personal satisfaction.[84]
> There is a marked tendency inversely to social class.

Having less educational experience, and been less successful at it, it is not surprising that the uncomfortable experience called schooling has no appeal for lower class parents.

If the working class families see education only as a means, what are their ends? Empey among others has suggested that middle

80. George C. Brook, "High School Drop-Outs and Corrective Measurers", _Federal Probation_, 23, 3, 1959, pp. 30 - 35.

81. H.L. Larson, "The Five School Project Drop-Out Study", _Alberta Journal of Educational Research_, 4, 4, 1958, pp. 212 - 215.

82. Jackson & Marsden,D., _Education and the Working Class_, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966.

83. Jean Floud, A.H. Halsey & F.M. Martin, "Social Class and Educational Opportunity", London, Heinemann, 1957, p. 81.

84. Ephraim H. Mizruchi, "S___s and Opportunity", Glencoe, Free Press, 1964, p. 86.

class respondents have higher occupational aspirations than do those of the lower class[85] and this finding is general when we deal with realistic expectations as opposed to "pipe dreams" of ideals which will never be realized, and which the subject _knows_ he will never reach, as Mizruchi's discussion of Hyman clearly shows.[86]

The overall perception of life chances that a parent holds is then a key factor in whether he or she encourages education or not. In so far as education changes the child's view of his life chances, a tension is placed on the child, and the school is a threat to the family. Before dealing with the details of how families react to specific schools, rather than the whole educational system, we should briefly consider the effect of the peer group, particularly as it reflects on the values of the student.

(d)   Experience Outside of the Family - The Peer Group

The process of growing up entails a growing away from the family; the school and the play group take up increasingly more time as the infant becomes first a child and then an adolescent. The child's relationship with his parents changes;

> Gradually then ... his parents alter their roles since
> their reference gradually becomes to be not to familial
> membership so much as to universalistic appraisal of
> the child's behaviour. They sanction more and more as
> members of the community, rather than as parents of the
> particular child.[87]

We do not need to discuss the bountiful literature on the indeterminate role of the adolescent in Western Society; we have two

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85.   Lamar Empey, "Social Class and Occupational Aspiration",
       American Sociological Review, 21, 6, 1956, pp. 703 - 799.

86.   Ephraim Mizruchi, op.cit., p. 82.

87.   Talcott Parsons & Robert F. Bales, "Family, Socialization
       and Interaction Process", Glencoe, Free Press, 1956, p. 117.

main problems to pose: What values do peer groups hold, and

therefore, how do they effect educational performance? Secondly,

is the peer group more influential than the family in this sphere;

if so, at what stage does this happen? We are more interested in the

effect on the cognitive level, although the socio-emotional support

offered by the peer group may, at times of tension, be as important.

Kahl has indicated that in occupational aspirations the

parents are more important,[88] and in a current study of Canadian

high school students, no-one gave their friends as being a major

influence on their occupational choice.[89] Simpson reports that

when peer groups and parents both have high aspirations, not

surprisingly so does the student; this held true for the working

class as well.[90] Another study reports that aspiring working class

tended to adopt middle class behavior patterns (participation for

instance) and thus to associate with middle class students whose

high aspirations were more akin to their own than other working

class boys.[91]

(e)   The School in the Community

We need to consider one other aspect of the community culture,

its general orientation to its schools. Indirectly we have indicated

this by talking about how the family views education (the family

being the medium of transferring community culture); we have also

88.   Joseph Kahl, op.cit., p. 201.

89.   Private communication with Colin Harris, McMaster University,
        M.A. study.

90.   Richard Simpson, "Parental Influence, Anticipatory Socialization,
        and Social Mobility", American Sociological Review, 27, 4,
        1962, pp. 517 - 522.

91.   Harry Beilin, "The Pattern of Postponability ...", Journal of
        Social Psychology, 44, 1956, pp. 33 - 48. See Frank E. Jones
        for a detailed discussion of sources on this topic, op.cit.,
        pp. 64 - 69.

treated the peer group as reinforcing these community-based attitudes.

Much has been written by professional educators on their image to "the outside world". Typical of such ideological comments is the opinion

> That people are truly interested in their community
> schools and education offered by them, is a fact that
> is coming increasingly evident.[92]

although evident in what data the writer does not mention. His generalisation may hold true for the middle class suburb, but it is certainly incorrect for the typical slum school. A better comment is that of Schelsky:

> school - - in the eyes of parents - - seems to side
> more and more with public life; they make claims and
> demands opposing private interests to those of
> organizations and they rarely co-operate ... School
> and teacher provoke the same aversion as the
> bureaucrat who meddles with private affairs.[93]

The squalid slum school cannot be in a physical sense a source of pride nor even a pleasant place to work.

At least, for the middle class teacher; the slum child may feel less aversion to the building, his life experience having been something different. The school is an outpost, a garrison fort, staffed with secular missionaries who are friends of the "Fuzz". It is "Dragsville"; part of the system laid down by Them to get Us. Sure its useful, everybody need three R's to get a job, but its still that place, that permanently landed alien spaceship, where they make a fuss about nothing. The parents know their kids don't like it, but they have to go, and it keeps them out of your hair and off the streets. But they are always fussing about nothing.

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92.   D.V. Carroll, "The School and the Community", Canadian School
       Journal, 44, 1966, p. 30.

93.   H. Schelsky, "Schule und Erziehung in der Industriellen
       Gesellschaft", Werkbund Verlag, Wurzburg, 1957.

do, but their results may not match their aims

> For the majority who emerge (from school) there
> is no disharmony between what the school has
> accustomed them to and what they find at work - -
> tedium ... Sanity is only possible by being, when
> not working, irrepressible, spontaneous and rule-
> breaking - - qualities which harmoniously (the
> slum school) helps to develop.[94]

The same author, with some experience of teaching in such schools,

suggests the system ideally tries to turn out either a boy who

will "get a trade" or be

> a meticulous clerk, sustained by a routine laid
> down by some-one else, and piously accepting of
> his station in life.[95]

He claims such aims not only fail, but that failure is just as well

in the face of growing automation which renders both such

occupational roles redundant.

Parsons, as might be anticipated, expresses things

differently:

> the specific content of school work is, of course,
> one part of it, but only one part. In addition,
> there are standards of dress, deportment, etc.,
> which are inculcated as being suitable for children
> of this age in this community ... To these matters
> the idea of values should be added the "oughts" and
> "shoulds" and "musts" of everyday life.[96]

But we are left wondering what is suitable for everyday life in the

slum community. One of the gaps in our knowledge of this

socialization is what goals the schools do succeed in teaching.

The evidence previously cited implies that the school has little

impact on educational or occupational aspirations, although Wilson

94.   John Webb, "The Sociology of a School", British Journal
       of Sociology, 13, 1962, p. 267.

95.   ibid, p. 267.

96.   Parsons & Bales, op.cit., p. 112.

and Michael present strong evidence that a school of largely
lower class students lowers the aspirations of even the middle
class students, whereas a predominantly middle class school sets
a tone in which working class students are more likely to have
higher aspirations.[97], [98].

The School

(a) Values

We can now consider the results of the foregoing within
the school itself. Given that the school provides the educational
means for occupational success or mobility, what does it do in
terms of providing the social customs, if not the wider value
orientation, which is necessary to consolidate occupational mobility
into social mobility? Does it attempt to pass on the social style
of life - - cleanliness, dress, eating habits, "wise" use of money,
respectability - - from middle class to working class? Is this
the "suitable" that Parsons had in mind? How far, in fact, is
Webb's criticism true of the Canadian Public School?

Certainly it would apply to the extent that the Canadian
Public School resembles the American, as it is conceived by Mead:
the school should instruct (or rather does) instruct the students

> in the habits of hygene and industry, to apply
> themselves diligently to succeed, to turn a deaf
> ear to the immediate impulse, to shatter any
> tradition ... in a way and with the sanctions of
> the entrepreneur.[99]

One implication of this type of teaching has been
suggested by Sexton:

97.   Alan B. Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes
        and Aspirations of High School Boys", American Sociological
        Review, 24, 6, 1959, pp. 836 - 845.

98.   John A. Michael, "High School Climates and Plans for Entering
        College", Public Opinion Quarterly, 25, 4, 1961, pp. 585 - 595.

99.   Margaret Mead, "The School in American Culture", Cambridge,
        Mass., Harvard University Press, 1951, p. 429.

It has been observed that school culture is typically
"polite", prissy and puritanical and that there is
little place in this female culture for some of the
high-ranking values of boy-culture - - courage,
loyalty, independance - or the high-ranking interests
of boys, as sports (except in gym class), outdoor life,
popular music, adventure, sex, action.[100]

This would, in part, explain the greater misconduct record of boys

who find it hard to accept such a system. (On top of which

adolescence, a growing challenge to the "Old Man" in a very real

physical sense, may be most difficult for the lower class male).

Some writers, like Conant, who have seen the gap between

middle class standards and slum schools, have recommended separate

scaled down curricula .

What a school should or can do is determined by
the status and ambitions of the families being
served.[101]

As Kenneth Clark asks, what changes the status and ambitions

of the families or, in short, why have schools?[102]

Without going further into this controversy, it seems fair

to say that while some changes in the school system may aleviate

cross-cultural conflict by making education more relevant, it is the

intrinsic nature of education to set up changes, tensions and a

disruptive force in the (slum) community. The subject of this study,

an elaborate new school staffed for the most part with young and

liberal teachers, represents a case history of how this conflict

operates.

To fully understand the workings of a school entails, ideally,

100.   Patricia Sexton, "Education and Income", New York, Viking Press,
        1961, p. 278.

101.   James B. Conant, "Slums and Suburbs", New York, Viking Press,
        1961, p. 278.

102.   Kenneth B. Clark, op.cit., p. 154.

being in each classroom at the same time. Most of the day is
spent in class, and it will be here that the tensions are created,
and to some extent, resolved. Some efforts have been made (to
the great satisfaction of the professional educator) to explain
behavior patterns in the classroom in terms of teaching techniques
and the personality of the teacher. As for the first, Wallen and
Traver's comment, in discussing some of the thousand and one papers
on teaching method, can stand for us:

> results tend to be consistent in one respect -
> the slight difference found usually favors
> whatever is designated as the "experimental"
> method.[103]

We shall treat with caution attempts to explain events in terms of
good or bad teachers,

> which say it is possible to judge a teacher's skill
> by watching him teach ... (to) recognise good
> teaching when he sees it.[104]

How are we to judge the effectiveness of the teacher, but on his
own terms: By the percentage of facts retained by his students?
By the affection he engenders? By the ideals he inculcates? By
the free thinking he encourages? By examining his results?

(b) The Role of the Teacher

The way out of this dilemma is to consider the teacher's
role in general, to see to what kinds of relationship this leads.
Admittedly, as Westby-Gibson says, the role is variable, flexible,
essentially dynamic, but there are certain core patterns that we
may observe.[105]

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103. Norman Wallen & Robert Travers, "Analysis and Investigation
       of Teaching Methods" in N.L. Gage, ed. "Handbook of Research
       in Teaching", Chicago, Rand McNally, 1963, p. 481.

104. Donald Medley & Harold E. Mitzel, "Measuring Classroom
       Behavior by Systematic Observation", in ibid. p. 257.

105. Dorothy Westby-Gibson, op.cit., pp. 333 - 340.

Most schools are operated as a limited hierarchy. We have clearly the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the teachers and the students in that order of authority. The picture is complicated by other personnel, such as the secretary, janitor, cleaners, nurse, etc.; by prefects; and by age and sex considerations that may be at odds with current status positions. Thus in each school there will be "good" and "bad" classes - - high academic streams and slow academic streams for instance - - which no-one wishes to teach, because there is little reward for such jobs in terms of colleague recognition or career promotion. Such jobs usually go to younger and newer members of staff. But a young teacher taking a good class - - especially if female - - instead of the "experienced" senior male teacher, may be a source of tension.

Following Blyth, we can see a teacher role-complex with at least six facets.[106] The teacher must _instruct_ and impart knowledge. He must _organize_ his class, and control events, act as parent-substitute (less after elementary education) and be value-bearer - - or in Floud's term "cultural missionary".[107] He must be the _classifier_ who sorts the academic sheep and goats, and finally he must also be something of a _welfare worker_. To function adequately in one role, he needs to devote energies to others; thus instruction needs organisation (an absence of bedlam, difficult to achieve in the slum school) and without instruction there can be no classification.

106.   Blyth, W.A.L., _English Primary Education_, London, Routledge, Kegan, Paul, 1965.

107.   Jean Floud, "Teaching in the Affluent Society", _British Journal of Sociology_, 13, 4, 1962, pp. 299 - 308.

The role is largely achieved anew with each class; the teacher carries over his own assumptions about his role from a different school, class or a different age set, or even a different school. Hence a very real problem of role-expectations can occur. There is little evidence as to how children perceive teachers; one may resent the welfare efforts as noseyness, while a classmate is pleased to find out that Sir is a person who cares.

This is relevant to the question of socialization in early grades when the teacher is the key figure in the widening experience of the child outside of the family. While we may be less sanguine than Parsons concerning the teachers' universalistic criteria (admittedly less particularistic than the family's) the child may have problems in orienting to a role that keeps changing.[108] This is especially true of the slum child who has little other contact with bureaucratic figures outside of school.

The relationship between student perception of teacher and student performance is confused. Ackerman reports a study in which "success" (?) was greater in students who perceived their teachers as inconsiderate and distant,[109] but Larson found many drop-outs tended to resent a lack of interest on the part of their ex-teachers.[110] Cogan found teachers praised for their warmth and organisation had better results in required work.[111] But these three researches may be missing the point; what balance of the role-complex is best suited to each class? This best balance

108. Talcott Parsons & Robert Bales, op.cit., 100ff.

109. W.I. Ackerman, "Teacher Competance and Pupil Change", Harvard Educational Review, 24, 4, 1954, pp. 273 - 289.

110. H.L. Larson, op.cit.

111. Morris Cogan, "Theory and Esign of a Study of Pupil-Teacher Interaction", Harvard Educational Review, 26, 1956, pp. 315 - 342.

may be of little use for some individuals who resent such a role performance because it differs from their expectations and interpretations of what a teacher should be. In case of the middle class teacher who does not adapt to, or appreciate the values of a mainly working class class, the problem is acute.

Such adaptations may be difficult, as several seminal works have shown. Becker shown the discontinuity between the teachers' ideals and those of the pupils; we have considered the lower class view-point and it is hardly that which Becker depicts for teachers in Chicago. The teachers' ideal pupil is most closely approximated by middle class pupils.[112] The same point is made by Glass who asked masters at four London schools to rank their pupils for industriousness, sense of responsibility, interest in school affairs, good behavior, good manners and popularity with their peers.

> Throughout, without a single exception, middle class
> pupils received a higher rating. The consistency
> of the findings irrespective of the quality rated,
> is of interest ... in the teacher's view the middle
> class boy taken all round, proves a more satisfactory
> and rewarding pupil ... The boy with a working class
> background is not so well integrated into the school.[113]

Hollingshead reports the same sort of thing:

> high grades went to students from the "better"
> homes and low ones to the pupils from the
> "inadequate" or "unfortunate" homes.[114]

The teacher is a "cultural missionary", but his zeal (or otherwise) is not always appreciated by his captive audience; worse still, he

112.   Howard S. Becker, "Social Class Variations in the Teacher-
        Pupil Relationship", Journal of Educational Sociology, 25,
        1952, pp. 451 - 465.

113.   D.V. Glass, ed., "Social Mobility in Britain", London,
        Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, p. 149.

114.   August Hollingshead, op.cit.

does not fully realise it; the urban

> educators' customary aloofness, many teachers'
> own ... frequent moves, and their unfamiliarity
> with particular ... schools and neighborhoods,
> the general confusion about special groups ...
> the tiring distances teachers cover between
> home and school - - all keep teachers outside
> their pupils' worlds.[115]

This lack of rapport may be conscious or unconscious,

and lack of data on students' ideals about teachers makes this

a serious gap in our knowledge, for despite the power hierarchy,

the class is not completely passive in its acceptance of

authority.

It is here that the sociologist for the most part has

neglected his duty; having indicated, as we have done, the

problems that lower class students bring with them as a source

of potential conflict with the teacher, and having defined the

role of the teacher, the study is usually left at that, and the

discussion turns back to class differentials in educational

success. Rather, we should look at the student's role and his

response to tension.

The Student

Berstein, for example, in talking about the strain the

student undergoes as he learns formal language, and must re-pattern

his cognitive system, pictures the child as "bewildered and

defenceless" under a persistent attack on his normal mode of

orientation.[116] Even Webb conceives of his boys as "irrepressible,

rule-breaking and spontaneous"; his "refreshingly different"

analysis still leaves the delinquent with an air of the noble

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115. Ruth Landes, "Culture in American Education", New York,
      John Wiley, 1965, p. 16.

116. Basil Berstein, op.cit., (1961), p. 306.

savage.[117]

These two such different views both have elements of the truth in them - and here we shall concentrate on the predominantly working class school. Certainly the lower class child is under pressure to change, but he is by no means defenceless; certainly he is rule-breaking for this is his means of defence, of revenge, and of release of tension. But not all children are suspended, caned, and punished even in the lower classes; not all children find school a simple extension of gang and work life, of Us and Them, that Webb would have us believe. True, working life, coming after school is tedious, and one "puts one over on the Boss", and the child experiences this at second hand. What Webb fails to allow for is the identification with the school, that may even be the criteria for gang warfare, as we shall see.

But in essence, Webb's position is an acceptable one. The classroom is a battlefield; the teacher's role as organiser becomes the crucial means of regulating conflict, which must damp down rebellion, and by punishing a scapegoat (hopefully the right offender) create a catharsis which both intimidates and relaxes the rest of the class into another period of submission.

Let us briefly review the forces arrayed against the teacher. As individuals - - and here is the point - - they accomplish very little; the class is divided by age, sex, block, rivalry, cliques of all kinds, interspersed with strategic hamlets of middle class achievers. But the students try. Books and pencils are "lost",

117.   John Webb, op.cit., p. 264.

clumsiness and inability exaggerated, the wrong answers
deliberately given;   there are a variety of "go-slow" techniques.
A child may be late or play truant, or daydream - the closest he
can get to striking. The analogy to the shop floor, spelt out
in Boocock is basically a sound one;[118] unfortunately, so far
no one has attempted to spell out the patterns with which the
resistance movement responds. While slum youth are hardly the
"rational man" - or rather coolly calculating at all times, their
outbursts can frequently be related to the degree of tension they
undergo, although at times it appears that they "mess-out", to use
Goffman's phrase,[119] to regain status in the eyes of their peers.
In slum schools, large classes, rather than providing the extra
reservoir of talent which means better class performance, simply
present greater problems of organisation, and more play for student
resistance. This result has confused studies of large classes
which included middle class _and_ working class students. It also
makes it more difficult for the teacher to adapt his behavior to
the individual child. As we have seen, each child needs a
different balance of role-complex; the children's role-expectations
also vary, and it will be argued that this variation, the product
largely of different home environment, helps explain the nature of
the conflict.

Thus, for instance, a middle class child who see his teacher
as instructor, but not as organiser-discipliner of _himself_, will
react differently should he be punished, but is generally more
accepting of instruction. The working class student who sees the
teacher as parent substitute, organiser and instructor will be hard

118.   Saranee S. Boocock, _op.cit._, pp. 16 - 18.
119.   Erving Goffman, _op.cit._, p. 112.

to teach, but may not resent discipline which is seen as part
of the game, and almost natural. The role of value-bearer may
be crucial; the middle class child is almost unaware of it as
it is a reinforcement of his beliefs. The lower class resents
this "fuss about nothing" which tries to change his world-view.
The major expectations appear to be Teacher as "Them" (i.e. an
establishment), Teacher as Teacher (i.e. complete role) and
Teacher as a Person (the opposite, a lack of awareness of what
roles are about. This latter mis-perception of the teacher's
role is another key factor in the poor performance of the lower
class child.

We have concentrated more on the lower class student than
on the middle class teacher as it is likely that the reader can
more easily empathise with the latter; but our survey of the
other studies should serve us in several ways. We have made
explicit some general orientations that we hold within the
sociological framework, and tried to justify certain assumptions
that the slum children in our study are largely non-verbal, and
have a value orientation different from and not clearly understood
by the school; therefore, education causes stress and tension
for them which will find expression in behavior. The lower class
child is, therefore, more likely to be treated as a "bad" student.

So we focus on his value orientation and the nature of
his family life, compare them to those of the "good" student,
and try to relate values and life experience to actions within
the school system. Of these values, firstly those involved in
the playing of organizational roles (such as universalism
rather than particularism) and secondly, the importance of
education in life, are most important to this study as being

central to the conflict involved in the interaction between the staff and student which makes up the daily life of the school. It is this conflict that is an integral part of the syndrome of academic failure, both generating and being generated by the stress of education, which is more acutely felt by the slum child.

Summary

We can summarise our discussion by considering the main sources of tension-generating conflict which mitigate against educational success on the part of the lower class child, and the main sources of tension-reduction which counteract these.

Tension Production.

Cognitive Style

a) the child has a motoric and a verbal style which must be changed; this is an attack on his modes of thought.

Values

b) the child is unused to competition and has one value orientation; the school tries to change this.

Social Organization

c) the child does not understand the teacher's role or how the system works.

d) the child does not see education as important or worth any great effort.

Rewards and Performance

e) the child likes to succeed and to be rewarded but his techniques make both unlikely.

f) the child's non-school environment reinforces him and when he acts out his frustration, he is only further from success.

g) the child finds all of these unpleasant, which reinforces it all.

Some of these can be seen in reverse, and there are other factors which work against the above.

Tension Alleviation

a) the belief that this evil (school) is transitional (unlike teacher's view);

b) the belief that this evil must be endured in order to get a job;

c) an identification with "The School";

d) release through misconduct;

e) "personal" contact with the staff which breaks down the Us-Them orientation and may contribute to the overall process of learning the teacher's role.

In view of all these it can be seen that the middle class child will tend to find education less taxing and is, therefore, under less stress. The lower class child suffers stress and his most frequent reaction to it, misconduct, only serves to compound his initial handicap. It was from this orientation that the study of the social system of "Pheonix School" was undertaken.

CHAPTER 2

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF....

What follows is a composite day in which several
major conflicts have been made to take place, whereas an
average day might witness only one such an event. By following
a hypothetical Grade VII class the reader can see the kind of
event which other studies have suggested occur, which become
explicable in terms of our theory. All events were observed
and conversations are reported verbatim; appendix 1 contains
some details of the logistics of the school (page   ). We
follow this account with a discussion of four incidents which help
to illustrate the clash of values, the responses to these clashes,
and the role of community factors, which we have set out to
investigate.

When the school bell rings

At 8.42 a.m. the school bell rings and the doors are
opened to a stream of children who have been milling about on
the playground and the street outside. A teacher stands at
the door to ensure some sort of order, and anyone pushing is
reprimanded. There is a great deal of noise as the students
hang their coats in the lockers that line the halls and take
their books to the class-rooms. Routine greetings are mixed
with shouted questions about the day's curriculum and the staff
concentrate on imposing a keep-to-the-right, single-file traffic
system in the hall and on the stair case until the students are
in their classes. It takes about 5 minutes for this to happen
and there are always one or two late-comers who rush into the
building and go through the same proceedures in considerably
less time than their fellows have done.

In the classroom there is, at first, a free flow of conversation, with much sharpening of pencils and ordering of books and moving about. Without any apparent formal signal this phase ends as the students start on their "bell-work", a chance to finish homework or yesterday's exercises before the day's lessons properly begin.

The class-room is large and brightly lit with three rows of neon tubes and diffusers. Front and rear walls are parallel but the two side walls are at an angle, forming a trapezium so that the front wall measures 24 feet but the back wall 36 feet; the lateral walls are about 27 feet long. The floor has a check pattern of pale grey and yellow, while walls and ceiling are shades of cream. The woodwork has a very light oak finish and the metal work on the 35 desks-and-chairs units is mid-green. (The colour scheme is thus very different from the old school, which is talked about as a "dirty brown").

In contrast to these basic light pastel shades, the student paintings, progress diamgrams, formula charts and decorated notice-boards are brightly coloured. Pictures of the Queen and a Canadian flag have pride of place centrally over the blackboards which run across the front of the room over open storage shelves. One side wall is also lined with blackboards on which spelling lists, key diagrams and formuli accumulate. The other wall is mainly windows, two-thirds of which are translucent. The rear wall has fitted closets and notice boards which exhibit students' papers, news cuttings and photographs relevant to the week's topic, and other visual aids. The key notes are learning and competition; while much of the decoration is "interest" material, there is a predominating tone of things done properly, and the

best examples of class work are held up for emulation.

Miss Othmar circulates, checking homework, offering individual tuition, and occasionally checking talkers. She is in her late twenties, is well-dressed in a conservative way and wears almost no make-up. She quietly calls for order, the next bell goes, the door is shut, and P.A. announcements are made.

A basketball game is announced by a boy, and then a girl's voice reports a play rehearsal. The Principal announces that every single girl in Grade V has passed the artifical respiration test, something of which the whole school should feel proud, and adds a polite reminder to stay on the sidewalks and not tread mud into _our_ school which the cleaners, and, he is sure, everybody, are trying so hard to keep looking so clean and smart. The children listen; they show no reaction whatsoever.

After "O Canada" and the Pledge have been cheerfully and meaninglessly chanted, there is a Bible reading. Alternate verses are read by the leader for the day and the class in chorus. The students treat it like the Pledge; there is no expression in their voices, as they repeat mechanical phrases, just as if they were asking for a bus ticket. This mechanical phase lasts until the first lesson begins and the teacher exerts a lead. Routine has rendered the early exercises a ritual process, in which content has no meaning, and hence there is no conflict.

Already we have two important elements of school life. Firstly, the change from informal order outside, through increasing order in the corridor to order in class. This is

accepted by staff and students as given. There is a clear
demarcation of behavior in the yard, in hall and in class.
The day begins with a recognised ritual which not only reaffirms
beliefs, but more important, marks off the start of "school".
Thus the actors might be expected to know that all that follows
is part of a system which operates differently from non-school
systems; we shall question this assumption below.

Secondly, the ideology of the school has been in part
presented; we should be proud of our property, and cleanliness
is next to the Bible Reading. This, partly because it is
contained in a ritual, formal expression of ideology, has met
with indifference by the students. These values will be re-
expressed during the day, in contexts where content is more
important than form.

The first lesson begins; these twelve and thirteen year
olds are learning ratios as part of the "new math". There is
little volunteering of answers and the lesson goes at a fast pace.
An undercurrent of noise and restlessness grows during the lesson.
One pupil, Charlie, makes more noise and pays less attention;
he is a year older than average. After explanations on the boards,
the students are set to individual work; Miss Othmar circulates,
trying to help those who have been left behind by the lesson.

The second lesson sees the use of the side boards, for
spelling, and after an exercise on synonyms has been set, Miss
Othmar again works individually. One boy, who had volunteered
several correct answers in the math lesson, is corrected for
talking; soon after he drops a book and then a pencil. Charlie's
mutterings have subsided after he has given some correct answers
but the final round of the class, calling out the answers, does

not hide his, and indeed a general, restlessness on the part of
the class. Miss Othmar says, "Don't interrupt", to this general
buzz, and asks those with all answers correct to stand up, then
those with one wrong, and so on. Three students who have been
more noisey than the rest are left sitting till the end. While
the teacher tells them to write out the list for homework, the
noise level rises and she gives a "second and final warning about
noise". At this point the bell goes and the class lines up for
recess. Collecting their coats, they go out onto the playground
for the 15 minutes recess to 10.30.

What has our second phase of observation shown us? We
can here concentrate on response patterns to stress: Charlie
mutters less while he answers correctly, the second boy drops things
soon after he has been corrected, and the three students who fared
badly in the exercise had also made a lot of noise. Thus unpleasant
experiences - - being criticised explicitly for conduct or
implicitly for schoolwork, in front of the class - - is associated
with most obvious acts of misconduct, even though these have been
small offenses. The response, talking, does not cause the poor
academic performance; rather it is the other way round, but once
the response has started, then it adds its share to lowering
performance. The increasing restlessness of the class is worth
noting; the students do not like sitting in their desks for so
long, and express their frustration by fidgeting and talking.
The students who had been pointed out to me in advance as being
"good students" fidgeted less, despite finishing ahead of the class.
The teacher has had to devote more and more effort from instructing
to organization.

After recess, there is a further English lesson, followed by Geography. Two of the three bad spellers have no pens after recess and there is a shuffling as pens are found for them; the students who lend them pens grin. Emphasis is on memorizing names of coastal regions, and a general explanation of tides is given. Linus, who was corrected before recess and when lining up to leave, continues to talk and makes no effort to conceal his activities. He is less of a distraction during visual and oral work, but when he has to write his "note", he talks even more.

Miss Othmar says, "If you don't want to listen, C.K., but some people here do, some people want to learn, and since to learn is the entire purpose of school, that is what we are going to do. And if it is outside your capabilities, just go outside and you can learn it after Four in your own time." Linus leaves to stand in the hall and Miss Othmar adds, "There have been too many interruptions. We just cannot have it." The noise level subsides markedly, but several of the students grin and exchange glances.

Linus is reinstated soon after, when the lesson is suspended for twenty minutes by the arrival of the Oral French teacher, who uses pictures clipped to the board, a tape-recorder, and his own histrionics to communicate. He speaks no English in class, reviews the story they heard last time, plays the next episode, leads the repitition of key new words with gestures of explanation. Without a pause, a fast game of "Simon Dit" is played, with applause for the winners. Then the story is acted out by some of the students and again applauded. He waves au revoir and rushes out, clutching his recorder, leaving the class relaxed and apparently in a good mood. Even those who later complained that they did not understand a word of what went on, have participated cheerfully and enjoyed

the lesson.

Miss Othmar returns, and the geography continues with
a discussion of fisheries and slides shown the week before.
The class is slow to settle down to writing notes. When the
teacher corrects her own spelling mistake on the board,
Charlie exclaims loudly in annoyance (he has copied it) and
is promptly sent outside "as you've been commenting all
morning". This quells the noise.

Five minutes later Charlie is let back into the room,
but in the meantime some-one has moved into his seat to see
the board better. But he does not ask her to move; he waves
good-bye at her. Miss Othmar refrains from comment and looks
around to find an empty chair. The boy in front turns round
and says something to Charlie, who flicks a hand at his ear.
The other boy prods him back with his pen which Charlie
knocks from his hand with a snarl. The teacher realises
something is happening and sends both outside. Charlie mutters
and Miss Othmar continues in the same breath to "send him to
the office". He throws his ruler onto his desk and follows the
other boy out slamming the door. Miss Othmar, apart from the
command, appears unconcerned and her manner and tone are
unchanged. The class is quieter for a few minutes and then
life goes on as before. She finds it easy to smile at one or
two comments soon after. The lesson concludes without event
at 11.45, the class line up and march down the hall.

In this third session we have again observed the
patterns of response that children use when under stress.
Pens conveniently disappeared during recess, but only in the
case of two students who had been reprimanded before. Linus

was sent outside having deliberately talked until he reached a recognised limit; in both cases the other students clearly recognised these informal protests and sympathised, as their facial expressions showed. Their own talking was less aggressive as Linus became the front runner and focus of efforts to slow teaching and, therefore, escape the unpleasant task of writing (there was much less disturbance during oral work). Miller and Swanson's work enables us to understand his behavior and the response to the French teaching, with lots of physical action, is an event better example of this (see Chapter 1, page 8).

It is particularly worth high-lighting the slow transition to writing entailed in the recommencement of the geography lesson. It is at this point that Charlie causes trouble. Under stress, Charlie lost his temper and instead of deliberately being a nuisance, he was caught up in a burst of emotion. He was no longer consciously testing the limits of his role, he forgot the obligations and duties that his role as student imposed on his relationship with the role of teacher. Miss Othmar made it plain to me afterwards that she felt she could not let this challenge to her authority go unpunished; in other words she saw it as role conflict. The second disturbance was in a sense less important; the machinery had already been wound up by the first challenge.

A third area of interest is the terms in which the teacher legitimised the expulsion of Linus to the class. She defined school as being the place where we are (implicit "obliged") to learn. Anyone failing in this area was, therefore, at fault, not the system. The problem was phrased largely as one of role conflict. But Linus afterwards explained to me that "she was just in a crabby mood". In other wo   he saw the incident as a clash

of personalities in which the social environment is secondary.

Admittedly Miss Othmar mixed her explanation of the system - -
no student can be allowed to talk because it disrupts the
imparting of knowledge - - with a reference to the individual,
particularistic failing of Linus to conform: she did see both
the system and individual personality problems. But even after
I had probed, directed and finally made explicit my view, Linus
still stuck to his original definition of the event, that
Miss Othmar was crabby and picking on him, and appeared to
genuinely believe it. He only saw the personality clash.

Immediately after the class has gone out, I hurry to
the Principal's Office; inside he is talking to the two boys,
and Miss Othmar who enters part way through. (I stand outside
with the knowledge of the Principal). Charlie has a record of
trouble, and has had a major row with one teacher already.
Another teacher comes into the office and is told by the secretary
of the event. He tells me that "Charlie has been better,
especially after Easter". He is a real clown, genuine talent
in drama and music, great with an audience. "He is his own
worst enemy, and sets goals that the school cannot let him attain,
but can't retract". Miss Othmar has said on the way to the Office,
"He's basically a good kid, just looses control of himself
sometimes; he's never slammed the door before".

Charlie apologizes as soon as Miss Othmar comes in. He
is relieved that his father will not be called or that he won't
get the strap. The Principal praises his part in drama (the
school play) and asks him why he won't play the role of the
student, knuckle down and work for Miss Othmar. The other boy
also has a record of small troubles and is contrite in a
conventional way.

Both Principal and teacher treat the event as a minor nuisance, annoying that it has happened, but easily dealt with in a ten minute session. The Principal expresses high hopes of Charlie as a leader in Grade VIII and points to his responsible behavior during the Forest Hills Incident (see below) after the boys have been dismissed. He tells me that Charlie will be O.K. for a couple of weeks; it's a bit like whipping the plates on the Ed Sullivan Show, you no sooner get these three going and you have to rush back and keep the first one going. The students need fences.

Several teachers keep an informal watch on the students in the halls as they leave for lunch; they exchange greetings and grins with the students. One breaks off a conversation to speak to a student about his muddy shoes. Again he phrases it in terms of the boy as a person living up to the building. Another stops two boys who are running in the halls, reminds them of the rules and tells them to walk. The Principal watches and remarks, "It's all a problem of personal relationships".

From this we begin to see that organizing students demands more than universalistic attitudes, and the staff are keenly aware of this. Yet, at times, the system demands the application of universalistic values; the relationship is role to role, not person to person. We should re-phrase this; the role of the teacher is at times universalistic but at others he must "act out of role" to use Goffman's term. At these times he is playing his social worker/parent substitute role, but the students do not perceive this as role-playing, but as a phase of person to person relationships. Where - as the adult and middle class teacher can revert to other role facets, the child, used to family life, cannot adapt so readily, and so still

defines his problems in purely personal terms. His understanding of school remains that of an interaction of <u>people</u>, with some minimal grasp of rules of organization thrown in; the process by which certain actions are rewarded regardless of who performs them, remains largely a closed book to the (especially lower class) child.

The above account can be taken to illustrate much of the routine of school life, and many of the typical events that served as a focus during the period of participant observation. To this we add four incidents taken from field-notes which highlight under-lying trends; as such they may seem extreme cases, but they all occurred in a single month, and affected the school.

Shane

One afternoon after school, there is a showing of the classic cowboy film, "Shane". It is nominally run by the Library Club, in fact by the staff, to raise money for new books for the school's small library. A small entrance fee is charged, and the last period is cancelled; about 50 younger children from Grade IV at nearby Celebration School attend, and the auditorium is packed to its 450 (adult) capacity. As there are only 475 students in the school, at least 4 in 5 of the Pheonix students are present.

There is reasonable order and low noise before the performance starts, and when the lights go down everyone becomes engrossed in the film. During the slow parts of dialogue and love interest there is sufficient rustle of paper to suggest that the children have brought candy and popcorn and are treating the venture as a typical "Saturday-morning Matinee". Soon they are cheering the heroes, booing the villains, and talking to each other in-between.

During the second reel the film is stopped, the lights
come on and one of the teachers issues a lecture somewhat similar
to that of Miss Othmar, only the purpose in this case is to
"enjoy the film". This means silence so that the dialogue can
be heard; this is not a matinee. Then the film continues. At
intervals staff use the rear doors, letting in a flood of light;
they are roundly booed and hissed in a ferocious manner. Slowly
the old pattern re-establishes itself and matinee conditions
prevail.

A second interval is called and another teacher gives
a final warning. If the students saw a similar performance
over again, then they had better show how they know to behave
at this one. This is a school function and not the "Delta".
The film continues with some quiet until the climax, when
cheering breaks out again, but the staff let it go.

In discussions afterwards most students see nothing
worth comment, and talk about the story of the film. The staff
are divided; most are strongly critical of the conduct and
point out the presence of the 50 Celebration School students.
Others praise the uninhibited audience participation and stress
the enjoyment the kids got out of it.

It is worth comparing this briefly with a performance
of the School Musical one evening. There were about 300 in the
auditorium, 60% of whom were children; there were almost no men
there and those present were mostly in their late middle-age or
elderly, dressed in working class "Sunday Best".

At first, there was much standing up and waving, until the
Principal welcomed the audience, pointed out that all rehearsals
had been outside of school time, and stressed how good it was

"in these days when anything goes" to see such efforts and
enthusiasm towards excellence and perfection. During the
performance there was lots of applause, joining in choruses, but
while there was a buzz of approval when the good characters won
out, there was no cheering. Afterwards staff and students were
happy with the way it turned out.

The events we have described are interesting from a
number of points of view; let us start with values. Both
performances were used as vehicles for values which the staff
wished to project, in the first case correct behavior at a
film, and in the second, effort, sacrifice, striving for
perfection. Very few of the staff were willing to accept the
minority view of "audience participation" in "Shane"; to them,
eating candy and expressing strongly felt excitement, identification,
etc., were wrong. Students should be seen, or rather see, and
not be heard. They felt obliged to teach these "savages" how
to appreciate something which all too obviously they were
appreciating - - but in a different way. At the musical, the
Principal was clearly projecting direct to the parents; he felt
that anything that brought them into contact with the school was
good and did not hesitate to extend his role of cultural
missionary from children to adults.

We must also consider the behavior of the students.
They treated the film as a non-school event, or rather, brought
their outside frame of reference for movie-watching to the event.
This was the way of the community when lots of children assembled
for a film. At the musical they had a different frame of
reference; one does not shout and stomp at a regular performance
when adults are present, and so they were, in staff terms, better
behaved; they did know how to act. It was normal for (lower class)

children to shout at matinees; however, if they had defined
the movie as "school" which because of its timing they did
not, would they have acted differently? The teachers did define
the show as "school" and therein lies the conflict; once again
we are dealing with a problem of definitions. This is an example
of middle class values clashing with lower class values, not on
the level of general abstract orientation, but on specific, almost
petty, social mores and customs. While middle class children
may shout at movies, they are corrected sooner: the working class
style is less inhibited (see Chapter 1, page 9).

Two other points are worth briefly mentioning. The
first is the use of the Celebration School children as scapegoats,
when it was patently obvious that they alone were not responsible.
Secondly, the shouting at the staff who used the door and let the
light slip in; so easily do definitions and awareness of roles
slip. It did not matter that this was a teacher, he was treated
as any old fool who was a nuisance and at whom they should shout.
If their minds had not been occupied, they would have been more
"respectful".

The Forest Hills Incident

During the preparation of the musical, Phoenix School
was invited to perform selected scenes at a Public School Drama
Festival held at Forest Hills School. Forest Hills is a mixed
residential area with a superficial middle class appearance, and
much of the bad feeling generated by the "incident" was over
middle class kids with all their advantages, acting as they did.

Trouble started after the performance on the first night.
A group of "hardrocks" pushed some of the younger students (not
from Phoenix) and shouted insults at the girls from the Top End.
As Charlie put it, "Nobody calls our girls that kind of names and

gets away with it; they can't push us around", and he and some
of the other older students organized several car-loads of
Grade VIII and ex-students to accompany the cast the next night.

When the Principal heard about the insults (reported by
both staff and students present) and the reprisals planned, he
intervened and requested Charlie and the others not to damage
their school's name in this way. He suggested the hards were
jealous of Pheonix's swimming record, and after much talking,
achieved agreement from the group by accusing Roy, one of the
leaders, of not really caring for his school. He fiercely denied
this and even offered to stay away from Forest Hills himself. As
a result, although there was trouble that night, no Pheonix School
students were involved, and the Principal made much of it in his
P.A. notes and to me.

Here we see the culture of the community being grafted
onto that of the school. It is apparent that the ringleaders
in particular were genuinely proud of their school, and prepared
to defend it in what seemed to them to be the correct manner.
They were sufficiently proud to back down when their figure-head,
the Principal, advised against it as it would ultimately damage
the school. Thus we have previously talked in terms of the
unpleasant side of education, but now we must redress the balance
and note the degree of generalised commitment that does exist,
over and above the classroom; one might say despite the classroom.
The difference in this case is that sub-culture and school were
jointly threatened by an outside force, instead of the usual
internal tensions. This strong emotional tie is also a product
of interpersonal relationships, of a group identity, and need have
nothing to do with the formal operation (or teacher definition) of
the school. In the discussions, the Principal requested as man to

Roy and Civil Disobedience

Roy has a long history of trouble. From a broken home, he has lived most of his life with his grandfather. He has a police record and at 17 years old is still in Grade VIII where he sometimes causes trouble. In particular he does not like Miss Davidson, who the Principal admits is a "bit prissy, fussy over details, doesn't let things go".

Roy has received a bad mark from her in a subject which he thinks he is good in. He dislikes being treated as a child, and often speaks out of turn in class. Miss Davidson does not like this; she is a teacher "of the old school" both literally and figuratively. Roy says he hates Miss Davidson because she can't teach.

One afternoon there are very few answers indeed to Miss Davidson's questions, and anyone giving an answer receives a dirty look from Roy. Eventually he is caught pulling down the arm of the boy next to him who is offering an answer, which inevitably leads to an interview in the Principal's office, where Miss Davidson reads out a list of Roy's misbehavior. Roy admits to the Principal who is sympathetic that "some-one else decided that no-one would answer questions in class", he doesn't know who. The teacher thinks that the total of grievances must mean at least suspension from her class and probably from school. She tells me separately that Roy is unintelligent and immature.

He has failed Spelling and History at least once in the two exams this year, but her subject twice. He has caused trouble over many things, especially over notebooks by taking a new one from her desk without showing the old one is full up,

and asking. She told him to put it back and ask properly, which he refused to do. After two weeks the Principal intervened and with the teacher's permission gave Roy one of his books. It is in the very next lesson that the civil disobedience occurs.

Miss Davidson estimates it was successful in causing a 33% slow-down. In addition, she says that Roy said some very nasty things to her as he went out. This is the first time she has herself faced non-co-operation on such a successful scale. She always asks delinquents what they have gained by their action and Roy has answered "Just satisfaction!".

The Principal gives Roy overnight to think and apologize or get out. In the morning there is another interview, without the teacher this time, during which Roy admits that as a 17 year old in Grade VIII he is in no place to judge standards of teaching; but he falls back on personal dislike. "I'll not bend for her". The Principal concedes on behalf of Miss Davidson not to demand an apology in front of the whole class, but outside. Roy submits; he is influenced by the Principal's argument that she is part of a team, and to buck her, bucks the school. The compromise works; they shake hands and an uneasy truce is restored. Relieved, the Principal says to me, as I have heard him so often say, "part of our job is teaching these children to live with other people. That's part of life, just living with people".

Here we see extreme forms of the response pattern in operation, and the breakdown of efforts to mobilize the class as a unit. Roy failed to understand that he could not opt out of one subject and still pass his year; he did not understand the system. While the class mobilisation failed, we have a vivid example of what Bernstein has called "bewildered and defenceless" children - - bewildered perhaps, but not defenceless. The response,

however, only served to lessen Roy's chances of passing his
subject, if only because he had worked that time less on it.

The Fight

The fight started at the end of the lunch break. Word
spread along the school corridor in excited whispers of "a fight!",
until even the Principal, two teachers and I, standing in the
office, noticed it. I went at once to the glass door; out in
the road two boys were squared up boxing style, dancing around
each other. The school path was blocked with students, arrested
in their entry to the school and more crowded and jostled at the
doorway, forgetful of place, time or rank, in an attempt to follow
the action. Everyone was very excited; the demands of school
routine were ignored.

For several very long seconds we watched the punches thrown.
When a car came down the street, the fighters would draw away and let
it pass between them; then they would start again. Several older
boys were standing around, calling encouragement. One teacher
pushed his way out and hurried over to the fight. I could hear
him telling them to stop, that they could not settle anything
with violence. Both boys were bigger than he was, and he did not
intervene physically. They were now trading punches at close
quarters, very fast, in sharp, repeated bursts of violence.

The Principal joined the group and ordered a halt. He
clearly was very angry, and when his order was not obeyed, warned
the protagonists that he would call the police. Then he walked
very quickly for the entrance, implying that he was about to carry
out the threat. At this one of the older boys pulled Shermy,
the smaller fighter, away and the teacher stood between them,
keeping Schroeder back. The whole group began to come along the

path to the school, and the crowd started into the building.

But Shermy was still saying something to Schroeder over the head of the teacher (he later reported this as "Fuck you" said over and over) and the fighting broke out again, Schroeder landing an excellent straight right to Shermy's mouth over the teacher's shoulder, at which Shermy pushed forward and went into a clinch. Wrestling and kicking at each other, the two boys came to rest against the school wall, deadlocked, panting for breath. Both the older boys and the two staff members were now agreed that the fight should end, and they intervened with both words and strong arms. The fighting was over; both boys kept well apart as they walked along the corridor to the Principal's office.

I sat in the office while the Principal talked to them; the interview lasted an hour-and-a-half.

Schroeder sat on one side. His white shirt was torn almost to the waist but he was clearly the winner and he sat upright and in control of himself. His only marks were a few red scratches around his neck. Shermy, on the other hand, was bleeding at the mouth, visibly upset, and prowled up and down behind the Principal's desk.

His chief worry (and that of Schroeder too) was the police, because the former was on probation; he would be sent away if the police came and certainly Schroeder did not want that. Shermy stood by the open window saying he needed to cool off, but watching the road apprehensively. The Principal motioned me to leave and putting them on their honor not to fight in his office we left them for a few minutes to cool off. They seemed almost hurt that he should fear a fight and not trust

When we returned the contrast between the two was even more apparent. Schroeder's only worry was that his friend might be in trouble, and hardly hesitated before admitting that he threw the first punch. But Shermy quickly interrupted that it might have been the other way around quite easily, and it was he who had been "mouthing off" and so caused the fight. Both admitted it was a stupid thing to do, but meant something different from the Principal in this. To them the stupidity was that they did it then and not after school in the Park.

A second point at issue was stopping when they were told to. Neither boy was very coherent about this, but talked about "the other guys were there". Shermy was very angry with the teachers for not intervening physically at the start. It did not matter that they might have got punched; that would have been O.K. and part of the price paid for making an end to things. Shermy admitted that he was so mad he would have hit anyone who got in his way but this appeared to be as much bluster as the truth. By the time it was obvious that the police weren't coming he had regained some self-control and was making smart answers.

He said that he was not worth bothering with, that he should be given a work permit and put out to work. Both he and Schroeder agreed that even though there were only eight weeks to go to the end of the year, the fight could not be ignored, even though they both wanted to complete Grade VIII (both were nearly 15, and therefore only in school on sufferance).

At this stage, Schroeder was sent home to change. He was clearly experiencing a clash of values. He felt that the fight had been inevitable and he had been right to fight; he could not accept the official line that "it took even more guts to back down". Fighting was part of growing up and he considered it unfair to

demand otherwise. That this led to trouble, he also accepted as inevitable, but clearly did not accept the rationale for this. On the other hand, Shermy, feeling the same conflict, reacted differently.

Still on edge, he talked about the money he was making with a beat group, and how he was going to make $20,000 a year. He claimed he could go to trade school without Grade VIII, and then made rueful remarks about it having been a good ye r for the school up to them. He went back to his class for the last period, having asked advice as to what he should tell his Probation Officer whom he had to meet that night.

Later I spoke to Schroeder as he was leaving the school and he defended his actions. Although he expected some punishment and could see that within the context of the school he was in the wrong, he perceived this in terms of <u>maintaining order and discipline</u>. He did not appe r to consider the rationale, that fighting was wrong anywhere, (regardless of the demands of the school) even remotely relevant to his life. He persuasively made his points that everyone fights while growing up, and that "you can't let yourself be pushed around because then nobody respects you in the Top End".

Shermy was absent for the rest of the week. He claimed illness, and his symptoms the next day might have been those of shock. Two days later his mouth had become infected and so he had remained away all the week. The Principal accepted the first day as hurt pride, and quite excusable.

From this detailed account of the fight we can draw a number of conclusions._ Firstly, how did the fight start?

Schroeder and a few others were throwing a ball at a car (sic) and Shermy was jeering at him. As the Forest Hills Incident

also shows, verbal insults cannot be ignored; they have to be answered with force. It was impossible for either to back down without loss of face. The original cause of the fight was insignificant to the teachers, a few words; to the fighters those insults were a major challenge which could not be ignored. Schroeder told me proudly of his father's fighting exploits, especially after insults; his life experience at home and in his peer group, the two major and most intense socializing agents outside of the school, clearly demanded that he fight, and in this case he yielded to these pressures despite his precarious position with regard to school and expulsion. While it is true to say that Shermy gave him little choice (both agreed he was spoiling for a fight) it was Schroeder who threw the first punch and signalled he was willing to fight.

A second major issue to the actors was the cessation of hostilities. Both teachers were more upset by the refusal to stop fighting than that the fight started in the first place, and this was repeated in the interview. The community intruded directly in this. The physical presence of the older boys meant that the norms of the peer group (and also in this case the neighborhood) had vocal expression; any deviation would be seen by a significant number of people. Even if Shermy was getting the worst of it he could not stop. Yet again, we see that the values of school (instant obedience) took second place; faced with the choice, he fought on.

To Shermy, the teachers' failure to intervene was a betrayal. To stop fighting he had to be held back forcibly. He was unable to accept that so much fuss was being made over the

"correct way" when the teachers had not cared enough to enforce
it by brute strength. In fact, he felt it had been a "just"
fight, and saw no reason to call the police in or argue, except
in as far as a breach of discipline and disruption of the school's
smooth operation was concerned. There could be no voluntary halt;
school rules demanded a halt and prescribed penalties for failure.
Therefore, such penalties were inevitable and part of a system of
operation alien to the main theme of the combatants' lives.

Neither of the teachers concerned, despite being among the
most radical and liberal on the staff, appeared aware of this
value conflict. They made a great effort to communicate, but
were always at cross-purposes. They never deviated from the
"official line" nor demonstrated the "superiority" of their stand
over the neighborhood sub-culture. By this, I do not mean to
imply that this would have been successful in converting the
delinquents; I feel that the omission is a further indication
that there was no awareness of the problem in the terms I have
outlined.

Certainly both teachers made every effort to communicate
and sympathize with the boys. The Principal spent nearly a whole
afternoon on the problem. But despite his obvious good will, the
interview was not pleasant for Shermy; even the process of
sympathetic counselling set up major tensions. His tolerance
of Shermy's absence is an indication of his full sympathy but not
complete empathy. In this case, the real source of tension for
Shermy was not the fight, but the interview that followed. He
was reluctant to face the Principal and have the experience
reinforced, so he stayed away. This is not to say that he did not
experience the symptoms he later described; rather the symptoms
were largely caused by the interview, and secondly he welcomed

the after-effects and was willing to stay away, rather than attempting to overcome them and attend. In this case, he chose to be absent as a direct reaction to his school experience.

When I talked to him about it he was evasive. He said he did not. "feel up to school" and then grinned, "you know". He said it was easier not to come, but loosing the fight was not too important; this agreed with Schroeder's view that while loosing is sometimes important, "Shermy didn't feel bad about it".

The level of resistance to the depressant effects of illness is low because there is no will to overcome it. Indeed, there is often marked motivation to exaggerate symptoms. The lack of parental pressure in cases where education is not valued often means absence which would not occur otherwise.

Summary

We have seen certain events in the life of Phoenix School
which represent underlying trends, and are representative of
my field notes and, I hope, of normal life in the school. From
these some understanding of the field situation should have
arisen but we have not merely used the data as description,
but made the following main points:-

a)   that physically active and oral teaching is more enjoyed
      by lower class students;

b)   that misconduct is a response to stress;

c)   that the students do not understand the application of
      universalistic criteria, and regard school as a system
      of personal relationships;

d)   there are major differences in the values of staff and
      students;

e)   that conflict over values is often seen as having no
      inherent importance or not as value conflict but only
      as a matter of discipline and order;

f)   that the neighborhood retains an extremely strong hold
      over its children;

g)   that when there is no conflict, and neighborhood and
      school agree, there is a strong drive generated.

We will return to these points in the discussion of the
interviews which follows.

CHAPTER 3
CONDUCT AND CONFLICT

The next section unfortunately presents one of the disappointments of this study, for available records did not add as much as was hoped to our knowledge of conduct as a manifestation of conflict. It was argued above that the student can withhold his labor by going absent or being late; unfortunately the records for 1966/67 were not available for administrative reasons, and while we briefly consider attendance records during 1959-1964 at the old school as a guide, this is of course of limited usefulness.

Similar problems are involved in the accurate assessment of punished offences. The detention list gave no offences, and the "black list" of more serious misdemeanours started in mid-November 1966 and ran to May when the study ended: not only was it chronologically restricted, but not every serious offence was listed, for an immediate interview with the Principal often served instead. With such limits in mind, we can make some approximation towards a picture of conduct problems in the school. We can also utilize the responses of the students on the problem of conduct, for they talked freely about techniques of "bugging the teacher" with obvious enjoyment.

Attendance

The staff listed attendance as a major problem in slum areas, and as a significant cause of lower marks. One teacher ruefully said, "In my last school I had several perfect months (i.e. no absentees). Here I am lucky if I get a perfect week". In the last chapter we discussed the case of Shermy's absence and while we do not need to discuss it further at this stage, we then

drew some general conclusions from it; absenteeism is a way out, but not only a way out. Most cases have a genuine illness which no amount of motivation will overcome. Some of the "good" pupils reported with regret being absent just one or two days: "My mum wanted me to stay home but I said no and came and then I fainted and they sent me home", was how one girl put it. Another boy had come to school for several days with a high fever until the nurse saw him, diagnosed measles, and sent him home. More typical cases took a half day for dental appointments and the like, which was unusual in the good students. But as we say, not all cases are a matter of motivation.

It is interesting in this connection to briefly consider the impact of epidemic illnexx in the very few cases of registers where detailed notes on absenteeism were kept. Bad students in our sample tended to have poor attendance records: it is reasonable to assume that students with bad attendance over the last five years were either problem children, or of a weak constitution, and the notes enable us to discount any of the latter.

It would appear that the child who is absent frequently tends to catch for instance the measles in addition to his already bad record: in other words, even if he was not absent from the measles, he still had a bad record. Other students with otherwise better records were less prone to the epidemics. However, the registers mostly say "ill" rather than giving details so this finding is tentative. In one example of nine cases of measles listed all the frequently absent students were included in the nine, while only two of the nine had more typical absence. Thus of the seven, absenteeism excluding the measles period ranged from 15 days to 73 days, as compared to the nearly 80% of the class remaining who were abse 10 days or less.

Without more details we can only tentatively suggest reasons for this. It is possible that the seven formed a peer group, one succumbed, and the others all caught the disease. It is more likely that they knew about measles from the grape-vine of other classes and siblings - - perhaps one or two did actually catch measles - - but most pretended illness, knowing that they could get away with it.

This field is worth further investigation but the lack of details limits this study. A few general impressions are worth noting. The most frequently absent students were not chronically ill, but either had no excuse, were baby-sitting or had some other "social" excuse. The registers contained many excuses of an almost Dickensian ring; "no shoes ... body lice ... helping mother ... watching grandmother ... running errands ... I was ill and needed her at home" and so on, suggesting serious problems in a small number of households, particularly when there was illness in the family. We suggest that the low evaluation of education by the parents makes them more willing to keep their children out of school than in a middle class suburb, especially in the case of daughters.

So we need to remember that while attendance can be opting out, or a genuine illness, or a home problem, it probably is an indication of a lower evaluation of education. One teacher who attempted to stop casual absenteeism said his culprits substituted lateness for absenteeism as a first sign that his efforts were working: this would fit our general hypothesis. The important point is that attendance is not a random or biologically-defined phenomenon, but has a sociological pattern which merits more investigation.

Serious offences were those for which a detention or
"lines" was considered insufficient punishment, and the offender
was instead sent to the office where his name was entered on
the "black list". A persistent myth among students was that
three entries meant an automatic strapping but the staff used
the list as a reminder when dealing with multiple offenders.
Despite its limitations the list offers some interesting
evidence.

All entries from 21st November to 12th May were grouped
by offence, grade, sex and time, for comparison in the study.
There was a total of 401 entries, 256 boys and 145 girls. As
the school was roughly equally matched for sex, it is clear the
boys were punished more often. By time, offences were heavy
in the first three weeks, averaging 38 entries a week, declined
steady to a low in January, rose to a new peak of 36 offences
in the third week of February, then declined slightly, running
as a level of 4 to 6 entries a day until an upsurge in the last
two weeks of the study. Both sexes showed similar time patterns.

The first two peaks coincided with the fall and thaw of
heavy snow according to the staff, but this seemed to be a piece
of folk lore whose validity I did not test by checking
meteorological reports. But the third peak in May was at a
time when the students told me they were trying harder as exams
were near.

The offences were evenly spread between grades but the
girls in grades V and VIII made up nearly half the offences in
their grade, while those in grades VI and VII made up about one-
quarter and one-third of the entries respectively. Relatively
more girls were entered in   V and VIII, while in the same

grades, relatively fewer boys were listed, both relative to the mean of their own sex. In other words, in these grades both sexes react differently. There were no apparent differences in the way teachers of one sex punished students of either sex. We assume here that the teachers punish on a consistent basis as a group, but it is possible that at times they are more strict, rather than the pupils more disobedient: for example, when the school was first opened.

It is in these two grades that the girls enter puberty and mature ahead of the boys. This may account for the difference of the boys acting up because of the feeling of inferiority, but it is surprising that the stress of puberty does not lead to more rather than less offences. Interestingly enough, the staff did not remark on the subject.

When we consider actual offenses, these fall into ten main categories as in Table 1. (The significance of being in the wrong place is that in a new building, the staff firmly enforced rules about leaving the building in an effort to minimize wear and tear).

Table 1: Percentage of Black List Entries by Offence and Sex

Nature of Offence	Male	Female	Total
In wrong place at wrong time	20.3	30.2	25.2
Horsing around	21.1	9.9	15.5
Talking	14.1	14.4	14.2
Insolence	6.2	15.1	10.7
Fighting	9.8	6.1	8.1
Bad work	8.2	7.7	8.0
Chewing gum	5.9	5.4	5.6
Drinking sans permission	3.5	5.4	4.0
Talking in line	5.5	2.7	3.9
Lateness	1.9	0.6	1.7
Other	3.5	2.7	3.1
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(n=256)	(n=145)	(n=401)

Not surprisingly the boys were more often punished for horsing around and this again relates to the school; as one teacher commented, "We can't have them horsing around in here, it's no way to treat the building". It was the girls who were more often insolent (an average of one case each week); if we take this with being in the wrong place - (after hours using wrong doors etc.) - again a lack of appreciation about the status of the building and the students' presence in it - - we find that whereas the boys had 26.5% of their total offences in this category, the girls had 45.3%. When we add the similar offence of drinking without permission, the totals are 30% and 50.7% respectively.

From this it would appear that the girls have a less well defined awareness of their obligations of their role as students than the boys, and certainly act this out in a different, less boisterous way. This may be an early mark of western culture in which the female is encouraged to be affective, irrational and person-oriented, while the male is job-oriented and, as Parsons says, provides the cognitive functions for the family. Not only are the sexes already displaying their "natural aptitudes" but perhaps the girls, being kitchen-oriented, value education less positively because they feel it is irrelevant to their future.

Our data fit the usual impression of males getting into more trouble. Sexton's explanation would fit here for there is no room in the middle class emphasis on neatness, order and so forth for the adolescent male virtues.[120] Instead the somewhat prissy tone of the school was more acceptable to the girls, and the boys were guilty of more physical (and masculine?) offenses. Thus we are dealing with an area in which there are several variable at work which makes a simple interpretation impossible.

120. Patricia Sexton, op.cit., p. 278.

How did the 84 students in our sample rate in the black
list? None of the 28 good students were listed. 12 of the
average students were listed once and 2 more than once. 14 of
the bad students were listed once and twelve more than once.
In view of the terms of selection, this is not surprising.

As for their own confessions of offences, both major
and minor, a similar picture emerges. Good students reported 25
incidents of trouble, average students reported 36 incidents, and
bad students 60 incidents. Eight   of the good group said they
had never been in trouble; only 3 of the average and none of the
bad students claimed this. The good students mentioned only
talking and fooling around as a source of correction by the
teachers; while these were the main offences for the average
group, they also mentioned work and individuals named one case
each in four other categorites. But the bad group had as many
cases of insolence as talking and horsing around (14) with
several cases of fighting, work, lateness, and being in the wrong
place. These figures are summarized in Table 2, which also shows
sex.

Table 2: Admitted Offences by Good, Average and Bad Male and
Female Students

Group	No Offence		Talking		Horsing		Other		Total		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Good	3	5	10	8	5	2	0	0	15	10	n=.17M,11F
Average	1	2	7	7	4	3	8	4	19	14	n= 13M,15F
Bad	0	0	9	5	10	4	13	19	32	28	n= 20M, 8F
Totals	4	7	26	20	19	9	21	23	66	52	

The pattern of which offences are by which sex is the same as in the
black list; the girls were more represented in talking and 'other'
offences - - principally being in the wrong place and insolence
(especially in the bad group). Boys were guilty of talking and
horsing around.

Let us look at the techniques of "bugging a teacher". We have seen some of these such as the "lost" pens in the last chapter, but there are several others to add. All students knew at least one or two of them, even if they claimed never to have used them (as often in the case of the good students). Not surprisingly the bad students reported more examples and more cases per capita than the other two groups.

By far the most recommended techniques for getting back at a teacher, to make him mad, or to in short "bug him", were variations on themes of noise and movement. Talking in a continuously ostentatious way after being told to cease was more popular than "talking back" to the teacher's face, and was more often linked with immoderate laughter at the teacher. Another technique of noise, more frequently admitted by the bad students was tapping drum-solos on the bottoms of the desks, and activity in which most of the class would join. "Forgetting" books and pens, dropping books, hiding equipment and throwing rubbers around were all mentioned, the last being considered as more extreme. Changing desks, direct and open lack of co-operation (in effect a refusal to work) and getting up and walking around were final stages of escalation, and I observed all of the above at one time or another during the study. When I asked students why they bugged a teacher, they usually answered that they did not like them, that the teachers pushed them around and made them mad. Very few students said they bugged every teacher, each having favorite tragets, a variety of which the rotary system in the new building provided. While all these techniques might be expected in any urban school, their frequent use is due to Pheonix School being working class.

At the outset of the study, one of the areas to be investigated was the impact of the building on the school's life. Even without knowing the old building, it was felt possible that some comparison could be made, but as the study developed, this became more and more difficult. The reason for this was the multiplicity of new factors which made it virtually impossible to isolate the effect of the new building.

In the first place, as we have noted, more than half of the staff left and were replaced, largely by new specialist staff. As we shall see we found no difference in attitudes between the new and old teachers, but it is possible that those who transferred out were those who did not adapt to teaching in the Top End, or who manifested some other characteristic which those who remained did not.

Secondly, there was a major change in the student population. The old Pheonix School was split into grades I to IV at the new Celebration School, and V to VIII at the new Phoenix School. A redrawing of the school catchment area meant a large intake of students from another school outside the Top End. Thus both staff and students had changed.

Thirdly, there was the intervening period of shift teaching, which meant essentially three phases not two. I was told by some teachers that part of the discipline problems was a result of the resumption of full-time education and supervision. The same may well be true of the change in marks obtained by the students. All we can say is that during the year, the marks tended to show an improvement for all levels of ability. The details of this would have been interesting to investigate but for administrative reasons the marks were not available.

A fourth change probably also affected the marks, and is bound up with the new building. All grades had a half-day of rotary five times a week in well equipped rooms. It is plausible that this improved marks but it might have equally well been the new staff. All we can do is note the change and pass on.

The other major change again was interesting but outside the scope of the study; this was the impact of the new community centre which was built adjoining the school, and which shared the auditorium and swimming pool facilities. In my conversations with ministers, policemen, social workers and ordinary Top Enders in taverns, I received a uniform impression that there was less "trouble with the young people" since the community centre had opened. From this it appears that the adolescents were "off the streets" more, attending the centre particularly for swimming, and so were both less visible, and more organised - - in effect supervised - - and had less free time to hang around and get into mischief. The centre was part of an urban renewal project which again changed the population concerned: as a result of the publicity the project received, several agencies began community-oriented social work in the area. A coffee bar, a new church group, a Social Planning Council project all started about the time of the study and we need to ask the effect these had on the children in and out of school.

We have argued that stress occurs in situations in which pressure is brought to bear on the slum child to acquire middle class patterns of behavior, and that the tension generated by this must be acted out, released in some way.

Webb has suggested this takes the form of spontaneous rule breaking; if the out-of-school activities are routinised into social worker-directed channels, what is the effect? In so far as these activities are physical - - competitive sports and even co-operative work projects such as house renovation, - - there is a release of energy that can also be a release of psychic frustration. Secondly, there is a greater chance for the child to relate to the social worker as person to person in small groups, than to the teacher, even if the same potential conflict over roles is present. But whereas before, evenings could be spent getting back at authority in general by simple acts of delinquency, the peer group now uses the community centre because it is novel and not unpleasant. Any tensions not released in the competitive sports can be carried over the school the next day, and this might explain fluctuations in school discipline seen in the "black list", above.

One other effect of the new centre and school is the feeling of pride expressed in the new building by almost every adult that I met in the Top End and nearby. Instead of the old school, here was a stimulating new building which attracted crowds to its opening; parents visited the complex at least once who had previously never been in a school since their own youth. It is arguable (as the staff claimed) that a new awareness and interest, albeit a small one, was awakened in the parents who then encouraged their children more in educational endeavour.

It would be a mistake to think that the new building was a great inspiration or opened up vast new vistas of golden

middle class opportunity for a younger generation. The Top Enders were proud of the urban renewal but saw it as a matter of right. They had the classic working class community pride; what City Hall did for them was only what they deserved and if they continued the old way of life as far as possible - - the natural way of life to them - - all would be right in the end. Thus the centre was rather a sumbol of amelioration than an inspiration to escape the ghetto.

In this chapter we have considered certain limitations on our data despite which we have been able to present evidence of conflict in detail, and suggest some reasons for it. Our basic position is that apparently random events (like absentee-ism) contain a pattern, which is discernable once we know enough about these manifestations of conflict. Now we know something of the form conflict and conduct took at Pheonix, we can look at the protagonists and find out why it took the form that it did.

CHAPTER 4

THE STAFF

As we noted before, there were seventeen teachers at Phoenix School, excluding the Principal and the French Teacher, sevel males and ten females. They ranged from one in her first year of teaching to two who were in their fifties, from teachers in their twelfth year at the school to one who had started a month before the study; almost all denominations of Christianity were represented, and there were supporters of the major political parties, including Social Credit. With so much variation it is pointless to talk of the typical: however, there was a predominance of United Churchmen and Progressive Conservatives. As one would expect from this, we are also dealing with third generation Canadians, who in this case were mainly in their twenties and thirties. They all lived in middle class suburbs, well away from the Top End. All came from family backgrounds in which the major wage-earner was in Blishen's occupational class 4 or above, with several reporting that they grew up on a farm, and this broadly agreed with a study of social origins of high school teachers in the city.[121] It does not seem unreasonable to talk about the teachers as middle class, and to expect them to display middle class values: in general there was great consistency in their responses.

The physical layout of the school did contribute to a division of interaction, the teachers upstairs being more of a group, using the staff room more, and talking to each other in the second floor corridor. The teachers below formed another

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121. Frank E. Jones, "The Social Origins of High-School Teachers in a Canadian City", in Blishen et al, op.cit., pp. 474-482.

group but interacted less, as their spare time was spent on preparation of materials for impending lessons; in this way the difference between home-room and specialist teachers was accentuated. It is possible that this division effected formation of school policy in staff meetings, but with the exception of the stand on corporal punishment, general more favored on the second floor, I found little evidence of it: the atmosphere was at all times relaxed and cheerful and all the teachers were pleased at their relationship with their colleagues which most felt was as good or better than in other schools. There seemed to be no age differences in attitudes, nor did the females differ greatly from the males, although they were less at ease in the interviews, in general less secure, and tended to be slightly more worried over discipline.

Without prompting, discipline was one of the first things talked about in the interviews. From there, most teachers talked about the problem of home backgrounds, how this effected the students, and back to general teaching problem. At all times I was impressed by the obvious sincerity and dedication of the staff who, whatever their personal explanation of chosen problems, were genuinely committed to their job and their students. We also discussed the role of the teacher in a slum area, the goals of education, administrative problems and the events that had recently occurred in school life.

The Values of the Teachers

Not surprisingly, the teachers expressed attitudes in conformity with and support for the system within which they operated. An obvious point not normally realised is the

tremendous emotional commitment to school which teachers have.
As children they enjoyed school: as middle class students they
cared about "the school" and its good name; without thinking
they worked hard and with success, rarely felt the need to break
the rules, were in fact nearly model pupils. It is therefore
difficult for them to imagine how it feels not to like school.
For them, the delinquent student is offending against the
natural order of things, and so is abnormal. This attitude
goes above and beyond the basic normative definitions of good
and bad conduct, with negative sanctions for transgressions;
the bad student is not so much an ordinary student who has erred,
but a different breed, a bafflingly alien animal.

All the teachers gave vent to this definition, even
the most radical. They found it not only inexplicable but
depressing that a student should not like school or see how
important it was. There was constant return to this point that
opposition had to be overcome for the child's sake; without
education there was no future. At all times there was a dual
perception of the importance of education, and thus of themselves:
education was seen as being intrinsically valuable, as an
experience which entailed rewards inherent in the process and
in the fulfilment of the individual personality. But they also
saw education as the road to success, to a better job, and so
a better life for the student than his parents had. They were
equally aware of school as a means and as an end.

They differed from their students in that they saw it
as an end in itself, and as a more potent means. Although never
crystallized, there was a vague faith that the more education

the better the job, regardless of aptitudes, social environment or occupational structures in society. Talking to the teachers one almost accepted education as the single magic ladder to a golden future which awaited everyone who went through school to Grade XIII or beyond. Despite sadly admitting under pressure, that they were all too ineffectual, they deeply regretted the desire of the students to leave school and start earning. If only they could be persuaded to remain at school, everything would be find. Only one teacher talked about getting the students to do the best they could, and not feel inferior to those who went to university.

Thus we see two characteristically middle class attitudes were firmly to the fore in the teachers' minds. Firstly, the belief that education brings its own rewards, independent of any occupational overtones; very few of the lower class students saw this. The staff also had higher occupational aspirations. Secondly, there was an emphasis on present deferment of gratification in favor of attaining some future goal. The students who were criticized were much more present-oriented and cared less about the future; consequently education might be expected to have less significance for them.

The above discussion is not meant to give the impression that the teachers thought all their students would become professionals and that there was no variation in ability. Rather the students' occupational future was never thought out in detail, nor the full range of factors effecting their future lives considered. All the teachers mentioned the lower overall ability of the Top End children, but with two aspects in mind.

One was the lack of motivation on the part of the children. "They give up too easily ... They won't (note, not "can't") concentrate ... they lack perseverence and are slow to get down to work ... They don't try and even their parents don't seem to care".

We have heard this emphasis on "striving" before, when the Principal welcomed the audience to the musical by praising the students for putting in so much hard work and seeking such a high standard. Indeed, the value on striving in a work setting is institutionalized in the school's report card, which authorizes the teacher to rate each student on whether he:

> listens attentively in class; is prompt to begin,
> works steadily. Persevers to completion of a task ...
> works well without supervision ... works well alone
> or with a group. Carries out duties promptly without
> frequent reminders.

In other words, regardless of the results, that he attains them in the right manner and lives up to the Protestant work ethic. Following Webb, we might ask the relevance of this for the unskilled worker in a capitalist economy. This is a direct expression of the middle class drive to mastery, to achieve, to work as the real purpose and true obligation of every mortal. It is deeply ingrained in the Canadian education system.

The second point of reference in the lower ability of Top End kids as in all criticisms of them, was the home.. A very strange picture of homelife emerged from the interviews; the middle class experience of the staff made them unable to appreciate the positive values of lower class family life (see above p. 19 and it became the most convenient scapegoat. The teachers seemed to think that in most cases there was no love or interest in the child, that the child was ignored. These homes apparently were 99% "common law marriages" which the children knew was wrong

(and the staff left me in no doubt as to the rights and wrongs

of the matter). Breakfast was a bottle of coke and a bag of chips,

mother was out at work all day, father came home rolling drunk

every night, and the kids were either hanging around the street-

corner till midnight or baby-sitting. In the home there was

constant uproar, too many kids, and not enough money; the kids

were never taught manners or how to behave, and no-one cared.

It is true that some homes have all these features, and

most Top End families had some of them, but the nature of working

class life was misunderstood and misrepresented by the staff.

They used this stereotype to explain all problems of the school,

whether it was a case involving a child from an outstandingly bad

home or an average student. It wasn't the kids' fault, it was the

environment, but the teachers misunderstood the environment. Of

course, being in a structural position where they had to suffer

directly from all these bad effects - - such as reading ability

or absenteeism - - it is understandable that they should seize on

the one tangible cause and over-emphasise it.

Another aspect of the middle class value orientation can

be seen in the teachers' typing of the lower class environment;

this is the importance of order. They pointed to the disorder

in the home, and to the unruliness of the children. They

complained about the way students would not be clean and neat,

keep in lines, be on time. Several expressed distaste at the

fracas on the playground at recess, and the (to them) unstructured

and unproductive rowdy street games were also disliked. In their

keeping of lists and order, was an inbred fear of informality as

chaos.

The fourth major value that we suggested in our discussion of Robin Williams (Chapter 1, p. 16) is that of the individual versus the collectivity. In their criticisms of the family and of the adolescent peer group, in part for anti-educational attitudes, we see evidence of this value. More importantly, in the competitive nature of the school system we have this value enshrined. "Sometimes they seem almost afraid of showing their friends up", said one teacher, and another complained, "You'd think they'd want to do better than the rest, but they don't". "It's very hard at times to make them do their own work, they're always helping each other", said a third; all three plainly disapproving of this lack of individual competition.

The other aspect of values to consider is that of "socializing" values. By these we mean the middle class mores of speech, deportment and manners, the techniques of etiquette, that make acceptance into a nice way of life possible. As we have seen, the teachers do not see their students as coming from "nice" homes where they learn how to behave "properly". This concern is expressed through the report card again, under the headings of Health Habits, Courtesy, Reliability, and Co-operation. In addition to the parts quoted above, we have -

> is careful in person and dress. Is genuinely and
> consistently polite in word and manner to fellow
> students as well as adults. Considerate of others.
> Respects the time and property of others. Cares
> for personal belongings, school supplies and
> buildings. Produces neat and accurate results.
> Accepts criticism and correction graciously.

Our point is not that any of these is unworthy, or wrong, or even totally alien to the slum child's life experience. We are merely establishing that the staff have these values, and

that the children (as we shall see) have different standards

on these values, because of their greater or lesser relevance

to their own lives. Thus I was frequently told that the students

"don't know the meaning of manners, always over-stepping bounds ...

They don't mean to be rude, but sound it. It's just their way,

but you can't let them get away with it ... One thing is rudeness -

I can't fathom it nor will I stand for it".

One running fight that developed during the study was

over the girls wearing jeans. The female teachers especially

criticized this style of dress as untidy, unseemly, unaesthetic

and so on, but no student agreed with this view in any conversation

during the entire study. On the other hand, few teachers felt

that there was any neglect or hygene problem in general, other

than a rare case of "ringworm the size of a silver dollar, and

legs swollen up with bed bug bites till the blue veins showed".

The students were old enough to look after themselves, whatever

the parents did, and several remarks were made about the extensive

wardrobes of the girls. One teacher said the students maybe needed

a shower a bit more often than in other schools, but added, "It's

the air around here, dirtier than in other parts of the city".

The staff seemed impressed with the new building and

thought the students liked it, but most noted a falling off of

carefulness over the year. It's better than the homes they live

in, I was told, but they don't know how to treat it. Marks on

desks, litter, writing on the walls had to be watched for at all

times, unlike in the early days. The specialist staff praised

better equipment for improved results, but were just as concerned

about untidiness.

In the last chapter we suggested that the teacher is aware of two levels of relationship in school, person to person, and teacher to student, whereas the student is much less aware of the second. The remarks above about rudeness are further evidence of this clash, cases of students overstepping bounds. "They forget who you are and where you are" as one teacher put it; this is exactly the breach of obligations which we saw in the previous chapter, and all the teachers discussed this problem at length. Another aspect of this lack of understanding by the student was given by the teacher who quoted her students as saying things like, "I'm not doing this ... You can't make me", and so on. The students did not understand that in the system, she could make them do what she wanted because it was her right to do so as a teacher.

For the teachers, this problem of communication was bound up with professional needs. All claimed most students wanted "to talk to you" about themselves, especially after class; other students had severe home problems and needed counselling. In view of what we have seen of the problems of teaching lower class children, the staff's desire for classes of 15 or 16 students only, in which they could provide the individual attention they wanted, makes considerable sense.

But over and above these complaints of rudeness, the staff complained more about their students forgetting their obligations than being malicious or breaking written rules deliberately (all spoke warmly of their students except when discussing specific clashes). Compared to better neighborhoods (always said with a pause before "better") this was the problem of the Top End. This

and other discipline problems were seen in terms of a family
background up in which the student had been badly brought.
Misconduct was seldom phrased in terms of response to stress
caused by education. "If you put these students in a different
area, in different homes, you would not recognise them. They
are problems because their parents are problems. They don't
come from "normal homes". Some did see that conflict did
sometimes occur because of the pressure by the school. They are
torn in half, said one teacher, and another talked about leading
two different lives. But even these teachers blamed the family,
and saw the pressure as being the correct thing.

There were many complaints about the indifference of
parents. "On Parents' Night it's been an empty school" was one
pessimistic comment, while others belligerently condemned those
parents who sided with their children in excusing absenteeism
or told Johnny, "Not to let them teachers push you around any".
The cause of all problems was essentially the parents. This
belief has some truth in it, of course. The early family
experience has defined the child through child-rearing and
socialization, and on-going support for him is provided at home.
As we have seen it is the child's particularistic orientation
which he brings from the home to school that is at the root of
the trouble. But for the teachers it was more a matter of
anecdotes of how Johnny had come back to school in the afternoon
a changed boy, a real nuisance, because such and such happened
over lunch and put him in a bad mood. We can re-interpret this
as saying that stress in one situation may be acted out in
another potentially stressful situation; that a child already

under stress yields more quickly than others when additional pressure is applied.

The advantage of this "homes-are-the-problem" explanation is that failure on the part of the teacher to "reach" the student is no longer the fault of the teacher. The blame is projected outside the school onto the family which is beyond the influence of the school to change. In view of the 15 in 17 teachers who expressed serious doubts about the degrees of success they had in reaching the students, such a belief has strong functional value for the school system.*

Because of this realistic evaluation of the effects of their teaching, it is interesting to note the aims the teachers claimed for their job in the Top End. The most general in both senses was to act as a guide, but almost all added a coda of some sort; to show what the students can really achieve, to teach them how to get along with each other, to fit better into society. The role of teacher as instructor took very much a second place behind the cultural missionary/social worker syndrome. If these aims were projected into action, it may explain the lack of role awareness on the part of the students, but we shall have to reconsider this when we look at the students' attitudes.

This has been a brief summary of the attitudes which the Phoenix School staff expressed in the interviews. We have seen their backgrounds, their main preoccupations, and considered their values. We have also discussed their self-image, their perception of the students, and their explanations

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* That is to say, it contributed to the maintenance of the status quo of the school by helping the staff maintain morale.

of troubles. Although the teachers were encouraged to select their own topics for discussion, there was uniformity and at no time did any attitude find expression which challenged what we had observed during the period of observation; indeed, the few efforts to follow up ideas from observation in the interviews confirmed the working hypotheses that we originated.

CHAPTER 5

THE STUDENTS

The interviews with the students were carried out fairly
late in the study. It is interesting that, left to their own
devices, the students talked without direction about many of
the problems central to this study, which shows the relevance of
these problems to the actors and the system itself. The responses
in the type of interview used are subject to re-ordering and
interpretation by the interviewer: the inflexion of words, the
balance of spontaneous and re-considered answers, even the
truth of the response, are all potential sources of error in
this interpretation which makes the data presented somewhat
subjective.

The sample consisted of six students from each of the 14
classes, 2 representatives of "good", "average", and "bad" studnts
according to the teachers' stereotypes. Throughout the section
we shall use these terms as a convenient shorthand: it should
however not be interpreted from this that we in any way accepted
or rejected the teachers' value judgements, or that we attached
any meaning to the words "good" or "bad" other than as a useful
label for distinguishing between the groups. The teachers were
asked to select the pupils, and they did this with academic
performance and school conduct in mind. These two criteria
present a convenient starting point for our analysis.*

We have already seen that whereas the good students

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* for further discussion of these points the reader
should see appendix 1, page 128/9

admitted only 25 cases of getting into trouble, the average group admitted 33 cases, and the bad group 60 cases. Eight of the good group had "never" been in trouble; 3 of the average group and none of the bad students were able to say this. None of the good students was on the "black list" as compared to 14 single and 12 multiple entries among the bad group. In terms of discipline then, there was a clear distinction between the three groups.

Academic performance has a complex interaction with conduct, but here we shall for purposes of analysis look at it independently. In terms of I.Q. (seen as a measure of performance on a standardised academic test) we find all but 4 of the good group had I.Q. scores of over 100. The average group sat squarely in the middle, with 15 below the "normal" score and 13 above. Among the bad group, only 4 had scores above 100. A similar picture is presented in average term marks taken at Christmas.

Table 3: Christmas Marks of Good, Average, and Bad Students

Marks	54 & less	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80 & more	Totals
Good	–	–	–	2	7	10	9	28
Average	–	3	8	10	5	2	–	28
Bad	2	10	12	3	1	–	–	28
Totals	2	13	20	15	13	12	9	84

The mean mark for all students being in the high sixties, all but two of the good students scored higher than the mean, and none below.

The average students straddled the mean, and 24 of the bad
students were below average in academic performance, and one
was above. The sample shows a high association between conduct
and marks which explains in part why the staff could talk in
simple terms of good, average and bad students.

The classic step in exploring why these students scored
as they did is to consider their social backgrounds. The students
were asked what job their father did; contrary to expectations
of the staff, all knew what kind of work their father did, and
most knew the name of his firm, and could tell me a lot about
what went on there. These occupations were rated using the
Blishen Occupational Scale, and the three groups compared. In
the total sample, there were 7 children from occupational class II
homes, 6 from class III, 11 from class IV, 30 from class V,
18 from class VI and 12 from class VII. All the class II and III
children were in the good group, as were 7 of the 11 in class IV.
With the exception of 2 and 1 class IV children in the average
and bad groups respectively, the two lower categories consisted
exclusively of classes V, VI, AND VII.

Table 4: Occupational Class Background of Students

Occn. Class	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Good	7	6	7	8	-	-
Average	-	-	3	14	7	4
Bad	-	-	1	8	11	8
Totals	7	6	11	30	18	12

In other words, no child whose father held a semi- or
unskilled job was rated as a good student, while all except one

child from white-collar and higher background was rated good
or average. For the rest, our discussion in the first chapter
in terms of middle and lower classes is seen to be largely
appropriate: the multiple handicaps of the lower class home
can be seen as applying to and explaining these figures.
Without reiterating them all at this stage, we suggest that
they provide the major factors in school success as rated by
the teachers. The lower class children perform poorer because
of lower abilities (as previously defined) and a lower evaluation
of education which means they try less hard. The bias of which
teachers have been accused, of favoring children from similar
backgrounds to their own, makes some sense in terms of how these
students perform and respond in a middle class system.

There is little point however in repeatedly comparing
social class, teacher rating and a series of third variables;
the type of interview and the size of the sample means that
the data do not lend themselves to accurate correlations of
variables in which great faith can be place. We are interested
in how students relate to school, not so much in how social
classes differ: we will concentrate on teacher ratings, bearing
in mind that each attitude or pattern of behavior we consider
is produced by some aspect of the total environment that is
social class. In this connection, we will look first at the
family environment of the students.

As we would expect, knowing their class origins, bad
students tend to come from larger families, only one student
having less than three siblings; 9 of the average students came

from two children families and 10 of the good students. In fact, there was very little difference between average and good students, which might suggest that in as far as family planning shows middle class values, the lower class parents of average students have assimilated the middle class orientation. Not knowing the age of parents prevents us drawing any positive conclusions.

The presence of the mother in the home, or absence at work did not appear to have any significant effect on the children, contrary to the teachers' beliefs. The figures were 13, 12 and 14 for the good, average and bad students respectively. The physical presence is not what counts; rather it is the fulfilment of her duties within the home.

On the other hand, a disrupted home-life was an influence on the student. By grouping complaints about parents fighting and rowing, of conflict between generations, and of conditions (over-crowding, noise, or other living problems) in which it was difficult to complete homework, a clear trend in the expected direction was found. Good students reported 3 cases, average students 10 cases and bad students 19 cases. The important issue here is not whether broken- or potentially broken-homes cause bad students, but that if the student is unable to complete his homework or study for tests because of the home environment, we have an important factor within the syndrome of failure of the slum child.

The probability that work set in school will be completed at home is closely linked to the parental encouragement and

interest in the child's education. The parents manifested this by attending parent/teacher interviews, by enforcing rules that ensured the completion of homework, and by asking sincere questions about what was happening in school. There was a great range of attitudes here; one girl said, "My father says the housework comes before the homework and by the time it's done, then I don't feel like homework", whereas one boy's mother: "knows I do my homework, so don't chase me for homework. But she has to make sure we study and study and study and she asks us questions on it; but my Dad, even if we study all we could, he tells us to study some more".

In this sort of interview it was possible to differentiate between a parent's formal, routine question of "How did you do in school today?", which is meaningless in terms of content, and a genuine interest in what the child has done. As Charlie put it, "My mam always comes at me with the same old question, "How was school?" - - I was gettin' tired of it, then one day - - "I beat up Teacher", y'know? She just went on walking right by, she didn't notice, so I don't think they really care".

Some parents showed their concern by rigid supervision: "I been grounded out for 3 weeks during exams, and he catches me not studying, then I'm in big trouble", said one boy, and a girl complained she and her sisters had "to study even when we've got colds!" This is very different from families in which the mother greets the bad report card with a remark such as, "She'll get it one of these days if she fails", which the child knows is a routine formula which reveals a general lack of interest.

When families were rated for being strongly pushing, mildly
pushing or indifferent (no families were openly hostile to
education) towards their children's education, the pattern
in Table 5 emerged. It was usually the mother who was mentioned,
although fathers were more likely to feature in the cases of
good students (the good students having middle class, "democratic"
homes).

Table 5: Good, Average and Bad Students by Degree of Interest
          in Education shown by Parents.*

Degree of Interest	Strong Interest	Moderate Interest	Indifference
Good	27	1	–
Average	6	15	7
Bad	1	1	26
Totals	34	17	33

* It is possible that knowing a child was "good" or "bad" was
   an unconscious source of bias in allocating a student to a
   given category by his opinions.

Two important points can be made to explain the family
attitude as the causal one. Firstly, the parents do not take an
interest in education because they do not think it important, and
their children learn this attitude during socialization, and so
share the low evaluation of school. Secondly, the students are
not free agents but depend greatly on their parents for guidance
and (paradoxically) "self" control. Without such guidance, the
homework is not done and the academic performance suffers
accordingly.

Similarly, absence from school means less work is learned
in class and academic performance suffers: certainly this is

the view of the teachers. But this must be seen as a part
of the syndrome of the working class response to education.
We have argued elsewhere (Ch. 2, p. 63) that students who
reject education are absent more often because they are poorly
motivated to attend. Thus it is not simply that a student is
absent, and therefore becomes a bad student. Rather he is a
bad student whose absence aggravates his bad performance. In
our sample, 26 of the good students had good attendance records
(up to 5 days absent), and two had moderate records (up to 10
days). None of them had more than 10 days absence. The average
students had 17 cases of good attendance, 9 moderate and 2 bad.
The bad had only 5 students claiming a good record, but 16 had
moderate, and 7 had bad records.

One of the reasons for work not being done is, of course,
rival activities which claim the attention of the student unless
the parent intervenes. All the students talked about what they
did in their spare time in the evenings and at weekends, giving
anecdotes and examples, and discussing with whom they played.
The younger children talked more about playing street games,
but almost all the respondents mentioned an interest in sport,
playing games in the local park, or swimming at the community
centre.

Most of the activities were carried on in the Top End
nearby, and very few of the respondents mentioned visiting
other parts of the city. The main spare time activities apart
from sport were seeing friends, reading and hobbies; good
students mentioned studying more often, while bad students had

to baby-sit or perform chores more often. An interesting fact

is that only 10 in 84 mentioned watching television, hardly

any attended clubs other than the community centre, and formal

activities - - dances, going to the show, and so on - - which

cost money - - were also rare. In this sense, the mass media

were failing to reach the younger element in the Top End,

although popular music on record and radio were a frequent source

of relaxation. The extra-curricular activities at Phoenix

were very few in number but almost every student played in the

lunch hour sport leagues. There were only four mentions of

school clubs, all by good students.

One aspect of the peer group was considered, the choice

of friends from either school or outside the school. Apart from

the geographical handicap of distance, why should a child turn to

non-school peers for friendship and what effect does this have?

If the bad students are friendly with each other, rather than with

good or average students, as we would expect, and indeed seemed

to be the case, then they are limited by sheer lack of fellow

bad students (the teachers talked of 3 in most classes), but

their friends will share and reinforce their beliefs. If they

choose more friends from outside the school, then there is

perhaps a stronger chance of reinforcement of negative values

in that the peer group does not share a common experience of

the school, and divisive influences (such as membership in

external groups) are probably opposed by the group; thus there

would be an emphasis on rejection of the school. On the other

hand school rivalry might result; the key thing is that it is

the bad students, not the good, who react in this way. If they

are better integrated into the non-school community at large,
then they will be less accepting of the intrusive middle class
values of the school.

Table 6: Choice of Friends by Good, Average and Bad Students

Choice	School	Non-School	Old School
Good	20	6	2
Average	12	12	4
Bad	5	19	4
Totals	37	37	10

If we exclude those who still retained strong friendships
with students from a previous school (which however implies that
they did not integrate so well into the Phoenix culture) there is
a clear tendency in the direction we have indicated. The figures
reinforce our theory that good and bad students tended not to be
friends; very few could have been friends (even assuming that every
bad student who selected friends from in school was friendly with
some of the good students).

If we develop this point of integration into the
community, and consider liking and disliking the Top End, we
again observe the trends we would expect, although less clearly.
Just as in peer group selection geography was a factor, so in
attitude to the Top End, geography and community were seen as
being relevant.

Table 7: Attitudes to the Top End, with reason, by TP group

Reason Pro or Con	Pro People		Pro Physical		Con People		Con Physical	
Where Lives	TP*	ExTP	TP	ExTP	TP	ExTP	TP	ExTP
Good	4	–	4	1	7	3	6	3
Average	12	–	3	–	3	7	2	1
Bad	15	–	2	–	2	3	5	1
Totals	31	–	9	1	12	13	13	5

* TP = Top End Dweller

ExTP = Dwells outside of Top End

Of the Top Enders, the most frequent reason giving for liking the Top End was the people, but only 4 of the good students felt this, against 12 of the average, and 15 of the bad students. No-one living outside the area liked it for the people, and there was only one favorable comment in this group, which was 22% of the sample. Their main reason for disliking the neighborhood was the people (2/3 said this). For those who lived in the Top End, physical conditions (air pollution, bad housing, services, etc.) were about as unpopular as people, but half of those disliking the Top End were good students. All in all the sample was about evenly split on likes and dislikes of the community, but the poorer students were favorably disposed to the Top End and its working class culture.

Thus far we have concentrated on external factors which both reflect and contribute to events that occur within the school. In particular we have seen that the working class environment, a home-life in which study is not encouraged, a peer group drawn from the community rather than the school, and

a more favorable response to the neighborhood are all highly associated with being rated a bad student by teachers using low marks and misconduct as indices.

But the main focus of this study has been to consider the reaction of the lower class student to school, which leads to him being rated a bad student. The above discussion has given some evidence of external factors which in the main effect his academic performance, and secondly his acceptance of the school's values. We must now consider his perception of the school. How does he define the events and understand the processes which make for success or failure in education? To try to answer this question, we must discuss a number of topics raised in the interviews which will illustrate some aspects of the problem.

One crucial problem is the student's evaluation of education as being worthwhile or otherwise, and in particular we shall consider the utilitarian view of education as advanced by Mizruchi (see Ch. 1, p. 24). He suggests that because lower class students have lower occupational aspirations, they see they need less education, and so under-rate its importance. Yet if this were strictly true, we should observe lower class students being strongly committed to succeeding in those grades which they feel are necessary to pass for their aimed-for job. Unfortunately, the pattern is not that clear-cut. Many students do not work hard, some work hard in one subject and not in others, different subjects are seen as being "useful" and the level of education required is rarely specifically realised.

True, the job looms large when we talk to a slum child about education, but the relationship involves other factors.

When the students talked about what they wanted to do on leaving school, their hoped-for occupations were rated according to the Blishen Scale. They were asked what job they would like to do and also what job they really expected to do in actual fact. There are two ways in which to consider their answers; in terms of their abilities, and in terms of their ages.

Table 8 shows the answers for the former.

Table 8: Job Aspirations by Ability (Occupational Class by the 3 groups of students)

Occn. Class	1 & 2	3	4	5	6	7	D.K.
Good wants	23	3	–	–	–	–	2
expects	23	3	–	–	–	–	2
Average wants	12	4	4	7	–	–	1
expects	10	1	4	12	–	–	1
Bad wants	–	5	6	6	5	4	2
expects	–	–	4	13	4	5	2
Totals wants	35	12	10	13	5	4	5
expects	33	4	8	25	4	5	5

Good students dominate the upper class aspirations having roughly 2/3 of all ambitions to class 1 & 2; they also completely ignored class 4 or lower occupations. Average students had some aspirations to high status jobs (mostly among younger students as we shall see) and none to the lowly semi- or unskilled jobs. Apart from 5 fantasies, the majority of bad students aimed for working class jobs.

Good students had no doubts about their ability to

succeed in their goals, whereas average and even more so, bad
students tended to have a discrepancy between ideal goals and
their markedly depressed expectations of reality. But it is
worth remembering that 17 bad students reported white collar or
skilled job expectations, whereas only 9 of these came from a
home background of this level, and conversely of 17 from class
6 & 7 homes, only 9 did not expect or want something better.

Before adding any comments, it will be useful to look
at ambition by ages, or rather, comparing grade with grade, as
in Table 9.

Table 9: Job Aspiration by Age (occupational class by grade) as %

		1 & 2	3	4	5	6	7	D.K.	
Grade 8	wants	21	17	8	29	4	12	8	n = 24
	expects	17	12	8	29	12	12	8	
Grade 7	wants	47	17	13	10	10	0	3	n = 30
	expects	50	3	17	27	0	0	3	
Grade 6	wants	56	17	17	4	4	0	0	n = 18
	expects	50	0	4	39	0	4	0	
Grade 5	wants	50	0	8	17	0	8	17	n = 12
	expects	42	0	0	25	8	8	17	

If we make the assumption that aspirations have not changed
markedly, and that each year's cohort is passing through the same
stages, an interesting picture emerges. Both real and fantasy
aspirations start fairly high, perhaps rising by Grade VII and
then fall drastically: whereas only 27% of Grade VII expect a
working class job (and 20% desire that level) 53% (and 45%
respectively) of Grade VIII students expect such a job. This could

, of course mean our assumption was wrong, but the pattern of Grade VIII suggests a different explanation. The final year students have much less variation between real and fantasy aspirations.

This is because students in Grade VIII have to select which course they will enter in High School, ranging from the two-year technical, to the five-year academic. Influenced by their teachers, they must decide how capable they are of getting sufficient marks to enter each stream: they must look at job choice and years of schooling in more concrete terms. Only the interviewed Grade VIII students had undergone this process and had adjusted their fantasies towards reality. Thus only one average student in Grade VIII had a class 1 & 2 occupational goal, against 9 cases in the other grades.

This prompts the conclusion that students do not percieve occupations, and the qualifications needed for them, in any precise fashion until at least their last year in Public School, and that great care is needed to differentiate between ideal and real ambitions. It is thus incorrect to talk in too simple terms about the relationship of occupational goal to educational attitudes, because the actors themselves cannot see the relationship clearly, as they have only a partial perception of the occupational system. This is not to deny that educational aspirations show similar patterns to occupational aspirations, but rather the relationship is part of a wider syndrome of cultural characteristics.

Table 10 shows educational aspirations.

Table 10:   Educational aspirations of three groups of students

Grade completed	10 or less	11	12	13	beyond 13
Good: wants	1	–	2	12	13
expects	1	–	2	12	13
Average: wants	1	3	7	12	5
expects	1	5	9	8	5
Bad: wants	9	2	10	6	1
expects	10	7	9	1	1
Totals	11	5	19	30	19
	12	12	20	21	19

Not only is there lower aspiration in poorer students but more

pessimism about their chances.   The chief pessimism came in

dropping out after Grade 12 rather than making Grade 13.

However, if we consider educational aspirations by age we find

that like occupational aspirations these are lower in the last grade.

Table 11:   Educational Aspirations by Grade (%)

Aspiration		Low	Medium	High	
Grade VIII:	wants	20	37	42	(n = 24)
	expects	39	29	31	
Grade VII:	wants	6	27	63	(n = 30)
	expects	23	27	50	
Grade VI:	wants	22	11	67	(n = 18)
	expects	38	11	51	
Grade V:	wants	33	–	67	(n = 12)
	expects	50	8	39	

These figures deal with four different grades of students, not one cohort over four years, but if we take broad trends the data show that ideal aspirations are higher than real expectations, and that after Grade V, real and fantasy aspirations may rise in Grade VI, stabilise or even decline a little by Grade VII and then drop sharply in Grade VIII due to "high aspirations" scaling down their occupational and educational ambitions (only one in ten aspirers to Class II among poorer students were in Grade VIII).

It seems that education as a means to an end is only very vaguely perceived, up to Grade VIII at least. Even when aspirations are more clearly perceived, there is no sudden improvement in behavior or marks as the student sets about passing the grades he sees as necessary for his particular job qualification (even though educational aims are trimmed to fit).

This is not what we would expect if educational performance were determined by occupational goals in a purely rational cognitive process. While in general the lower class child is interested in education only for its key to a job, the precise job, and the precise degree of education which is desired is vague in the student's mind, for he does not fully understand the system. For instance, one boy was extremely keen to become a policeman, but he did not know how far he had to go through school to meet the entrance requirements; it was a common event to find that the students had such an imprecise vision of their future. Even when there is a clarification in the student's mind there is no change in his school performance.

Ambitious (or good) students see education much more as a very important means to an end (and as an end in itself). Poorer students both see the link less clearly, and know education is less important for them. The former __have__ to do well to make it to Grade 13 and beyond for training; the latter can just scrape through each year and drop out after Grade 12. For the good student, education (as in a sense preliminary training) is vital; it is an essential and inherent part of the job in which he will use much of what he has learnt. For the poorer students, education is only a hurdle which once passed, leaves them in a job where education is largely irrelevant. In Grade VIII education for the good student is at once a means to, and in part the content of, a job; his weaker brethren sees school as only a short run means. Before this there is such a low level of understanding that the general relationship is only intuitively perceived, and does not operate as a purely rational process.

Therefore to explain the lower class student's lack of commitment we need to bear in mind his lack of awareness and look at other, non-cognitive factors to complete our explanation. In short, we need to know __how__ useful the student sees education in relation to other factors. Even if he sees the need for education, but finds school intolerable, he will not perform as well, nor rate education so highly, as he otherwise might do.

However, the importance of the job in education did present itself throughout the interviews. If we compare the list of subjects "which are useful to you in your life outside of

of school", good students were more likely to list science, literature and speech as being useful than bad students, who mentioned industrial arts and physical education. All groups listed Mathematics and English Grammar as the two most useful (but these were seldom liked). Least useful choices reflected something of the same pattern, with bad students more likely to consider history, music, and geography as a waste of time; no group rated art, literature or history very highly.

One student said, "nothing's useful around here", and there were many comments along the lines of "What do we have to learn this for? ... Music: I'm never going to play no instrument ... Art? What's that for? ... I don't want to learn all about what's happened in the past, I want to know what will happen in the future!" Thirty-five per cent of the students related usefulness directly to a job, and twenty-five per cent directly to non-occupational aspects of life; the remainder either mentioned both or neither. Of those who talked about the job, almost half were good students; of those who talked about life in general less than a fifth were bad student, and over half were good students. This, of course, fits our argument that good students see education as more than just a means, and so more important, as it brings other benefits besides a job.

The importance of occupations did have surprising results in one area. We had suggested that much of the conflict in school would be over middle class mores, and one way this was tested was to ask the students how important they felt the five middle class values listed on the report card to be (see

page 82/4).   It was expected that these would be largely

rejected by poorer or lower class students, but this was not

the case.   While some said that the teachers made too much fuss

over such things (an in an earlier chapter we saw the form

such fuss takes) most were reluctant to rank the five items for

importance, and even more reluctant to pick one as least

important and for omission.   The most common reason given for

the importance of these values was that without them, <u>no-one</u>

<u>would employ the student when he left school</u>.   The values were

not seen as intrinsically important but chiefly as a means to

an end.

Table 12:   Students' choices of important values (more than one
            choice

Selection	All Important	Selected one least	Rely.	Co-op.	Work	Health	Courtesy
Good	12	-	13	5	10	6	12
Average	11	5	15	3	6	6	8
Bad	-	5	22	15	4	8	8
Totals	23	10	50	20	20	20	28

No bad student thought the citizenship values all equally

so important as not to bear ranking, unlike more than a third of

the other two groups.   Only 10 students - - or 12% of the sample - -

were prepared to select a "least important value".   Good students

showed a slightly greater emphasis on work and courtesy, while

bad students were more accepting of reliability and co-operation.

This latter preference probably does reflect their own values as

members of the working class culture, in which the collectivity

and interpersonal relationships are more valued.   Students who

were asked what they felt reliability and co-operation really
meant to them, talked in terms of being "a good friend ... a
nice guy ... someone who was not always causing trouble for
people".

Taken in conjunction with other trends we have seen,
these results have some pattern, but our numbers and the way
they were collected are limiting. The values were partly
accepted because of occupational needs, and partly because they
were interpreted as resembling existing working class values.

The final area of exploration we can consider is to
return to the students' definition of the educational process,
and the school as a social system. It has already been seen in
this chapter that there is a lack of knowledge about occupational
requirements, and an overall low evaluation of education in itself
by the poorer students. The interviewees were asked why did they
come to school, what were the teachers trying to do, what was the
best way to get on in school, and finally why did they get into
trouble and how they reacted. All these questions were designed
to find out how the student perceived what was going on in school.

As we might expect, most students said they came to school
because without education they could not get a job. Better
students also mentioned education per se, or learning to be a
citizen as reasons, whereas bad students thought this less
important; if they mentioned education per se first then they
usually added a coda about occupations.

Table 13: Reasons for Coming to School of Three Groups
           of Students (more than one choice)

Reason	Job	Education	Citizen	Don't know
Good	22	20	11	2
Average	22	15	5	1
Bad	26	9	4	6
Totals	70	44	20	9

In contrast, most students felt that their teachers were trying
to give an education for its own sake, and this was most marked
in better students who were more accepting of such a point of
view.

Table 14: Students' Perception of Teachers' Efforts

Aims	Teaching for R's job	Education per se	Citizen	Dont' Know
Good	11	22	12	1
Average	7	22	6	4
Bad	14	14	7	4
Totals	32	58	25	9

Fifty per cent of concrete answers said education, and 29% job
requirements were the teachers' goals, whereas 33% and 47% res-
pectively gave education and job requirements as their personal
goals. In other words, there was a marked discrepancy of goals
within the social system of the school. Further it is very
doubtful that the staff realised how job oriented their students
were.

Although the question, what are the teachers trying to do, was asked with a job definition in mind (to compare with the teachers' responses on role) the students took it as a question on the general behavior and phenomena of teachers. The topic was a most popular one with the students but the overwhelming impression was that respondents went straight into talking about how to relate to teachers as individual persons as a part of their answer. "Well", said one, "They've all got different ideas. Some are O.K. to get along with, others you never know". There were many complaints that teachers seemed to forget they were "only human ... had been young once" and so on. "We never get the chance to tell our side. They are always right", said another (i.e. he did not accept the role differences). Charlie summed it all up in an anecdote of troubles: "So she said, "You don't know the difference between teachers and pupils", and I said, "Yes I do, pupils are human!" (i.e. you don't act like a human being but you should).

Once again we meet the particularistic orientation which may, in part, explain the lack of understanding about the job market. Further evidence of this orientation comes from the question, "What is the best way of getting on in school, doing good work, obeying rules or getting on with the teachers?" It is true that the first two are somewhat subsumed by the third which might account for its frequent selection.

Table 15: Choice of way to get on in School by Three Groups

Choice	Work	Obey Rules	Teacher
Good	4	3	21
Average	2	–	25
Bad	–	1	27
Totals	6	4	76

However, the marked selection of the third category must represent
to a large degree the extent to which relationships were seen in
personal terms by the students, especially when other data are
taken into account. The same is true of reasons given for
getting into trouble.

The majority of responses were in terms of a personality
clash.

Table 16: Reasons given for trouble by Three Groups of Students

Reason	Personality	Work	Rules	Other
Good	21	4	2	1
Average	23	2	1	2
Bad	26	2	–	–
Totals	70	8	3	3

Partly this may be a withholding of legitimacy from the
school system, but the large proportion of good students who do
this suggests that there is more to it than that. In terms of
reacting to trouble there was one clear difference; good
students especially in the top two grades said they would do

nothing until they could talk to the teacher in private.
Average students were more likely to make some weak response
such as talking, and bad students set out to "bug" the teacher
in some strong way.

Our study of the interview responses has then turned
for the most part on the influences of occupational horizons,
and the universalism/particularism conflict within the system.
Rather than summarize the findings of this chapter, we will
proceed to the final chapter in which these findings can be
integrated into the body of the study. We are now in a position
to evaluate our data in terms of our original propositions and
consider how they fit our theory of education.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is now possible to summarise the aims and the con-
clusions of this study, and to highlight those aspects which
are felt to be most important.

Having tried to systematize a vast but unwieldy body
of knowledge, we considered three main problems which underpin
much educational research and yet have been left relatively un-
explored. Firstly, how does the teacher define and perceive the
school? Secondly, how does the student define and perceive the
school? Thirdly, what results do these definitions have for the
system of action that is the school and, in particular, what is
the nature and effect of conflict (as manifested in misconduct)
caused by dissensus in definition betwween these two groups of
actors?

To answer the first question, we considered the values
that the teacher brings with him to the situation and how he
defines his role as teacher; this we did by observing teachers
in class, and by allowing them to talk about themselves in the
interviews. In other words we looked at the ends that the
teachers held, and the means that were employed to attain them.
We also found out how the teachers perceived the students,
another determinant of action.

We asked basically the same questions about the students;
in particular we asked what end (and hence, what meaning) did
education hold for the students. The perception of school as a

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means and as a system of action were also important. Thirdly, we considered what pressures are put upon the student by a situation in which he has little power, but which he cannot escape despite its unpleasantness.

This brings us to our final problem of what conflicts arise from the interaction of the teacher and student. We described what form this takes, because of the nature of the school system, and how this in turn becomes a major factor in the social relationships within the school. Having tried to answer those three problems, we can now summarise our discussion of the social determinants of academic success. The aim of the study is then to explore, to describe and to understand, so that a coherent picture may emerge.

At the beginning of this study we considered the teachers' allocation of students into three categories. We found that good students had much higher marks (Table 3) and much better conduct records than average or bad students(Table 2), and if we take expectation of years of education as a pointer to the quantity of education they will receive, then good students expected more education (Table 9). Thus we can safely say that our three groups represented three markedly different levels of academic success.

Noting that the most successful students came from white collar and managerial class backgrounds, we argued that the nature of working class life was responsible for "failures": from a theoretical standpoint, intelligence quotients and achievement motivation were not felt to be useful explanations of who succeeded, and we looked rather at aptitudes and value orientations.

While there was no testing of aptitudes, our survey of the literature gave us reason to make a number of assumptions about the lower class child. Because of his early socialization and his

role in the working class community, the slum child's attitude
to education is not geared for success. In particular, he is
non-verbal and therefore finds it hard to abstract, is unused
to controlling aggression and has a motoric, or concrete
physical approach to problem solving (we saw indirect evidence
of this in clashes and in the French lesson). Not only is he
under pressure to change these things, a pressure which he finds
unpleasant, but his early lack of success imposes further strains
on him; all this impares performance. We did see that the
homelife of bad students was a handicap in that study was often
impossible, whereas good students reported being forced to study
(page 94 and Table 5). We also found that poorer students were
better integrated into the slum community (Table 7) which in
terms of existing literature, suggests that they share its working
class values, and thus are less likely to accept those of the
school. All these factors contribute directly to failure, by
making it difficult to complete work, by reducing motivation,
and by contributing to the state of tension that the students
feel under the pressure of education.

The bad student is hampered by a different value
orientation to that of his teacher. We have seen how the
lower class student is criticised for not competing, for being
disorderly, for not finding education important, for being eager
to leave school too soon, and for being untidy and discourteous.
All these things are aspects of the middle class values of the
teaching staff, who are quite conscious of their duties as
cultural missionaries. It is therefore demanded that at least
in school the student displays to some degree the middle class
ethic. This is at once giving an advantage to the middle class
child, and imposing another source of tension on the lower

class student; it should be remembered that at night he returns
to a way of life that reinforces his old orientation. We argue
that this strain impares performance, that clashes occur over
these values, and that the ensuing punishments (an expression
of frustration on both sides) further impares performance.

Central to the value orientation are two important
problems which are singled out for particular consideration.
The first of these is the evaluation of the work of education.
We found that bad students had lower occupational aspirations and
lower educational aspirations (Tables 8 and 9). This was true
for all age groups, even those young students who did not clearly
perceive their chances (in terms of obtaining the necessary
academic performance) of obtaining a given occupational level.
We argued that occupational aspirations were responsible for
educational aspirations. Given that the bad students saw
education only as a means to an end, and not also as an end in
itself (as Table 12 and the accompanying discussion suggest) and
that they have low occupational ends, they have less reason to
value education highly, especially as their parents do not (Table 5).

We made the point that at first, however, the bad student
does not see the relationship of education and occupation very
clearly at all: when around the age of 14 he does perceive it,
he cannot change a pattern of school behavior that has become
set, and is still largely determined by other factors (such as
stress) that we have observed. In particular, we emphasised that
the process should not be taken as a purely rational one. The
students also accepted many of the staff's values not because
they believed in them, per se, but because they were told that such
values helped to get a job. As in the overall attitude to

education, nominal acceptance produces different results from internalisation, but this acceptance does help reduce a source of potential conflict.

The second major value of importance was that of universalism, because this is a source, and also a factor in the form conflict took. Not only do the students come from the family, which is particularistic, but the bad students come from an environment in which there is a great emphasis on personal relationships and the small group: in short, old established working class life is the closest approximation to the gemeinschaft type society that exists in the urban environment as, for instance, Wilmott and Young show.[12] It is only in the school that the student first systematically meets situations in which relationships are universalistic, not particularistic, as Parsons has pointed out.

Rather than obligations, duties, rights, privileges, rewards, even allocation of time and attention, being features of who the actor is, regardless of what role he is playing, the student now meets the teacher who demands the same performance and relationship from every student: more, regardless of who the teacher is, these obligations remain. Instead of Johnnie being rewarded, not for the quality of what he does, but because he is Johnnie, he must now achieve certain standards without which the teacher cannot reward him. Similarly, Johnnie's dislike of one person who teaches him does not change the obligations he owes to that person in the role of teacher.

We have seen that the picture is not as clear as this. The teachers try to adapt to each student, and see any discipline clashes both in terms of the needs of the system, and the needs of the individual. But by and large the student does not see this,

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12 . Michael Young & Peter W   op.cit., pp. 11 - 13.

as Tables 14 and 15 show; even the good students tend not to

see it. They accept the occasions when the teacher "acts out of

role" and talks person to person as being the real relationship,

the correct way; but we have seen that this "acting out of role"

is in actual fact an essential part of the teacher's total role,

the aspect of social worker/parent substitute. This helps to

explain the complaints that the teachers are unfair and bossy --

the rights of the staff are not realised. It explains the form

such conflict takes -- insolence, defiance, being in the wrong

place: firstly, there may be a genuine misunderstanding about

what is expected (as in the case of teachers complaing about

rudeness) and, secondly, the acting out of stress discussed

earlier is likely to be over such pressure points as these. At

these points, especially when excited, the students' awareness

of the school as a system of obligations (low as it is) is

forgotten, and resentment in the face of overwhelming power comes

to the surface.

The child treats the school as an extension of his family.

There is nothing inherently wrong in the confusion, so long as

obligations are met, and not challenged. Lower class children

are not resentful of authority, or rebellious against it, as the

location of the authoritarian personality as a phenomenum in

lower class adolescents might suggest. Rather they see authority

as allegiance to an individual for his personal qualities: a

disliked teacher is seen as lacking these qualities and his

authority is therefore resented.

Thus the commonplace statement that the working classes

do not understand the system has a deeper truth in it. Unrealistic

ambition, conflicts over punishment between parents and staff,

the resented distance between   nt and staff all make sense in

this light. Of course, we have treated the formal
institutionalised obligations as being the only true and
immutable way. Perhaps there is a case to be made for more
particularism in education; certainly it can be argued that
each teacher differs in his own role playing so that there
are variations in the "official line". While this may be true,
it still does not detract from the underlying argument that
the universalistic element of school as defined by the staff
is not understood by the students.

Thus we are offering a specifically sociological
explanation of why there are bad students - - or why there is
a differential in academic success. The problems arise out of
the social system of the school and are problems of values,
roles, expectations and interaction. They lead to the student
failing to fulfil the demands of the school because he does
not understand them; even if he begins to learn them, these
demands remain alien to him. Thus we are not replacing
existing theories, only trying to complement them.

The strains and stresses of education, together with
clashes over values in the wide senses that we have just
discussed, lead to behavior defined by the staff as misconduct.
Once the student is defined as bad there is little chance of a
change; punishment only disrupts the student's learning time,
and his work suffers; the prophecy fulfils itself. Every
attempt to release the stress the student feels only damages his
performance still more. Thus in a sense the student fails
because he fails. This aspect of conduct in schools has been
largely ignored, but misconduct represents a source as well as
a product of academic failure.

Thus in final summation, we have considered failure as a result of three main factors which we arrived at through investigating the actors' perceptions of themselves and each other. Failure is largely caused by the process of education, which is in conflict with the child's outside life experience and sets up tensions; by the different value orientations and by the resulting clash of values between the teacher and pupil, most noticeably the importance of education and the obligations and mechanics of the system are the chief causes, both directly, and through the conflicts that occur because of them. Third is the damage caused when bad students act out their dislike of school, so disrupting their own learning process. Taken with the survey of other factors we are now closer to understanding in full the syndrome of academic failure that characterises the lower class child's experience of education.

APPENDIX 1

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This appendix discusses methodological problems and proceedures, and also presents some background data such as the nature of the community, the physical aspect of Phoenix School. its size, and the logistics of its day-to-day operation.

The Setting-choice of target school

The data reported in this study were collected from a single school located in a blighted area of a large industrial city in Southern Ontario, known for the purposes of this study as "Phoenix School" in the "Top End" of the city. The school was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, its newness and exceptional equipment offered two advantages; one, it was a test case of devoting extra resources to a slum school and therefore of interest to both the sociologist and the professional educator, and two, an enviroment in which middle class values of nice buildings, cleanliness, and order could be presented in concrete form. In this sense the contrast of the old run-down home and the new smart school was seen as rendering the value conflict more real and acute.

The community, presented with this contrasting block in its enviroment of delapidated houses, might be expected to express latent opinions about the school in their own homes and so make their children at the school more aware and more

articulate about their parents' views. The Top End had been
the subject of two major "life studies" in 1962 and 1965,
which offered a ready source of background data. From these
studies it was known that the area was predominantly working
class, which in turn assured a good sample of working class
children at Pheonix School.

The Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are implied in the above statement,
we wished to consider two major problems; the impact of a new
school building on the education in a slum community, and the
experience of working class children in school in relation to
certain middle class attitudes. We also were interested in a
number of allied problems mentioned in the literature, as much
for their own sake as for use in showing that our study did not
contain elements that departed wildly from other educational
samples. The study was essentially an exploration and investi-
gation, towards the generation of theory, although its limitations
in this latter aspect were well recognised.

In this section we treat the various methods of
collecting data independently for the sake of simplicity. As the
reader will have appreciated from the text, the methods were
used in concert so that certain key issues were investigated by
each of the techniques; thus examples of misconduct and value
clash were collected by all the methods, records, interviews
and observation. Other areas, such as the homelife of the
student, were supplied from one particular method (in this
example, the student interview) but at all times the data from
one area added explanation and insight to data collected by
another method.

The Area

The Top End is a highly homogeneous area of lower class housing, currently undergoing urban renewal. There is little commercial development, most structures being single detached residences built about sixty to seventy years ago. Its population numbers about 8,000, of which 86% of household heads held blue-collar jobs in 1961; the median annual income per family is just over $4,000 compared with the city average of over $6,000.[124] With regard to the major ethnic groups in the Top End, over half of the population are Canadian, 19% are Italian, 13% British and 11% from Eastern Europe.[125]

An unexpected feature was the high proportion of students interviewed who came from outside this area; this was due to a re-drawing of the school cachment boundaries and the opening of the new, age specialised, schools. Twenty-two per cent of the interviewees came from outside the Top End, from areas not significantly different in socio-economic characteristics, but with a different community orientation in that they "did not belong to the Top End", but came from "down our end, on Catherine Street". The students were very conscious of the difference (unlike the staff) and it was felt worthwhile to consider it as a factor in the results obtained. Most of the Catherine Street children were in the top two grades, but it was found that there was no significant difference between them and the Top Enders. Six other children had moved into the Top End during the last year.

124. 1961 Census, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics (93-519), 1961, pp. 84 - 88.

125. Peter Pineo, op.cit., p. 138.

The School

The original Phoenix School was scheduled for re-
placement as part of the urban renewal project in 1962, but
building did not commence until June, 1965. In the meantime,
on the night of 4th March, 1965, the old school burned down and
although arson was suspected, no charges were laid. The students,
temporarily without a school, began a system of education on
shifts at a neighboring school, working long mornings or long
afternoons. By February, 1966, classes could be held in the
new school, but normal operation with a full complement of
students and all the new equipment installed did not begin
until the Fall Term in that year. The shift system unfortunately
precludes an easy before and after comparison of educational
experience, and some of the problems in the new school probably
stemmed from the disruption of education by the shifts, rather
than a change of school building. It may also have contributed
to the students' understanding of the school system.

The new school building makes a considerable impact on
first sight. Combined with a new community centre, its
architecture is angular, almost ecclessiastical, with warm brown
brick walls throwing narrow white pillars and arched white window
frames of concrete into sharp relief. In an area of blighted
houses, peeling paint, dirty windows and littered back streets,
where the boats can be seen docking at the end of the street,
Phoenix School stands out in abrupt contrast on a grass-covered
space that was once three blocks of houses.

Inside the school, all is cool, clean and colorful. The

school is Y-shaped: off the left arm opens the industrial art shop and the science room, and off the right arm the home economics and music rooms. At the centre are the nurses' rooms, the offices and the art room, while an auditorium, gym and swimming pool make up the leg of the Y, and are shared with the community centre. On the second floor are the "home rooms", the library and the washrooms.

The school averaged 475 students during its first year, distributed into two Grade V classes, three Grade VI classes, five Grade VII classes, and four Grade VIII classes of between 30 and 40 pupils each: the higher grades tended to have fewer pupils per classroom. The age group for Grade V was 11 years old before Christmas of the school year; for Grade VIII it was 14 years. Each class had a number of older students who had failed a year at some stage, and a smaller number of accelerates of high ability and lower age. The school is non-Catholic, as Catholics attend schools run by the Separate School Board.

In the morning half the classes, designated with their room number and the letter A (21A, 22A, etc.), had "home room", while the B's (21B, 22B) "had rotary". That is to say, the A's stayed in their own rooms and were taught mainly English and Mathematics, some History and Geography by the same teacher, while the B's went from one room to the next on the first floor, receiving specialized teaching in art, science, literature, speech, shop or home economics, or physical education from special subject teachers in turn. In the afternoon, the process was reversed so that the A's were "on rotary" and the B's "had

home-room". The school operated on a four-day cycle, so that
Friday's lessons were the same as Monday's had been, and the
second Monday's curriculum was that of Tuesday last week, and
so on.

The school was staffed with a Principal, seven home-room
teachers, ten specialist teachers, and a part-time French master.
Of the previous staff nearly half had left, the natural turnover
increased by the need for new specialists (P.E. teachers for
instance had to be able to teach swimming at the new school) and
the allocation of Grades I to IV to another school, which had
previously been part of Pheonix School. Non-teaching staff
included a secretary, janitor, several cleaners and a part-time
nurse. In addition, there were frequent visits from the
community centre staff, local ministers, attendance officers,
the school inspector (who had been Principal at the old school)
and other assorted quasi-education personnel.

Collecting the data – methods

The study was carried out between 23rd January and 19th May,
1967, with three visits between then and late July to collect
and return records. Of course, not every single day of the
above period was spent at the school but most weeks saw two or
three visits, and at the peak periods in February and April, a
full 5-day week was in operation. In addition, some 14 or 15
evenings were spent in the neighborhood, talking in taverns,
watching the kids in the park, walking around the streets.

The data was gathered in three main ways. Firstly, by
passive observation; I sat in on classes and had complete

freedom to enter or leave any room at any time I wished. I talked to students in the lunch room and on the playground, to the staff over coffee or in the office. I made notes as soon as possible of anything that I felt relevant, as in the case of the fight reported on page 58   . In particular, I questioned the Principal because he was most frequently available; apart from occasional lapses when he treated me as the typical visitor, he was almost always helpful and very honest about the working of his school. But I took on no role that was already part of the school structure.

Secondly I used school records of attendance, detention lists and the "black list" of major misconduct offences. Two limitations are worth noting here: the attendance records lacked complete details on reasons for absence, and the "black list" was incomplete as offenders who were seen by the Principal at once were often not listed.

Thirdly, 80 children and all the teachers were interviewed; the average interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. Although no questionnaire schedule was used in this, most interviews discussed the same issues, so that comparisons were possible despite the free range of conversation in which both the staff and students were encouraged to lead. With the exception of one morning when the machine broke down, all interviewing was done orally and recorded at 15/16 i.p.s. on a Uher 4000 Report-L tape recorder, placed on the desk beside the interviewee.

In addition to the interviews, a list of 12 questions, clearly stated, was given to each child interviewed. (See

Appendix II). These 12 questions were considered import nt
and had been omitted or made unclear in the early interviews.
There was no problem in the way the questionnaire was completed
(apart from a certain legibility problem).

Methods of collecting data - some theoretical considerations

The role of the sociological observer has been the subject
of much discussion but we do not need at this stage to enter a
full re-appraisal of the basic logical foundations of observation
as a research method. Rather we shall focus on certain problems
of particular reference to this study. Firstly, what are the
advantages of using observation?

As we have seen, one of the objects of this study was to
examine the events that other studies have shown occur; that is
to say, questionnaires and psychological tests have demonstrated
that actors in the school system are aware of tensions, and hold
attitudes which suggest conflict is inevitable. Our aim was to
watch this conflict in operation, to describe it, to probe its
antecedants, to find its meaning for the actors, to look for its
consequences, to try to explain it. To this end, observation is
a suitable method, in that the observer:

> watches the people he is studying to see what
> situations they ordinarily meet and how they
> behave in them. He enters into conversation
> with some or all of the participants in these
> situations and discovers their interpretations
> of the events he has observed.[126]

As Becker notes this approach to research is suitable for
investigating particular problems within an organisation when a

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126.   Howard S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof in
        Participant Observation", American Sociological Review,
        23, 6, Dec. 1958, p. 652.

lack of detailed knowledge beforehand precludes the identification of all relevant problems and hypotheses. Clearly such research develops during its course:

> analysis is carried on sequentially, important parts of the analysis being made while the researcher is still gathering his data. This has two obvious consequences; further data gathering takes its direction from provisional analyses; and the amount and kind of provisional analysis carried is limited by the exigencies of the field work situation.[127]

Naturally then the later stage of research is defined by a focus on certain early observations that are subsequently checked as being either typical or atypical. Thus an early entry in my field notes reads:

> Principal returns to topic of new building repeatedly, points out clean floor, muddy shoes left outside library, praises cleaners. Interrupts talk to use P.A. system and includes warning to keep off mud in general announcements.
>
> Q i -- is he always this way?
>
> Q ii - how do kids react? ... check other P.A. remarks, comments to kids in hall, etc.

Here we see an event and our attention is afterwards focussed on similar events in an effort to check its frequency and its importance. From it we can infer the values of the Principal, the behavior he wishes the students to adopt, and the kinds of conduct that would incur sanctions. In this way the field notes become a predetermined selection, as not everything can be recorded. Of course, not everything needs to be recorded as we are interested only in certain problems. Only after the research can the data be fully analysed, although some key aspects have received ongoing attention.

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127. Howard S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof of Participant Observation", American Sociological Review, 23, 6, Dec. 1958, p. 6??.

A second problem is how the observer changes what he observes. We need to know how the actors define the observer in order to evaluate their actions and statements in front of him. To understand this we must look at the relationship between observer and observed, the staff and the students.

At first, among the students the most common assumption was that I was a student-teacher, as in my first two weeks of field work, there were several student-teachers gaining experience at the school. But soon the children were non-plussed because I obviously was not a pupil, yet I didn't teach and took no notice of misconduct (other than to watch). For instance, kids would pretend to enter the school as I left through otherwise locked doors to see if I reprimanded them or stopped them. Similarly if they were talking in class they checked to see my reaction at first, and seemed unsure of my normally passive role.

During recess or lunch hour they would come up and talk to me as I wandered about watching, and usually we discussed general things (anecdotes of the past few days, or pop music, or school events). At these times they used either my Christian name or "Sir" if they did not know my name.

On the other hand I interviewed the staff, was treated on a level of equality by them, shared jokes and sometimes went for coffee with them, and used the room normally reserved for the counsellors. In the early days the Principal would announce me at the beginning of the week over the public address system

as, "Mr. Payne from McMaster will be with us again this week".
In some classes I was introduced as a visitor and the students
were used to having a large number of visitors in their school.
It is easy to understand their confusion.

When asked directly, I explained that I was from the
University, that it was my job to observe what people did, and
to explain why they did it and the effects this had; after I
had studied the school I was going to write a long essay on
the school and the Top End. This seemed to satisfy most of
them although some seemed sceptical that anyone could want to
do such a thing, let alone be paid for it. In these cases I
explained that I was a kind of psychologist, but not employed
by the school board; most of the sceptics implied that I was
some kind of "nark", but this seemed to reassure them. Questions
were few after the first three weeks which implies either a
grapevine effect (which over-heard conversations re-inforce)
or an indifference bred of familiarity. For the rest of the
study the students seemed to accept me as being there to talk
to when they felt like it, someone sympathetic and definitely
not of the staff; however, neither was I treated as an equal.

Reaction of the Staff

My relationship with the staff remained throughout
cordial and relaxed. The teachers saw me as an ally, and
perhaps due to my deliberate reluctance to comment, something
of an expert on education. I was interested in the students,
the problems of their backgrounds, and their difficulties in
school: I expressed an interest in the ideas and aims of the

teachers when I interviewed them (early in the study). It was
therefore assumed that we had much in common. My opinion and
interpretation were sought after several events, and my limited
replies, based on readings in the sociology of education, but as
neutral as I could make them, seemed to be treated with
surprising respect. There were frequent jokes about my "hear-all-
say-nout" behavior, but conversation did not halt or change
abruptly when I entered the staff-room, even when the teachers
were "bitching" about one another or discussing their children
in a "most un-professional" way.

There seemed little fear that I was reporting or assessing
their teaching skills, and this was due I think in part to the
way in which I tended to sympathise slightly with them out of
politeness (and encouragement to talk), and in part due to their
acceptance of my role as observer of the students.

Again, I was not treated as an equal, but more nearly
so than in the case of the children. I tried throughout to
resist accepting the teachers' interpretation of events, and
despite the age similarity which might have biased me in their
favor, I think I was successful. Indeed, I was pleasantly
surprised at how easy it was to appear an ally of both sides,
without the other side knowing.

From this we have these more formal indices of my
relationship: with the students and the staff. In the first
case we have:

    i.   after preliminary trials, a willingness to
           break rules in front of me, showing that I
           was not seen as staff

    ii.   the use of informal names

    iii.   admissions of guilt in escapades denied
          to the teachers and

    iv.   spontaneous approach and conversation,
          all showing a lack of special distance
          and a willingness to trust me.

A similar index could be made for the staff, allowing for even

closer equality.

At times I was victim of a propoganda war between staff

and students concerning events, and I had to be continually on

guard to tread the tightrope of neutrality. In sum then, I feel

that after the first two or three weeks, I was accepted and

routine was as normal. Even my presence at the back of the

class was ignored and I was able to observe most of the types

of misconduct of which my respondents spoke, ranging from

fights and insolence to talking and "horsing around".

Finally, we need to consider the general position of

bias and ethics. Every sociologist has obligations to his

profession that his reporting not only be accurate, complete,

and honest, but that it should also be as free of bias as he can

make it. As Merton has noted, he must also ask himself what are

the potential uses of his work over and above his own theoretical

interests.[128]

In this study the problem of bias is of interest; the

observer had no experience of Canadian education as a child, and

therefore tended to evaluate Pheonix School from the stand-point

of the British system. This meant that the low level of

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128.   Robert K. Merton, _Social Theory and Social Structure_,
       Free Press, Glencoe, 1957, pp. 214 - 219.

intellectual challenge that was observed was a source of dis-
comfort. The danger in this is that my feeling that I would
be bored and opposed to this education if I were a student, might
be overly projected onto those whom I was observing. In truth
I found plenty of evidence of student boredom, but am duty bound
to say that I may have over-estimated it. Certainly not having
been a Canadian student was proof against one kind of projection,
and as I have never been a lower class student who had low verbal
skills and a motoric style, I had a further safeguard against
identifying too strongly with the students.

This is the specific case of the general problem of the
observer imputing his own values to others (in this case from a
different culture) in a given situation. Only extensive
observation reveals where these false assumptions go wrong.
Thus I assumed a resentment to punishment which was seldom
manifested, as far as conversation and observation could reveal.
In this way such differences in attitude become high-lighted,
to the benefit of the study. Clearly at all times one is doing
interpreting, rather than simple reporting, and cases such as
this are a constant reminder to re-assess one's position.

The ethical question also hinges on this discomfort at
the style of teaching. Even small documents such as this are
potential weapons in the in-fighting which determines the
ongoing form of education in the city. Being ideologically in
favor of devoting resources to the less privileged makes it
harder to report events harmful to the image of what the new
school is achieving. Luckily I became aware of this problem at

a very early stage, and tried to make due allowance. A similar threat that the future career of a teacher might be damaged by criticisms here was avoided by using a composite, ideal type instead of individual cases. The usual precept about characters resembling living persons applied. Finally, any changes based on my findings made at Pheonix School will, I hope, make it easier for the teachers and students to understand each other and so work out a new balance of conflict and co-operation. However, at all times my purpose has been:

> not criticism, but observation and analysis.
> When we report what we learned, it is important
> that we do so faithfully. We have a double
> duty - - to our own profession of social ob-
> servation and analysis and to those who have
> allowed us to observe their conduct.[129]

In addition to observation, data were collected by taped interview. This procedure had a number of disadvantages. Firstly, a few respondents seemed inhibited at having to speak into a microphone rather than face to face; the machine intruded. Further, there was some apprehension at the thought of every word being recorded verbatim; there was no room left for denials or claims of misrepresentation when the exact conversation could be replayed at any time. With both these problems, it was the staff rather than the students who seemed reluctant, but I perceived any hesitancy at all in less than 25% of the teacher interviews. The reluctance to be completely frank would have been present to some extent even without the recorder; it was felt that such hesitancy did not invalidate the technique especially in light of later unrecorded group conversations in the staff-room which often helped explain the cases in question.

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129. Howard Becker, Blanche Greer, Everett Hughes and
     Anself Strauss, _Boys in White_, Chicago, University
     of Chicago Press, 19   . 15.

The third disadvantage revealed itself at the playback stage. One of the rooms used for interviews resulted in a high level of echo which will tuned out by the ear, was recorded by the microphone, and this made listening to the tape a very tiring process, over and above the constant problem than an interview which lasted 30 minutes takes well over twice that time to adapt to the written form or into statistical data. But these disadvantages were far outweighed by a number of advantages in using the tape recorder.

Firstly, every word and voice inflection of the respondent is recorded, and can be examined over and over again. This means that no split second interpretation, or abbreviation for shorthand, distorts the answers during the interview. Further, the interviewer is free to devote his entire attention to following his questions, weighing subtle variations in voice, steering the conversation in the guided interview and speaking directly to the face of the respondent, rather than making frantic notes in his note book. This produces better rapport and more informative responses, while drastically reducing the interview time; the one morning spent without the recorder demonstrated this clearly.

A final advantage in interviewing the students stemmed from their desire to hear themselves speak, and I usually ended an interview by replaying the last few minutes of recording to the student. This was a very popular move as almost every student expressed surprise at the sound of their own voices; they had never heard themselves on tape before. As word of my

activities got around the school, more and more of the students
came to me asking to be interviewed, and those selected were more
enthusiastic and co-operative in the interview situation. Despite
my moderate experience as an interviewer, the quality of my data
is due to the use of a modern technological aid which maximised
the possibility of obtaining useful results from the interviews.

Interviews were carried out in either the "interview room",
a small bare room equipped with a desk and two chairs, or in one
of two larger rooms in the adjoining community centre, with more
tables and chairs, but little more to distract the eye. While
the door was shut during the interview, it was not unusual to be
interrupted by someone looking for "lost property" or a room in
which to hold a small class. The teachers were interviewed during
free periods or when their classes were being taught by student-
teachers; these interviews ranged 30 to 60 minutes in length, and
while we talked "about the problems of teaching in this school" in
a general way, I gave each teacher the chance to talk about the
issues he or she felt were important. At the same time, I ensured
that a number of questions that I wanted answered were covered.*

In interviewing the students, I found that the children
clearly expected me to take the lead; early attempts to let them
talk at their initiative were superseded by a period of specific
questioning before conversation began to flow freely. I found that
breaking a stick of gum and sharing it was an effective way of
setting the tone of the interview and establishing a relationship
with the child; this particularly in light of the strict rule
against chewing gum in school. As noted above, there were few

* See Appendix II for the "guide line" list of topics discussed
in staff interviews and with the students.

worries about students being unwilling to speak, especially after

I had explained the procedure during a stroll down the hall

towards the room. An excellent technique that I discovered by

accident was to let the respondent hold the microphone and operate

the machine himself. This made particularly the lower class

students more fluent, as we might expect from Miller and Swanson

(see Ch. 1, pp. 8-10   ). The children were for the most

part interviewed in pairs and seemed quite relaxed and happy in

the triangular conversation that developed.

As we have seen, the interviews were in part focussed and

in part free ranging. With this form:

> although definite subject matter areas are involved,
> the interviewer is largely free to arrange the form
> and timing of the questions (which) permits much
> freedom on the part of the respondent to "talk about"
> the problems under study.[130]

One benefit of this is that the communication can itself be

investigated, which helps both interviewer and respondent to use

words in the same way. As an adult dealing with foreign

adolescents this was important. What, for instance, is one to

understand from the remark that "Miss Othmar sometimes has a

hairy canippy", unless there is room to manoeuvre during the

interview?

In this kind of interview not only can leads be freely

followed in an atmosphere of personal rapport and trust, but the

interviewer gets a first-hand chance to evaluate the validity of

answers. Thus in one interview a boy complained about his home-

life and his sister in particular. His partner, a girl who was a

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130.   Carter V. Good, <u>Introduction to Educational Research</u>, 2nd
        ed., New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963, p. 292.
        See also pp. 285 - 301.

friend of his sister, argued that he was at fault, not his
sister, and explained that he never did any housework and
forgot to feed the pets over which the siblings quarreled.
Especially in the case of children doing something wrong,
there is a tendency to restructure the event in black and white.
By interviewing in pairs there was some check on this other
than my own opinion, for it was common to hear the partner say
for instance, "Oh come on, you were talking", when a respondent
claimed that he had "been picked on for nothing".

This issue aside, I feel able to trust the validity of
my answers. Most of them were "volunteered" apart from the
early lead questions which were of a factual nature. The first
attitude question was usually "What do you think of the building
here?" and thereafter the subject-changes were normally
introduced by "Well, tell me about ...". Of course, some
answers were in response to directions, but by allowing the
conversation to run its course, most information came freely
and in terms that were natural for the student.

A note about the selection of interviewees: during
the teacher interviews there had been consistent talk in terms
of "problem children", "the average student", and "some kids are
no trouble to teach". I asked each home-room teacher to choose
two students from each category, trying as far as possible to
pick white Canadian-born students from unbroken and non-immigrant
homes: there were four exceptions to this in the sample. I
knew from Glass, Hollingshead and Becker that the staff's
selections would probably reflect class bias; my main fear was
that the "average" students would be too similar to the good due

to teachers wishing to show themselves in a good light. This in fact did not happen.

The sample consisted of 20 students from each group and was seen as representative of these three groups. It was not meant to reflect the child population of the Top End, or even the school as a whole. Rather it was meant to illustrate the three main types of student as defined by the teachers, and to contrast them.

I was interested not so much in the "true" "sinfulness" of the children but in the teachers' perception; similarly, I was interested in the students' perception of the school, for these definitions determine events. To paraphrase Znaniecki, its how people see things that counts,[131] and this approach underlies the whole study.

131. W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in European America, New York, A.A. Knopf, 1927, Vol. 1, p. 22.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONAIRES

While no questaire was employed for the interviews
with teachers and the topic changed from person to person,
and the order of discussion changed, a guideline of basic
topics was used to ensure at least a minimum of issues were
included. The same is true for the student interviews. For the
strongly curious, we include the guidelines, but the free-flowing
nature of the interview must at all times be remembered. The 12
written questions are also included.

Written Questions

What is your name?

How old are you in years and months?

Which Class are you in?

What job would you like to do after you leave school?

What job dp you actually expect to do in fact?

What job do your parents want you to do?

What job do your parents expect you to do in actual fact?

How far would you like to go in school?

How far do you actually expect to go in school?

How far would your parents like you to go in school?

How far do your parents actually expect you to go in school?

Who is usually the "Boss" in your family?

Staff Interviews   30+ minutes

How long have you been teaching here? How does it compare?
How do most of the staff feel about it? How do you get on with them?
What are the advantages?disadvantages of this job? How is conduct?
Does the enviroment effect the kids? How do they react to the new
building? Cleanliness etc.? Relations with kids? How do you see what
you are doing? How successful are you? Age, sex , religion, etc.

Student Interviews

Now, so that I can find the place on the tape again, your name is?

And how old are you, _____ _____?

How long have you been at Phoenix?

Where do you live?

How does this school now compare to the previous one?

Probe, follow likes/dislikes

What do you think of the new building?

Probe likes/dislikes again

Do you think the things you learn in school are much use to
        you outside? Which?

What do you do in your spare time, at weekends and the evenings?

Do you belong to any clubs?

Who do you spend most of your spare time with, friends from
        within school, or friends from on the block?

Who would you say you get on with kids around here?

What about the teachers?

What would you say the teachers are trying to do?

Everyone gets into trouble sometime: what sort of things have
        you got into trouble for? When?

Take a look through this report card and tell me which you think
        the three most important sections are (indicates
        citizenship section) and the least important, or any
        that could be left out?

How do you score on that section?

How is your attendance record?

If you, or say the other kids in your class, wanted to bug a
        teacher, how would you do it? (probe)

Why do you think most kids get into trouble? Why do you get
        into trouble?

Do your parents f... about you doing your homework? Ask you
        lots of q...tions a...ut school? What sort of things?
        (probe con...tion of homework). Parents visit school?

Have many argumen... and fig... at home?

Mother works?

What job does your father do?

What do you think of this part of the city?

Thank you, etc.

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