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Academic resilience and buoyancy in second-level schools: understanding and supporting student success

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ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AND BUOYANCY IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS:

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

By

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B.Sc (Ed)

A thesis submitted to the University of Limerick in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Despite the reduction in early-school leaving rates in Ireland beginning at the end of the last decade at the onset of the economic recession, there remain persistent social class differences in educational attainment and school completion in Ireland (Ireland 2016). Such differences have given rise to a discourse of defining students from disadvantaged backgrounds as being 'at-risk' of early school leaving and the proliferation of support structures such as the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme to support 'at-risk' young people in schools.

Such differences in attainment can be understood in terms of social practices (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu argues that the field of school advantages young people of dominant class origin, in that their habitus allows them to recognise and more freely accept the legitimacy of the values transmitted to them by school, and to modify their practices in school accordingly. These differences have also been described in terms academic buoyancy and resiliency, processes whereby young people thrive in school in spite of the 'everyday' and 'chronic' adversity which they face. There is, however, a tension between these conceptualisations. Constructions of academic resiliency and buoyancy highlight the necessity for individuals to develop an internal locus of control in order to thrive in schools (Collie et al 2015). However, Bourdieu argues that young people in schools must internalise externally generated values and practices.

In order to explore the tension above, a two-phase approach was utilised. The first phase employed qualitative ethnographic methods in two case study schools comprising 34 students to understand their lived experiences. The first case study group, Smithstown, were in the final year of their Junior Cycle, and the second case study group, Goodwin, were in the first year of a Senior Cycle pathway for young people who do not transition directly to third-level education. In the second phase, the Student Buoyancy Instrument (SBI) was adapted from the work of Martin and Marsh (2008a) and validated with a non-representative sample of 581 Irish second-level students to examine these students' self-reported levels of buoyancy.

In Phase One, the individual and group identities constructed by the students in both schools, along with the differential understandings students had of their social world and vocational prospects, impacted on their engagement and decision making within both school fields. 'Buoyant' students demonstrated that they had internalised particular values and practices which mediated their engagement in their school settings and reported themselves as likely to complete school. The buoyant students reported upon displayed conformity, rather than meaningful 'autonomy' or 'internal locus of control' in the process of navigating their school worlds. The findings from Phase Two indicated that students who reported higher levels of confidence (self-efficacy), persistence and planning, were significantly less likely to report themselves likely to leave school early. There was no relationship found between self-reported high internal locus of control and reported likelihood of completing school. The results of both phases of the research raise new questions about how we as teachers afford 'autonomy' to our students within neo-liberal discourses of resilience. Accordingly, the intention of the SBI is that it provides a means for teachers to engage young people in a sociological analysis of inequality in society and how, as democratic citizens, we should all respond to same in a way that is affirming for young people.

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work

Signed: ____________________________ Date: _________________________

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction: Placing Resilience and Buoyancy in context

> "In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways"
>
> (Ungar 2008, p.225)

As important as it is to understand the many ways in which people's lives are adversely affected by unfavourable circumstances, it is just as important to try to learn from the experiences of those who succeed despite such circumstances. Such people are *resilient* to their adversity. The rationale for examining resilience is that in understanding the challenges which individuals face in their development, as well how these people recover from such challenges, mechanisms of adaptation and coping that can be used to guide interventions with others at risk will be revealed (Masten 1994).

The concept of resilience has its origins over forty years ago, founded on studies of schizophrenia. It was found that people with schizophrenia who displayed competency in the workplace, as well as competency in their relationships with others before suffering from the disease, tended to suffer from the mildest forms of schizophrenia. In these studies, it was resilience rather than pathology, which was the focus of research for the first time. Following from this research, interest in the concept of resilience expanded, looking at how it could be applied to other areas (Luthar *et al* 2000); specifically to those who excel despite the risks associated with socioeconomic disadvantage, the outcomes of children of teenage mothers, children reared in institutional care, sufferers of chronic illness and recovery from childhood maltreatment (Garmezy 1981, 1991, Rutter 1987, Masten 1994, 2001, Luthar 2003, Coleman and Hagell 2007). Over the last two decades, there have been moves away from simply identifying the factors promoting resilience, towards developing an understanding of the underlying processes behind these factors (Garmezy 1991).

Such a shift is towards a more positive psychology, and, positive psychologists, advancing the 'broaden-and-build' theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson 2001), propose that enhancing positive emotions broadens individuals' psychological and behavioural skill set. While much of the focus outlined above has examined resilience in a general context, this thesis sets out to add to the growing knowledge and understanding of resilience and the related construct of buoyancy in the *academic* context. Such knowledge is clearly important, as the majority of Irish adolescents (and indeed adolescents in the developed world) are involved in some form of education – and they have been demonstrated to experience academic challenges, pressures and setbacks (Catterall 1998, Finn and Rock 1997, Gonzalez and Padilla 1997, Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, Overstreet and Braun 1999). While reports from Ireland continue to demonstrate the marked association between socio-economic status and performance at school (Byrne and Smyth 2010, Ireland 2014), it is proposed that notwithstanding the important debate concerning the distribution of wealth and power in society, there is still much to learn from students who display resilience to disadvantage. Martin and Marsh (2009, p.354) proposed academic buoyancy and academic resilience as 'two important factors that underpin students' positive connections to school and academic life and their ability to 'bounce back' when they face minor and major academic adversity'. Martin and Marsh have posited that academic resilience and buoyancy are not innate skills – they can be enhanced in young people through the 'development of positive cognitive, affective and behavioural orientations to school and academic life' (2009, p.354). Such enhancement contributes towards an increased durability and resilience under stress. Moreover, from a mental health perspective, there is emerging theory and research proposing that mental health to be more than simply the absence of mental illness as has been the case historically, but is also the capacity to 'flourish' (Keyes 2007).

The 'classical' constructions of resilience above focus on the 'assets' of resilient individuals, however alternative 'constructivist' perspectives focus on collective experience and social identities (Bottrell 2009). Such perspectives note that due to the inequitable distribution of power, desirable outcomes can be subjectively defined as undesirable (Kaplan 1999, p.31-32). Accordingly, constructivist perspectives acknowledge that resistance may be reframed as resilience by taking the significance

of social identities and collective experiences of young people into account. Such perspectives should be of concern to teachers, particular as neoliberal interpretations of resilience individualises responsibility for adversity, potentially subverting the examination of the processes which cause adversity. Such processes give rise to power relations which, as Bottrell argues (2009, p.329), can classify certain manifestations of resilience as 'normative', and by exclusion, marginalise non-conformist forms in psychopathological terms. Accordingly, this research advocates for a constructivist understanding of resilience.

1.1 Research Problem

For young people, identity-making can be described as a process to define the means to represent themselves under socially given conditions (Epstein and Johnson 1998, p.116). As young people navigate their social worlds, they manage power relations, social relations, constraints and opportunities present within their specific contexts, which both informs and is informed by their identity work. Resistance and conformity are necessary aspects of identity work as young people encounter context-specific definitions of appropriate behaviour that at times can appear contradictory (Bottrell 2007). The 'narratives about the most ''personal'' difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions' (Bourdieu 2006, p.511). Martin and Marsh (2008a, p.53) describe academic buoyancy as a means to navigate this social world: a 'students' ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life (e.g. poor grades, competing deadlines, exam pressure, difficult schoolwork)'. This buoyancy is distinct from academic resilience which is defined as how students respond to *chronic* adversity (Garmezy 1991, Luthar *et al* 2000). It can be argued that much of the literature spanning the nineties, to the middle of the last decade on resilience tended to focus on relatively small groups of people experiencing extremely adverse circumstances (Catterall 1998 - violence, Finn and Rock 1997, Gonzalez and Padilla 1997 - underachievement, Miller 2002 - specific learning needs). Over the course of the past ten years, however, there has been increasing research interest in how people respond to the more 'everyday' challenges and pressures in life. Martin and Marsh argue that coping with such pressures reflects an 'everyday' resilience or 'buoyancy'. Buoyancy and resilience have been

demonstrated to be related and distinct concepts – while all resilient students are buoyant, not all buoyant students are strictly speaking resilient (2008a).

Martin and Marsh have examined this buoyancy within the domain of mathematics (2008a), and have suggested others should explore further domains. This study aims to continue the emerging line of enquiry into buoyancy. The major objectives of this research were to investigate how student resistance and buoyant adaption to school is made evident in their construction of identities and performance of school-based practices. Additionally, this research seeks to ascertain whether any distinguishing features of this buoyancy can be identified in young people, and if so, what these are. The final aim of this research is to investigate how can teachers help develop students' capacity for buoyancy.

1.2 Overview of the Research Methodology

This research adopts a critical realist position, which posits that social situations embody assumptions concerning the ability or otherwise of individuals to act in the world in the context of structural and situational enablements or constraints (Cruickshank 2002). A two-phase approach was adopted to address the aims of the research. This approach to the research acknowledges that:

> "statistical calculation of the variations in the intensity of the relationship between a particular indicator and any given practice does not remove the need for the specifically sociological calculation of the effects which are expressed in the statistical relationship."
>
> (Bourdieu 1984, p.22)

The first phase comprises of two case studies, in which data was gathered in an observer-as-participant capacity in two second-level schools in Ireland. In total, 34 students participated in this phase of the research. Data collection took place in the first school (Smithstown, reported in Chapter Six) between February and May 2010, and occurred in the second school (Goodwin, reported in Chapter Seven) between September and December 2011. Smithstown College is situated in the centre of a large urban town in the Munster, and to cohort selected for study were in their third year of the Junior Cycle programme. The students of Goodwin College were in the first year of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. Goodwin College is situated in a suburban area of a large city in Munster. This qualitative phase sought

to understand young peoples' interpretation of their social world and the construction and performance of school-based practices. As will be reported later, young people's resistance and their buoyant adaption are evident in the performance of these practices. The buoyant adaption of students who were identified as being likely to complete school successfully was coherent with adaption reported elsewhere (Martin and Marsh 2006), although this research queries whether this adaption could be better supported through emancipatory approaches to pedagogy.

The second phase of the research adopts a quantitative approach to understanding patterns of these buoyant dispositions in the wider population, and how these relate to young peoples' orientations towards school completion.A survey instrument was adapted from the conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2006) and administered to a total of 581 students in second level schools. The *'Student Buoyancy Instrument'* (SBI), reported on in Chapter Eight was developed with a view that it might provide teachers with a starting point for dialogue with their students on inequality in society and how, as democratic citizens, we should respond to same. This sociological analysis, Bourdieu argues (1998, p.ix), gives rise to 'self-knowledge', in which social actors become aware of the social determinisms which their shape practices, and this offers an important avenue for agency:

> "Self-knowledge… offers some of the most efficacious means of attaining the freedom from social determinisms, which is made possible only by knowledge of those very determinisms."
>
> (Bourdieu 1998, p.ix)

The observations reported in Chapters Six and Seven suggest that with appropriate support, young people can develop their buoyancy and enhance their chances of success, to do so requires a wider examination of teacher methodology. Freire cautions us against uncritically presenting the success of those who succeed despite adversity for others to emulate (1970, p.34). Instead, the discourse surrounding resilience should challenge teachers to consider the wider socio-economic and political inequalities which disadvantage their students in the first instance in their teaching.

1.3 Outline of Thesis

This section offers an outline of this research. Chapter One introduces the research and sets it in context. It offers a brief overview of the research problem, research methodology, the key findings and implications arising from these.

Following this introductory chapter, there are three literature review chapters. The first of these (Chapter Two) explores educational disadvantage and the perspectives which underpin how 'disadvantage' is conceptualised. The origins and conservative political undertones of much of the policy and debate concerning educational 'disadvantage' are, by extension, applicable to much of the literature surrounding 'classical' resilience and buoyancy. Educational disadvantage debates and policy have tended to have unarticulated and conservative political undertones which go unquestioned. O'Sullivan has previously criticised this as a 'phoney consensus' (1999, p.19). Debate on educational disadvantage forms part of a broad and distinctly political dialogue concerning inequality in society. However, this debate is subverted by efforts made to portray disadvantage as something that is a deficit of the individual and their community, rather than a shortcoming of a social system that structures society in such a way as to perpetuate inequality of resources and opportunity. Bourdieu's theory of reproduction allows a critical lens through which to examine the perpetual nature of such inequality (1977).

In Chapter Three, Bourdieu's concept of the habitus and field allows for an examination of adolescence. Using these constructs the development of identity is explored, and in particular, these constructs allow for an examination of the way in which actions may seem adaptive in one context but may prove to be maladaptive in others. This chapter also uses the theory of 'practices' to link the social with the psychological. In this context, the school is an important institutional arena where adolescents find their experiences routinized and rarely do they find any rationalisation for these experiences. In this way, it can be hard to them to reflect and bring about what Bourdieu terms the 'awakening' necessary to challenge one's practice.

In Chapter Four, the constructs of resilience and buoyancy are explored. These are complex constructs, involving the interplay of personal as well as social factors. Encouragingly, the school is an example of a particular external arena that can allow

adolescents a space to build supportive relationships with adults, and with other peers, and so forms the focus of this study. There is a parallel to be drawn between criticisms of educational disadvantage as well as resilience. Much of the debate surrounding both constructs is grounded in an epidemiological model, which can at best only offer a limited understanding. Just as epidemiological studies of disease have sought to understand the short-comings which place individuals or groups 'at-risk' of disease, so too have understandings of disadvantage focused on the shortcomings which place individuals or groups 'at-risk' of being disadvantaged. However, such understandings omit the political nuances of the social arena. 'Classical' conceptualisations of resilience have also been concerned with identifying particular adaptive 'traits' of individuals. However, constructivist interpretations acknowledge that such normative assessments are problematic, and risk pathologising non-normative forms of adaptation. While noting this context, it is encouraging that resilience and buoyancy are teachable (Gilligan 2000) suggesting it can be a worthwhile point for reflection for teachers and anyone concerned with helping young people succeed in schools.

The fifth chapter of the thesis outlines the methodology of this research reported above in greater detail. The findings from this research are reported in three chapters. Phase One of the research, comprising of the observations in the two case study schools are reported in Chapters Six and Seven. The '5C's' originally posited by Martin and Marsh (2006) – became the focus of the dimensions explored in the SBI, which was deployed to 581 second-level students and is reported upon in Chapter Eight. Lastly, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis, by reviewing the key points of the research.

1.4 Author's reflection

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the book '*Listening and Learning'* by Scott Boldt. I first read the book in 2007 and found it a powerful and inspiring experience. I was determined to follow its lead in giving a platform to the voices of students disaffected by school, and modelled my approach to my final year dissertation based on it – indeed this thesis is itself inspired by this previous work. Bearing this formative experience in mind, it probably isn't surprising that I favoured qualitative methods during the initial phase of this research, so as to

continue to provide this platform for the student's voice. This passion for the facilitating the student voice, however, was tested over the course of this particular piece of research, by difficulties I faced in gaining access to students.

Boldt himself wrote about similar issues to this:

> 'interviews which were arranged for a specific time were cancelled altogether when an interviewee did not arrive… much time was spent trying to locate individuals… information on lists were out of date…persons had moved to a residence outside of the city.'
>
> (Boldt 1994, p16-17)

When I began this research, I imagined myself going to similar lengths to provide this platform for the student's voice when necessary and relishing the prospect of that challenge should it arise, however, it was not until I found myself facing these challenges myself that I appreciated how demoralising it is. While I anticipated some resistance from some students, I had not anticipated the levels of apathy towards improving school I would encounter.

Data protection legislation in Ireland (1998) poses a dilemma for researchers working in schools with such students – particularly where the methodologies involved would be sensitive enough to require both students as well as parental consent to 'opt-in' for participation, rather than 'opt-out'. Such 'opt-in' consent is clearly of profound importance for research – it protects the potentially vulnerable participants and their families first and foremost, and also offers protection for the researcher. However many of the students at the highest risk of early school leaving will display erratic attendance, and poor engagement with school activities and this makes obtaining such consent very difficult. My lowest points in this research came when I was unable to secure co-operation from students at a potential case study site.

I was conscious of conducting research 'with' rather than 'on' students in the course of this work, and accordingly undertook only to carry out research in settings that extended the explicit consent of a democratic majority of the students in question. One particular school had agreed to participate in my research, but I was forced to abandon my efforts after four separate school visits to recover parental consent forms that had been given to sixteen students had resulted in seven left outstanding. On

some occasions the students were absent, and when they weren't they offered a variety of excuses: they forgot to get it signed, they had lost the form, they had left in their lockers, they promised it would definitely be done by tomorrow, and they would definitely give it to the principal for me. Their teachers told me they heard such stories many times before. I eventually provided self-addressed envelopes for the school to send to the parents, to try to provide alternative avenues through which consenting participants could indicate same. However, the school involved was not permitted to share addresses or contact phone numbers for any students – and had to take responsibility for postage themselves. After several weeks with no further progress, I found myself doubting whether the school concerned had sent the envelopes at all. Surely *one* would have been returned? Perhaps their interest had waned – as the process was taking so long? Accordingly, I decided to abandon further efforts and informed the school principal that because the consent simply wasn't forthcoming from just under half of the class, I could not proceed. Several months later, however, my doubts regarding postage were revealed to be unfounded. I received one of those envelopes back – via the An Post Return Centre as the intended recipients were not at the address specified. The letters clearly had been sent, and I quickly gained an appreciation for the fact that schools must also face similar difficulties as mine themselves. In this case, before research even began, I was seeing evidence of students rejecting school. These students struggled to see me as one of them, and instead, I was another part of 'the system' that they were so keen to resist. My consent forms were like another piece of homework, and my research likely to be another effort to try to teach them something they did not want to know. I was so disappointed that months of work had been in vain, but of course, acknowledge the right and autonomy of individuals not to participate in research. However, it is ironic and perhaps appropriate that my efforts to investigate resilience in young people, proved to be a test of my resilience simultaneously. I outlined at the beginning of this reflection my passion for allowing the student voice a chance to be heard, and it perhaps isn't surprising that my lowest point came when following months of logistics, all the pieces were in place to allow this to happen in this particular case study site, but the levels of disengagement within that cohort was such that even when the stage was set, and the microphone ready, nobody was willing to speak. I did not hear their voice. I did not listen or learn.

Having been unsuccessful previously with other potential sites before this experience, I found this I took quite some time to recover from it. I found myself questioning the appropriateness of my approach, and at times even considering reframing it entirely. However, I am ultimately happy that I remained *confident* in it; that I *composed* myself; that I *persisted*; that I remained *resilient*; that I allowed the others who did wish to speak a chance to be heard.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter served to introduce this research. It places the research within the emerging context constructivist understandings of resilience and buoyancy – characterised by an acknowledgement that adolescents deal with differentiation and marginalisation in different ways, including both resistances and conformities. The research problem and methodology was overviewed – seeking to continue this emerging line of enquiry. Finally, an outline of this thesis is presented to signpost the reader, outlining the major literature themes that informed this research, the methodology employed to address the research questions, and implications arising from these for further exploration.

Chapter Two: Educational Disadvantage

2.0 Introduction

> "The meaning of advantage is the ghost that lurks within disadvantage."
>
> (Derman-Sparks 2002, p.1)

In seeking to understand academic resilience as it manifests itself in schools, it is first necessary to understand educational disadvantage. Both concepts are intrinsically linked to each other. Resilience literature generally defines educational disadvantage as being a type of 'risk' factor, or an 'adversity', in the face of which some young people thrive, while others do not. However what is oftentimes lost in such debate, is the fact that educational disadvantage itself is a highly contested concept, and merits discussion in its own right. Many of the criticisms of the phrase educational 'disadvantage' could equally be argued to be criticisms of resilience and buoyancy – both conceptual frameworks being grounded in the epidemiology of disease, carrying implications that disadvantage is a shortcoming of the individual, rather than a shortcoming of the society in which they live. In Ireland, the use of the phrase educational disadvantage to describe the differing relevant attainment of different groups of people is widely accepted. It has been used historically by academics (Kellaghan *et al* 1995, Boldt and Devine 1998), by agencies such as the former Combat Poverty Agency, and indeed in more recent times in the policy documents of the Government of Ireland (2011c). There has been little contestation of the phrase over time save for some authors – such as Drudy and Lynch (1993) who dismiss the usage of the phrase; favouring instead a focus on what they call social class differences in education. This lack of contestation – elsewhere called the 'phoney consensus' (O'Sullivan 1999, p.19), serves to subvert critical debate about how to appropriately address 'disadvantage' in society (Tormey 2010). Historical reviews of research in the area of educational disadvantage in Ireland – such as that of Boldt and Devine (1998) – highlighted that exactly what writers mean by the phrase educational disadvantage has previously been quite unclear – and in this chapter I will discuss the evolution of theory, definitions and understanding of educational disadvantage from what can be understood as the 'disadvantage as

deficit' perspective, which tends to focus on the shortcomings of individuals or their environment, as well as the 'disadvantage as process' perspective, which seek to uncover social processes that lie behind inequality in society. Similar themes are also readily seen in resilience and buoyancy research, where 'classical' constructions of resilience focus on the 'assets' of resilient individuals, and 'constructivist' perspectives focus on collective experience and social identities (Bottrell 2009). This research advocates the emancipatory potential of the latter. This chapter will also serve to outline some national context – articulating some recent policy initiatives in response to disadvantage in Ireland.

2.1 Definitions and Theoretical Perspectives

The first section of this chapter deals with some definitions and theoretical perspectives on educational disadvantage. As outlined in the above introductory section, many of the definitions of educational disadvantage have historically taken a deficit-oriented view of individuals and their communities. While such perspectives may seem quite at odds with the 'broaden and build' outlooks towards individuals adopted in positive psychology over the last fifteen years (Fredrickson 2001, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000), it can be argued that seeking to identify and enhance assets rather than label shortcomings, has the potential to add rather than detract from the deficit metaphor . With this said, some of the commentaries discussed below outline critical perspectives that challenge these problematic definitions, and provide useful tools which can appraise the usefulness of the resiliency and buoyancy constructs in schools.

2.1.1 Understanding Educational Disadvantage: As Deficit

There are many definitions for educational disadvantage, and how educational disadvantage has been perceived has changed over time. To chart the evolution in the use of the term, perspectives over the last few decades will be outlined. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), a child may be regarded as being disadvantaged if:

> "because of social or cultural characteristics (e.g. social class, race, ethnic origin, poverty, sex, geographical location etc.) the child enters the school system with knowledge, skills and attitudes which impede learning and contribute to a cumulative academic deficit."
>
> (Passow 1970, p.16)

The Irish Education Act (1998, p.32) defines educational disadvantage as ‘the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools’.

Definitions such as those above all share a common theme. All tend to view disadvantage as a shortcoming of the child or their community. I contend that such ‘disadvantage as deficit’ definitions have powered the work of the Irish Government’s Educational Disadvantage Committee (2005), and the most recent Programme for Government (2011c), and, as a framework, such ‘deficit’ theory for understanding the social world was popular in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) during the 1950s and 1960s (Hanafin and Lynch 2002, p.36). This deficit model borrows from epidemiology. Just as epidemiology seeks to understand what short-comings place individuals or groups ‘at-risk’ of disease, so too have understandings of disadvantage focused on the short-comings which place one ‘at-risk’ of being disadvantaged. Tormey identifies that Irish literature on disadvantage has been influenced by this focus on being ‘at-risk’ (1999), and over the last number of years references to being ‘at-risk’ are found in both academic writing (see for example Byrne and Smyth 2010), as well as policy documents (Ireland 2011c), which identified the need to better connect with students ‘at-risk’. Analytical processes to identify ‘at-risk’ status have also been borrowed from epidemiology - seeking to identify correlations and measure probabilistic outcomes in relation to a specific event (Richardson *et al* 1989, McElwee 2013). While there is a correlation between socio-economic background and early school leaving, and between the former and educational disadvantage, not every person of working-class origin is a predetermined early school leaver, nor does this correlation show the causes behind early school leaving. In both Ireland and the UK, part of the causation may be that power over the education system is firmly vested in the middle classes (Ball 2003), or as Lynch contends:

> “Education matters most to those who gain most from it, namely the middle classes. They have learned the educational formula by rote; it is in their interests that it does not change. As a power group the middle classes are well positioned to have their interests defined as the public interest in education.”
>
> (Lynch 1989, p.124)

Authors examining the intersection of social class and education seek to uncover the unacknowledged 'normality' of middle class values and by corollary the unacknowledged patholagisation of working classes (Reay and Wiliam 1999, Reay 2004, 2006, Lawler 2005, Skeggs and Loveday 2012)

Furthermore, linking risk factors to educational disadvantage and early school leaving is not always without problems, even setting aside the distinction that must be made between correlation and causation. To illustrate, while there is an easily measurable correlation between, for example, exposure to UV light and changes to DNA structure in the skin (De Gruijl 1999) in medical studies, in an educational context such associations are not so tangible and readily quantifiable. It is problematic to measure, for example, attainment and participation which falls below the levels which one may be capable of as a result of disadvantage, as pointed out by Tormey (1999, p.32) . Therefore transposing frameworks that seek to identify risk factors as is common in epidemiology, and using such frameworks to inform the responses in educational contexts isn't effective practice. Many authors have pointed out that the last two decades have seen a proliferation of attempts to quantify and measure educational disadvantage (Kellaghan 1995, Boldt and Devine 1998, Gorby 2007, Byrne and Smyth 2010). Such efforts have given rise to a body of evidence indicating that young people attending schools with a high percentage of working-class students, have both higher levels of early school leaving, and lower levels of academic performance (Smyth 1999, Sofroniou *et al* 2004), and are less likely to progress to third-level (McCoy *et al* 2014b).

While there is agreement in the Irish context regarding the complexity of the phenomenon, and that it is primarily related to social class (Tormey 1999), various authors have previously further laden this concept with other groups such as those with learning disabilities (Fine Gael 1998) and those from different ethnic groups (Boldt and Devine 1998). Such clustering of discrete problems under the umbrella of 'educational disadvantage' lessens the usefulness of the term. Tormey (1999) argued that as a term, educational disadvantage essentially became synonymous with educational failure. Furthermore, placing what is conventionally understood to be educational disadvantage under an umbrella with such other issues that are at best arguably only tentatively related – authors (perhaps unwittingly) further mask the

societal inequalities underpinning the comparatively poor attainment of the working class in education.

Both Tormey (2003) and O'Sullivan (1999) have previously attempted to draw together and classify differing uses of the concept of educational disadvantage. Tormey identifies that most writers can be delineated according to whether they view disadvantage as a result of a deficit, or as a result of a cultural dissonance (2003). He suggests that a more useful typology to further distinguish the classification used by authors is as follows:

- As synonymous with special educational needs
- As a result of parenting styles
- As a result of ghetto culture
- As a result of cultural choices of the school
- As a result of access to resources

There is great variance in how the term educational disadvantage is employed as can be seen above. It is arguable given this variance that there is little that is universally agreed regarding concerning what exactly educational disadvantage *is*. Indeed some critical writers, such as Long (2008), dismiss the idea that such divergent views should be grouped together at all using the same term. Despite this variance in the usage of educational disadvantage, however, and the critique of Long, there is a measure of common ground between the positions above that merits useful discussion and exploration. One could conclude, for example, that educational disadvantage has a tangible differential effect on educational attainment and participation. Also of the classifications above are grounded in an interpretation (at least) of the political context in which educational disadvantage takes place, even if these interpretations aren't all the same. In the Irish political arena, however, the issue of educational disadvantage is oftentimes presented as if consensus existed around the term (Ireland 1997, 2007, 2011c); however, Tormey (2010) is critical of this implied consensus, as it denies the opportunity for critical debate about appropriateness of the measures used to address disadvantage. O'Sullivan (1999) has previously called the alluded agreement a 'phoney consensus' (p.19). More useful discussions of disadvantage must acknowledge and challenge the nuances of the political landscape that shapes the world where school values are in effect those of

the dominant class in society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), or, as Derman-Sparks (2002, p.1) argues, 'the meaning of advantage is the ghost that lurks within the meaning of disadvantage'. In other words – so long as there are some who have greater access to resources, and greater ability to utilise these resources, that there must exist others that who are not so well equipped to do so. Such questions of societal inequality, however, are unanswered under deficit models. In fact, by the nature of these models, they go unasked. Derman-Sparks goes on to argue that it is the advantaged groups who designate those that are 'diverse'. In Ireland, those who 'qualify' are Travellers, asylum seekers, non-traditional families, the physically and psychologically disabled, and women, all of whom experience disadvantage to varying degrees in Irish society. Tellingly, however, those who make up their advantaged counterparts are not referred to as diverse – but instead as 'right' and 'normal'. This conflation is important, as it allows an ideology of victim blaming to flourish – where short-comings in individuals are identified rather than shortcomings in their society. Ryan (1971, p.8) has previously called this 'a brilliant ideology for justifying a perverse form of social action designed to change, not society, as one might expect, but rather society's victim'. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have outlined that the result of this ideology is that working class individuals misrecognise the legitimacy of the arbitrary classifications of those in power.

2.1.2 Understanding Educational Disadvantage: As Process

Definitions of disadvantage as deficit have been dismissed altogether by authors such as Drudy and Lynch (1993), who instead focus on class differences in educational attainment. In Ireland, it has long been noted that conversations on educational disadvantage rarely allude to the *process* that ultimately gives rise to 'the discontinuity between the school and non-school experiences of children who are poor' – the definition used by the Conference of Major Religious Superiors, now CORI (CMRS 1992). Such processes had been ignored, in spite of the critical reservations of those such as Drudy and Lynch, as well as Tormey (1999). Tormey points out that a more useful lens is educational disadvantaging – bringing into focus the processes that result in differences in attainment and participation in education (individuals negatively impacted being termed disadvantaged). Such a focus is particularly useful in that it recognises that one cannot measure educational disadvantage directly, just the proxies of disadvantage (such as early school leaving

amongst others). This recognition maintains an emphasis on the causes rather than the results of the processes (1999).

Reviews of literature where contexts and mediators have been considered in relation to primary level (McCoy *et al* 2014a), suggest that higher socio-economic status (SES) schools are characterised by greater levels of compliance from students, and less pressure on discipline and guidance systems (Thrupp 1999), while there is greater unpredictability in the working environment lower SES schools (Lupton 2004). In the Irish context, it has been demonstrated that students attending disadvantaged schools are more likely to experience teacher-centred pedagogy, relative to their peers in more advantaged contexts who experience student-centred pedagogy (McCoy *et al* 2012), with the former less effective than the latter. Students in disadvantaged schools also experience a higher turnover of teachers, affecting the coherence of their educational experience (Darling-Hammond 2003, Guin 2004, Greenlea and Brown 2009). Elsewhere, evidence suggests that such students are more likely to participate in learning activities underpinned by lower teacher-expectations (Auwarter and Aruguete 2008).

In the last two decades, research in second-level schools has sought to examine the processes of schooling, and whether schooling is effective (Mac an Ghaill 1996, Hanafin and Lynch 2002). The work of Lynch and Lodge (2002), sought to examine class practices in second level schools. Their findings (2002, p.46-47) indicated that in spite of the known limitations of rigid streaming, relative to students from professional or managerial backgrounds, students from lower white collar, semi-skilled and unskilled backgrounds were more likely to attend schools which practiced streaming. They were also more likely to be allocated to the lower streams in these schools. Social class manifested within classrooms it terms of differences in styles of control – with students in higher streams and mixed ability groups more likely to receive work-focused forms of control relative to students in lower streams (2002, p.50). These practices had tangible consequences for the (largely working class) students allocated to lower streams. Almost a fifth of students expressed concerns in relation to ability grouping, when asked about school practices they felt were inequitable (2002, p.66). Students also highlighted the prevalence of 'labelling' on the part of teachers. More recent evidence suggests that teachers' expectations of their pupils vary according to the pupils' social class (McCoy *et al* 2014a, p46).

Young people from the salariat group in the *Leaving School in Ireland* study (p.46) were more likely report that their teachers had high expectations of them (82%) than students from the class unknown group (64%) The work of Byrne and Smyth (2010) is notable in the Irish context. Prior to this study, much research in Ireland focused on the characteristics of early school leavers, and of their schools. Byrne and Smyth sought to specifically address the shortage of literature dealing with the processes that shape disadvantage in second-level contexts. Longitudinal results of their study showed that early school leavers were predominantly male, and from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and tended to have negative experiences of school. These negative experiences, however, were also explored in the above study, which was a direction not explored since the work of Boldt some twenty years previously (Boldt 1994, 1995). These experiences were found to be multi-faceted. Specifically, a feeling of rejection emerged as a strong theme amongst early school leavers. Students reported either having feelings of rejecting school, or of feeling rejected by school. The school disciplinary code was particularly contentious and the resultant classroom climate it creates. This was a powerful influence over the decision to leave early, as indeed were poor teacher-student relations and low expectations. The decision to leave school is rarely knee-jerk, rather students report ‘fading out’ over time. Some boys, in particular, cited the availability of labour market opportunities post Junior Certificate. Also notable was the devastating effect bereavement has on young people, and the negative effect this has on school experience.

2.1.3 Review

At this point, it is useful to review the above perspectives. Educational disadvantage is a contested term, with many perspectives visible over time in academic debates (Boldt and Devine 1998, Prendeville 1998, O'Sullivan 1999, Kellaghan 2001), as well as in both national policy documents (Ireland 1997, 2007, 2011c), and the documents of international bodies such as UNESCO (Passow 1970). Many definitions tend to shape disadvantage as a shortcoming of the individual or of their environment and not of the society in which they live. Such stances do not mention the social processes that give rise to unequal societies – which is viewed as problematic by several commentators (e.g. Drudy and Lynch 1993, O'Sullivan 1999, Tormey 1999, 2010, Derman-Sparks 2002) who believe that such processes and conflicts should be part of the debate on disadvantage. In recent years, literature that

has sought to understand the process involved in disadvantaging highlight that students in disadvantaged schools are more likely to face greater unpredictability in their working environment (Lupton 2004), a greater turnover of teachers (Darling-Hammond 2003, Guin 2004, Greenlea and Brown 2009), and teachers who have lower expectations (Auwarter and Aruguete 2008), and employ a teacher-centred pedagogy (McCoy *et al* 2012). These process cumulate in students 'fading out' of the educational system over time (Byrne and Smyth 2010).

Teachers should concern themselves with such calls to focus on process. As Tormey argues 'if the problem is recognised as being the processes rather than the person, then the solution is to target the processes rather than the person' (Tormey 1999, p.47). Teachers are integral to such processes. A process-oriented view takes the emphasis off our students' outcomes and instead places it the ways in which we teach them, the system we teach them in, and the type of society which we all occupy. Students in schools are poorly positioned to effect meaningful change in any of these fields.

2.2 Empirical Data on 'Disadvantage' in Ireland

In this section of the chapter, I examine the Irish empirical data on 'disadvantage', acknowledging as Tormey does that this 'disadvantage' is not something that can be directly measured. As will be discussed below, Irish data tends to be interested in outcomes of this 'disadvantage' (such as early school leaving) or comparative in nature (e.g. the relative attainments of different social groups). These data places the Irish situation in context, although, as discussed above, some perspectives are perhaps guilty of not giving space to a debate about the ways in which inequality in schools reflects inequality in wider society.

2.2.1 How do we measure 'Disadvantage'

Though not always accurately quantifiable, considering the doubtlessly negative outlook for early school leavers, particularly in times of economic recession (Levin 2009, Smyth and McCoy 2009), it is not at all surprising that there should be considerable focus on measuring educational 'disadvantage' to gauge its prevalence and to both inform policy and act as a check on the effectiveness of policy. Power and Tormey (2000) identified that Ireland fell broadly into line with international norms in that there were two approaches to measuring educational 'disadvantage' –

an outputs-led approach, and a comparative approach. Succinctly, outputs-led approaches are concerned with the achievement of an objective minimum standard of attainment, while comparative approaches are concerned with identifying class differentials in attainment.

To elaborate, under output-led models – policy makers set out to establish a minimum level of attainment in school – for example, a minimum level of literacy or numeracy – and students who fall below these standards are labelled as being educationally disadvantaged (Crooks and Stokes 1987). Kellaghan *et al.* (1995) took this idea a step further, identifying students who both fell below these standards, as well as being poor, as being educationally disadvantaged. The reason for the prevalence of such objective measures is quite obvious. Firstly, they allow for an establishment of exactly how many people are educationally 'disadvantaged', which further allows for assessment over time as to how policies are affecting levels of 'disadvantage' if indeed they do so at all. Secondly, the discrete nature of the assessment allows for the individual to be targeted with extra resources (Tormey 2010).

Outputs-led responses to disadvantaged may be incorporated into neoliberal policy emphasis on individual responsibility for coping, competence and success, defined principally in terms of enterprise and contribution to economic rather than to social well-being (Rose 1996). The arising individualised evidence base may be readily appropriated as justification for 'responsibilisation' (Kelly 2001):

> "Messages to the poor that it is their responsibility or that they are lacking in effort, taken out of context of social support and protection – or their absences – blame those who are less successful or healthy or able to negotiate their way in conventional ways following conventional routes."
>
> (Garmezy cited in Rolf 1999, p.13)

In scenarios such as the above, emancipation is reframed in terms which tend towards erasing social justice and look instead towards disadvantaged individuals self-inventing for success, with scant regard to the adverse conditions which serve to constrain opportunities for marginalised individuals to experience success. Resilience building, Bottrell argues (2009, p.334), may then shift under a neoliberal

framework from positive adaptation *despite* adversity, to positive adaption *to* adversity.

The comparative approach, in contrast, is concerned with the relative attainment of groups, rather than the attainment of the specific individual. Sociological studies of educational 'disadvantage' tend to take this approach (Tormey 2010). Under this model, unless there is close to relative parity in the levels of attainment between all the class groups, then there must be a process of disadvantaging occurring to one or more groups. The success or failure of policy initiatives over time can be assessed by the tendency they have to bring about this relative parity of attainment between the working, middle and professional classes. This approach allows for levels of 'disadvantage' to be tracked over time.

Tormey (2010) notes that in Ireland government policy and investigations concerning educational 'disadvantage' are grounded in methodologies that are consistent with an outputs-led approach to evaluating educational 'disadvantage'. He notes that this has several political consequences. Firstly, by setting a standard threshold for 'disadvantage', (such as attainment of a Leaving Certificate, school based assessment) one overlooks the fact that such testing has an inherit bias that favours students from powerful groups in society (Mac Ruairc 2009), at the expense of others less able to express their capabilities. These differences have real life consequences – reducing student achievement, giving rise to practices of labelling students, as well as offering a justification for rigid ability grouping (Shiel *et al* 2010). Secondly – the presumed desire to identify disadvantaged students, schools and communities for the purposes of 'fixing' or 'changing' them, as is inherit in outputs-led models, becomes problematic to act upon in a context where most 'disadvantage' is scattered in nature (Kellaghan *et al.*, 1995). Thirdly, as Layte and Whelan (2000) posited, as educational qualifications proliferate, so too do alternative mechanisms through which middle class children maintain their advantage. Finally, the outputs-level does not account for those who despite exceeding the minimum threshold of attainment, fail to reach their full potential as learners. In these ways, a conservative political agenda is maintained, in which a focus is maintained on the deficits of individuals/communities, rather than on the wider inequality in society, through the implication that educational disadvantage is both a simple exercise in statistics and resource targeting as well as an uncontested concept academically

(Tormey 2010, p195). Such neoliberal agendas prevail, in part because the power elite who benefit from the policies have gained control over both public debate and policy-making. (Hursh and Henderson 2011), and through 'dominating the discourse and logic regarding economic, environmental, and education decision-making, neoliberal proponents have largely succeeded in marginalizing alternative conceptions' (Hursh and Henderson 2011, p.171).

2.2.2 Sociological focus on 'Disadvantage'

To examine this sociological focus in greater detail, it is clear that there has been progress towards lessening the differential effect of social class on attainment and participation. However, during the early part of the last decade, working-class students continued to lag some way behind their more advantaged peers (Gorby *et al* 2004). The proportion of school leavers from backgrounds of unemployment who went on to further education increased to 26% in 2004 – a rise of 14% over five years. However, this figure continued to lie well behind those going on to further study from farming backgrounds (50%), managerial/employer backgrounds (63%) and professional backgrounds (69%).

While such progress was certainly encouraging, the specific case of early school leaving remained curious. Later work by Gorby *et al.* (2007) suggested that despite much policy attention and resources, levels of early school leaving in Ireland remained reasonable stable since the mid-nineties – demonstrably at odds with other gains made in rates of participation and attainment. The most recent figures, however, show a qualified rise. Although figures from the Government of Ireland suggest that the percentage of young people completing school has increased slightly to 90.1% (2014), and again last year to 90.56% (2015), these recent figures coincide with a period of dramatic contraction in the Irish economy, and significant reduction in the availability of employment opportunities for young people. Also of note in recent figures is that the numbers of students from 'disadvantaged' schools completing school continues to lag well behind the national averages quoted above, at 80.4%, and 82.1% respectively (2014, 2015).

Amongst notable comparative findings, young people from 'disadvantaged' schools have been demonstrated by McDonald as having greater reading difficulties compared to the general population (1998), absenteeism is highest in schools with

the highest levels of disadvantage (Ò'Briain 2006) and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have been demonstrated to tend to leave school earlier; and where they complete school – to have significantly lower attainment than those from more advantaged backgrounds (Byrne *et al* 2008), and students attending 'disadvantaged' schools (as opposed to socially mixed or middle class schools) are far less likely to transition to post-second-level training or education (McCoy *et al* 2014b). Additionally, students from salariat or intermediate backgrounds are far more likely than students from working-class backgrounds to transition to third-level, while working-class students are more likely to enter the labour market directly after second-level, or undertake an apprenticeship or undertake a Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) course (McCoy *et al* 2014b, p.42).

Given the serious implications early school leaving has on the future life chances of young people, it is not surprising that policy makers have sought to address and remedy it – even if such remedies are often times conservative and outputs-led in nature, and deflect from a deeper examination of wider societal inequality that goes a long way towards causing early school leaving in the first place. In 1997, the then Government of Ireland outlined a policy strategy, which set out to address such societal inequality – with a specific aim in relation to early school leaving:

> "to eliminate the problem of early school leaving before the Junior Certificate, and reduce early school leaving such that the percentage of those completing senior cycle will increase to at least 90% by the year 2000 and 98% by the year 2007."
>
> (Ireland 1997, p.9)

This lofty aim proved to be very difficult to realise, and successive Governments revised this ambition downwards in the fifteen years which followed. By 2002, the revised aim was:

> "To reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second-level or equivalent will reach 85 per cent by 2003 and 90 per cent by 2006."
>
> (Ireland 2002, p.12)

By 2005, the Department of Social Inclusion again intimated that the revised target of ninety percent completing secondary school was unlikely to be met (Ireland 2005), and like many countries in Europe, Ireland failed to reach a common EU target of ten percent or less of young people leaving school early by 2008 as part of the Lisbon Strategy (Byrne and Smyth 2010, p.23), but Ireland did, however, achieve this target more recently (Ireland 2014).

Such statistics come against a backdrop of Irish intervention schemes to address educational disadvantage being generally both informed by evidence, as well as consistent with international models of best practice (Archer and Weir 2004). Indeed it is only in recent years, in the midst of the declining job opportunities that were found by Byrne and Smyth to be an important component of the decisions taken by young people to leave school early, that the above target was achieved.

2.2.3 Specific Schemes to address 'Disadvantage'

Weir and Archer (2004) give a comprehensive history of the school-based schemes aimed at addressing educational disadvantage. These included the designation of schools as being in areas of disadvantage (DAS) and the implementation of designated Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCL) (established 1990), the Early Start initiative for disadvantaged pre-school children (in 1994), and the School Completion Programme (SCP) evolved soon after as recognition of the importance of an integrated approach that included the wider community of a school. The Teacher Counsellor Project (in 1996) specifically sought to assist in the management of particularly disruptive and introverted pupils.

In 1995 it was highlighted by Kellaghan *et al.* that the designation criteria for assessing disadvantage were discriminatory towards rural schools, and that the dispersion of disadvantage amongst young people attending rural schools was such that school based initiatives were not especially effective. In response to this, the *Giving Children an Even Break* and *Breaking the Cycle* schemes sought to disperse funding more widely. The diverse range of programmes for disadvantage listed above have been both lauded as somewhat of a comprehensive 'menu of programmes from pre-school to lifelong learning (Educational Disadvantage Committee 2003, p.5), as well as criticised as somewhat of a pastiche where interventions are placed under an umbrella with no effort to critically evaluate the

conceptualisation of the issues they sought to address by O'Sullivan (2005). Tormey notes that these schemes seem to contradict each other in that as a group, they are both specifically targeted, while at the same time being quite scattered in nature (2007). Considering the fact that Kellaghan *et al.* had long pointed out that much of Ireland's educationally disadvantaged youth are scattered amongst rural schools, it is perhaps not surprising that those schemes designed to target concentrations of disadvantage specifically have proven ineffective. While they may target limited resources at the most disadvantaged, they would still 'miss' most of the disadvantaged.

In 2005, *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) was initiated – as an acknowledgement of the disintegrated reality of all the schemes offered, and rolled all the above schemes into one comprehensive support structure via the Department of Education and Science (now the Department of Education and Skills, and hereafter DES) (DES 2005). The scheme currently targets 193 second-level schools (26% of the national total) for extra support (Smyth *et al* 2015), including:

- Additional funding
- Access to planning supports
- Access to literacy and numeracy programmes and professional support in their implantation
- Access to the HSCL Scheme
- Access to the School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Access to School Meals Programme
- Funding under the Book Grant Scheme
- Access to additional professional development supports

(Smyth *et al* 2015, p.8)

The result of these supports is that at second-level there has been a small impact on achievement gaps in the subject of English in particular between 2003-2011, but no impact on Junior Certificate Mathematics (Smyth *et al* 2015).

Other recent proposals for reform of the Leaving Certificate by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have been designed specifically to address the discriminatory tendency for current structures to favour the powerful groups in

society. These changes aim to address the lack of flexibility in pathways and accreditation specifically, and to create a culture in schools that would prove more conducive to the retention of students who currently do poorly in school, as well as improving their attainment; and addressing other systemic issues such as teachers' expectations of pupils, and in-career development (Tormey 2007).

Also in recent times, the Government of Ireland launched a literacy and numeracy initiative (Government of Ireland 2011a). This new initiative takes a novel 'whole-school approach' in response to historical failure, and continuing disparity between reading and writing skills of students in the general population (approximately one in ten experiencing serious difficulty) and students in disadvantaged schools (in where in some schools as many as one in three are in difficulty):

> "The literacy skills of students in Irish primary schools, measured by the National Assessments of English Reading, have not improved in over thirty years, despite considerable investments in reducing pupil-teacher ratios, the introduction of learning support (formerly remedial) and resource teachers, the provision of better teaching materials and considerable curricular reform."
>
> (Government of Ireland 2011a, p.12)

While this strategy has been endorsed by the trade union representing primary school teachers, the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (INTO 2016), it speaks to an testing culture, to certify young peoples' capacity to 'read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication, including spoken language, printed text and various forms of printed text, broadcast media and digital media' (Government of Ireland 2011a, p.8). It does not readily speak to critical literacy in the Freirean sense (Freire 1974) where students learn to acknowledge political contradictions to come to a deeper understanding of their world – leading to self-change through being able to recognise and chose not to imitate dominant beliefs and practices in society (O'Brien 2016, p.157-157)

There have also been recent moves to reform the Irish Junior Cycle experience (NCCA 2010). These new moves aim to improve students' engagement with their learning, their teachers, and their schools, noting the particular engagement difficulties currently experienced by both disadvantaged students and male students

(p.4) as well as increasing evidence that maintaining the status quo is likely to see the situation for students deteriorate further. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) argue that successful reform efforts are those that are system-wide (2008, 2009), a position echoed by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009). The new Junior Cycle is intended to be a more system-wide reform than its predecessors, acknowledging the need to deleverage the terminal examination before there can be any substantial change to pedagogy. These intended changes to pedagogy include making students more responsible for their learning and strengthening ties between parents and schools (NCCA 2010). These changes to how schools are organised, and how students are taught show encouraging movement towards addressing the process issues highlighted by Tormey and others contributing to the disadvantaging of some groups of young people (1999). However, these changes are currently being resisted by some teachers' unions such as the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI 2015). The ASTI note reservations with respect to the increased workload on teachers, the impact of the proposals on teaching time, the feasibility of timetabling Junior Cycle Framework meetings, concern about whether 200 hours is adequate time for subjects, the lack of ordinary and higher level options for most subjects, the lack of examination conditions for the 'Assessment Task' process, the absence of State certified oral exams in Irish and other modern European languages, the impact of the 'Classroom Based Assessment' on teaching and learning time, and finally the lack of clarity in relation to the proposed new subject area 'Wellbeing' (ASTI 2016). Such reservations may indicate that the aspirations of the new Junior Cycle may not be reached. While 'assessment for learning', for example, forms an important element of the new Junior Cycle proposals, teachers have previously identified 'systemic' expectations of performativity on teachers, which constrains their ability to deviate from recording their students' progress as marks or grades (NCCA 2005). Such systemic expectations of performativity are also evidenced in the resources made available to teachers by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), specifically the most recently published Chief Examiners reports for the Junior and Leaving Certificate (2015). None of the eight published reports make any reference to 'assessment for learning'; however seven make specific recommendations to teachers to encourage their students to practice previous examination questions. Only the two Mathematics reports for Junior and Leaving Certificate make specific

reference to the potential this approach may have to restrict the range of student learning (State Exams SEC 2016).

2.2.4 Review

Data across the last decade demonstrate clear and significant differences between the successes of students from relatively advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds (Gorby *et al* 2004, 2007, Smyth *et al* 2006, Byrne and Smyth 2010). While it is encouraging that progress is being made to equalise success rates between these cohorts, it is clear that there is much room for further improvement, and recent motions to tackle some of the school processes that disadvantage young people in school are welcome (Government of Ireland 2011a, NCCA 2010). Measurements of the outputs of disadvantage are more useful when coupled with examinations of the processes that propagate them. Within such examination of the school system in Ireland, and modifications of teaching and learning, the concepts of buoyancy and resilience may be useful for teachers in understanding student success. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, some young people have capacities that allow them to flourish in spite of adversity, and there are strategies that teachers can deploy in the classroom that allows students to develop such competencies.

2.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have given an overview the perspectives which underpin how ‘disadvantage’ is conceptualised. The origins and conservative political undertones of much of the policy and debate concerning educational ‘disadvantage’ are, by extension, applicable to much of the literature surrounding ‘classical’ resilience and buoyancy. Educational disadvantage debates and policy have tended to have unarticulated and conservative political undertones which go unquestioned. O’Sullivan (1999, p.19) called this the phoney consensus, in that despite the diversity of both perspectives and policy concerning education disadvantage there is a lack of debate surrounding the contestation of whether the largely output driven assessments of disadvantage and interventions in Ireland are effective in tackling the disadvantage they seek to remedy; and on whether they are even appropriate at all. Debates on educational disadvantage form part of a broad and distinctly politico-ideological dialogue concerning inequality in society. However such debates are subverted by a prevailing neoliberal ideology, which serves to portray disadvantage

as something that is a deficit of the individual and their community, rather than a shortcoming of the social system itself. These portrayals, as well as the targets that are generated by them, lead unsurprisingly to laboured progress towards remedying the effects of educational disadvantage, as is evident from the progressive downward revision of Irish policy targets since 1999, and the eventual achievement of these targets in the context of a marked economic recession which impacted on job opportunities for young people. However recent policy, such as the (currently resisted) framework for the new Junior Cycle suggest that some of the work with schools and teachers, highlighted as necessary by Tormey (1999), to begin to address the disadvantaging processes may be commencing, however, the NCCA caution that:

> "Arguably, generating a new junior cycle curriculum and different assessment arrangements is not that challenging, on paper. The development of the unified three-year junior cycle in the 1980s is testament to the fact that it can be done. But that development also points to one of the most consistent and universal ironies of the change process in education, namely, that change can happen, but the student experience can remain largely the same. Educational change is one of those processes which has a habit of resetting itself back to how things have always been done."
>
> (NCCA 2011, p.3)

How adversity is conceptualised is important as it informs our response as teachers. Tormey argues that 'if the problem is recognised as being the processes rather than the person, then the solution is to target the processes rather than the person' (Tormey 1999, p.47). However as prevailing neo-liberal ideology repositions responsibility for disadvantage on the individual, critical examination of the process is subverted by those in power. Such power relations are critical to understanding conceptualising resilience and buoyancy. Bottrell argues (2009, p.329) that 'normative models of resilience are likely to preclude non-conformist forms and to categorize them in psychopathological terms'. However, inequality of power in society ensures that:

> "The socially defined desirable outcome may be subjectively defined as undesirable, while the socially defined undesirable outcome may be subjectively defined as desirable. From the subjective point of view, the individual may be manifesting resilience, while from the social point of view the individual may be manifesting vulnerability"
>
> (Kaplan 1999, p.31-32)

Accordingly, this current research advocates for a constructivist understanding of resilience, which recognises, like Bottrell (2009), that resistance may be reframed as resilience by taking the significance of social identities and collective experiences of young people into account. To acknowledge the diverse experiences of adaptive tasks confronting young people requires an understanding of the social processes of differentiation that underpins their accounts (Bottrell 2009, p.331).

Chapter Three: Adolescence from Sociological and Psychological Perspectives

3.0 Introduction

> "narratives about the most ''personal'' difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions."
>
> (Bourdieu 2006, p.511)

This thesis analyses the experiences of young people in schools and how they adapt to and negotiate their social worlds. Adolescents deal with differentiation and marginalisation in different ways, including both resistances and conformities. This chapter concerns itself with the positioning of resistance, as a form of identity work (Hey 1997), within discourses of resilience. Within youth and cultural studies of the 1970s and 1980s, as argued by Bottrell (2007), resistances were primarily theorised in terms of subcultural or countercultural forms of class consciousness (Clarke *et al* 1976, Willis 1979) and also as contestations of cultural ideals and norms in the construction of gender (A. McRobbie 1978, Walkerdine and Lucey 1989). Research on education, drawing, in particular, the work of Willis' (1977) study of working-class counter-culture, the concept of 'school resisters' disseminated quickly into teachers' vernacular descriptions of oppositional, alienated, problematic or disaffected students. The latter 1980s then marked a gradual shift in discourse from 'resisters' to students 'at-risk', closely linked to the economic recession and the risks identified with early school-leaving (Bottrell 2007, p598). Conceptualisations of young people 'at-risk', along with notions of 'challenging' or 'risk-taking' behaviour, supplanted the earlier conceptions of school 'resistance', largely resuming earlier individualisation strategies such as the attribution of 'inability', 'disorders', 'maladjustment' and 'deviance'. From a psychosocial perspective, such concern with 'deviant' and 'maladjusted' young people has also been a previous research focus (Dishion *et al* 1991, Ary *et al* 1999, Dishion *et al* 1999, Mahoney and Stattin 2000, Allen *et al* 2005). More recently, however, there is a growing movement towards framing adolescents' actions as positive, broadly termed 'empowerment' (Chinman and Linney 1998).

Drawing on constructivist resilience perspectives (Ungar 2004, Bottrell 2007, 2009), this research reaffirms the concept of resistance as an alternative to individualised conceptualisations of oppositional behaviour and personal deficit, which are decontextualized from social conditions. Such resistances are understood as 'practices which express opposition to rules and norms in specific contexts, and which contain critiques of social relations, from the lived experience of marginalisation' (Bottrell 2007, p.599). For young people, identity-making is a process: 'to acquire the means to represent themselves to self and others is part of growing up. However, this active work always occurs under socially given conditions which include structures of power and social relations, institutional constraints and possibilities but also available cultural repertoires' (Epstein and Johnson 1998, p.116). These process forms 'identity work' (Hey 1997), and as young people navigate their social worlds, they manage power relations, social relations, constraints and opportunities present within their specific contexts, which both informs and is informed by, their identity work. Resistance and conformity are necessary aspects of identity work as young people encounter context-specific definitions of appropriate behaviour that at times can appear contradictory (Bottrell 2007). The 'narratives about the most ''personal'' difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions' (Bourdieu 2006, p.511). Identity-making is a social process, and the process for understanding self and self-representation occurs within available discourses (Foucault 1980). In the context of this research, 'fluid' identities are understood as indicative of agency and constraints in the negotiation of socially differentiated places and contexts by socially situated young people, rather than associated with self-invention through choice lifestyles (Bauman 2000). Thus contextualised, identity work is based on subjective understandings, meanings and experiences which are constructed in and through relations of power and social organisation which structure the everyday (White and Wyn 1998)

In this chapter, several themes in adolescent literature will be examined. The first section notes the contested definitions of adolescence – and its emergence as a distinct life stage between childhood and adulthood necessitated by the diversification of skills required to function in the world of work. The second section

considers theoretical perspectives on identity, concerning Erikson, Marcia and those who have followed in this line. In the third section, the sociological subcultural perspective of adolescence is discussed in further detail, as well as the post-subcultural perspectives which have developed since the turn of the millennium. The chapter then ends with concluding comments.

3.2 Defining Adolescence – a 20th century construction

Adolescence has been described as a period of dynamism, energy and potential in a young person's life (Lalor *et al* 2007), and particularly since the 1950's; there is a growing acceptance that the period of adolescence is one characterised by instability and transition (Hodkinson 2007). Across many centuries, and many cultures there has been a distinct period between childhood and adulthood (Schlegel and Barry 1991). It is a time where one makes a shift from childhood to adulthood – and experiences major physical, cognitive and relational changes. In its contemporary form, adolescence is a period during which young people find themselves segregated from adults. The school acts as an institution of this segregation. Passer and Smith argue that the need for this segregation can be traced back to the industrial revolution. In pre-industrial society, girls were expected to marry once capable of bearing children but with the new technology (and the resulting need for more schooling) brought about by the industrial revolution – it was necessary to delay the recognition of 'adult status' (Passer and Smth 2001, p.481). While the origins of adolescence may be found in the industrial revolution, it has emerged most distinctively in the social and economic upheaval of the last century. Flammer and Alsaker (1999) point out that in the early twentieth century a typical European or American fifteen year old would be working alongside adults – be it on the farm or in a factory, but by the early twenty-first century – that typical fifteen-year old would be spending a substantial part of their day amongst their peers, both during and after school. Alongside the emergence of adolescence, Moran (2015, p.127) notes the emergence of identity which coincided not only with the social upheaval during the last century but also with a massive growth in consumption in western capitalist societies. Many contemporary cultural studies of adolescence have treated both identity and consumption together (Miller 1995, Featherstone 1990, Slater 1997, Sassatelli 2007). Moran contends however that the practice of building an identity is

better understood as emerging alongside the emergence of consumption as a means of doing so.

Definitions for adolescence are contested and have evolved over time. Some definitions, such as that of Crider *et al* (1983), understand adolescence regarding chronological age, beginning at puberty and ending at approximately nineteen years of age. Other definitions from a psychological perspective are more nuanced, describing adolescence regarding physiological, cognitive and social outcomes. Atwater (1992), for example, described adolescence as a time of rapid growth between childhood and adulthood, encapsulating psychological and well as social development. A similar definition is offered by Santrock (1990), who described it a period of transition involving physiological, cognitive and social changes. The biological onset of puberty is occuring earlier in both boys and girls over the last 100 years (Arnett 2002). This earlier onset is partially attributable to improving nutrition, and higher body mass index (Kaplowitz *et al* 2001). There is also broad agreement that the end of adolescence is socially constructed – requiring an understanding of the sociology of adolescence.

The *Growing Up In Ireland National Longitudinal Study of Children* identifies both biological and social dimensions to adolescence – noting the beginning of adolescence as being thirteen years of age and involving a range of physiological, emotional, and psychological changes and experiences (Economics and Social Research Institute 2012d) (hereafter ESRI). In relation to schooling (ESRI 2012a), almost all 13-year-olds transition from primary to second-level school, and feel broadly positive about their school. Some noteworthy gender and social background differences emerge in the findings related to school – broadly adolescents from high-income and highly educated households have more positive interactions with their teachers, and boys are more likely to have negative attitudes and to misbehave in school relative to girls. In relation to health (ESRI 2012b), young people from advantaged backgrounds are more likely to exercise and are less likely to be overweight. Girls are also more likely to be overweight than boys. On family and financial circumstances (ESRI 2012c), just over four out of five 13-year-olds in Ireland live in two-parent families, with the mother usually being the primary care giver. Mothers' education was strongly related to employment status and family income, and the majority of interviewees for this study (61%) reported at least some

difficulty in making financial ends meet at home (the interviewing period coinciding with a significant contraction in the economy of Ireland). Finally with respects to 13-year-olds feelings and relationships (ESRI 2012d), the young people interviewed reported broadly positive relationships with both parents, and on self-image, boys reported a higher sense of self-image than girls.

From a sociological perspective, adolescence is understood to be a social construction (Lalor *et al* 2007) – an arbitrary 'hiatus between childhood and adulthood' (Muggleton 2005, p.206) and has been classically understood regarding socio-economic and cultural factors (Hodkinson 2007). For Parsons (1949), adolescence was also a transition from childhood (characterised by dependence on the family) to adulthood (characterised by career, marriage and establishing a family of one's own). For Parsons, the 'youth culture' of adolescence was a time of experimentation in which adult roles are initially rejected to make the process of transitioning into them less stressful. In effect, youth culture then became a coping mechanism, allowing young people to reconcile their emerging position in society (1949, p.101). Long (2013, p.29), conceptualises adolescence as a 'subtle recalibration of fantasy and reality', in which young people experience important moments of vulnerability which serve to temper future risk-taking. He goes on to argue that contemporary contexts, marked by the proliferation of social networking and access to information and communications technology (ICT), present adolescents with opportunities to 'downplay experiences of vulnerability in favour of immediate experiences of artificial mastery' (p.29) potentially detracting from important developmental experiences in adolescence. In addition to those family and occupational transitions outlined by Parsons, other social and cultural factors have emerged which serve to signal the transition from childhood to adulthood, such as the legislation establishing ages at which young people can vote, drive, drink alcohol, and have sex. Such legal transitions vary across different countries (underscoring the social nature of the concept of adolescence), but they are none the less of symbolic importance in marking the leaving behind of childhood (James 1986).

Another important transition into the adult world concerns the completion of non-compulsory schooling (Arnett 2000). This transition has also been noted to occur later and later in the lives of young people (Chisholm and Hurrelmann 1995). As

more young people remain in higher education for increasingly prolonged periods, Arnett argues that the effect of this later transitioning from non-compulsory schooling to adult roles is challenging the identity of young people, leading them to feel 'adult' in some ways, but not in others (Arnett 1994, 1998). The transition represented by marriage is also occurring later in the lives of young people (Arnett 2000). Adolescence is becoming an increasingly 'blurry' term (Lalor *et al* 2007, p.4) – spanning such a long period (from as young as nine or ten years of age potentially through to the late twenties), so as to make the term too diffuse for practical purposes.

Increasingly, researchers describe two distinct periods – adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett 2000). Adolescence, as it is currently understood, begins at puberty, and ends at approximately 18 years of age; with the period of 18-24 years of age now understood to be this emerging adulthood – where young people continue to experiment with adult roles (Rindfuss 1991, Arnett 1998). It is a time of high variability between individuals, arising from significant volition individuals have over their life choices (Rindfuss 1991). This emerging adulthood has been the focus of much interest regarding changing nature of relationships with the family (Aquilino 2006) as well as substance use (Chassin *et al* 2002, Arnett 2005) and the impact this has on mental health (Schulenberg and Zarrett 2006). This research then specifically concerns itself with the period of adolescence, encapsulating much of the second decade of an individual's life. Here, most young people find themselves segregated from the world of work, and for much of the period, involved in compulsory schooling. This segregation creates a platform through which young people can develop their culture and identity, and a theoretical understanding of how this identity is developed is necessary to set the results of this research discussed later in the thesis in context.

3.3 Adolescence: identity and subculture

This section discusses psychological and social perspectives on adolescence. While psychological and sociological perspectives may differ on the emphasis that should be placed on a biological component to adolescence, both perspectives broadly agree that there is a social component to the construction. Accordingly, this section opens with an overview of the work of Erikson and Marcia, who sought to combine the

social and the psychological in relation to adolescent development, and the process of experimenting with and selecting suitable roles to solidify a sense of identity. Drawing on sociological perspectives, there then follows a discussion of adolescent subculture – a concept which positions adolescent agency and action within a distinct subset that is both distinct from while remaining related to the dominant culture (Blackman 2005). The subculture perspective traced its roots in the work of Durkheim and the Chicago School and became proliferated through the work of Cohen (1956), the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham University (CCCS), and later post-modern reinterpretations of this foundational work. The concept of subcultures is particularly suited to discuss adolescence because to discuss subculture – a form of stylistic resistance to constraint – is also to discuss power in society, and how it is unequally distributed. While Arnett's adolescents may feel 'adult' in some ways (Arnett 1994, 1998), an important way in which they are not 'adult' is that they do not occupy the positions of power which are occupied by the adults who shape the discourse on adolescence.

3.3.1 Normative interpretations of adolescence

As stated in the introduction to this section above, there is a tension in the literature on adolescence between perspectives that interpret adolescents' experimentation as normative and functional, and perspectives that view these experiments as deviant and dysfunctional. These perspectives are explored in this section of the chapter. Some important normative perspectives are presented, including the adolescent identity development theories of Erikson, and the later extension and development of this theory carried out by Marcia. The structural functionalist construction of adolescence by Durkheim and others is coherent with such developmental psychology perspectives in that both perspectives stress the normative and functional role adolescents play as part of wider society.

3.3.1.1 Erikson, the social and the psychological

From both a psychological and a sociological perspective adolescence can be considered a time during which young people begin to experiment with different roles as part of functional and normative development. Erikson's approach to identity development was comprehensive, outlining amongst others, cognitive, moral, social and cultural aspects of identity (Schwartz 2001). Erikson proposed a stage-based theory of psychosocial development. In this theory, Erikson proposed

that individuals face eight psychosocial crises which represent turning points in an individual's relationships and feelings about themselves. The language of crisis used by Erikson (1950, 1968) points us towards a tension inherent the need to reconcile one's self and one's place in the world as a function of this normative development. These crises, or dilemmas, present choices for individuals in which one advantageous choice is considered to be healthy, but another risky choice carries significant risk (Seifert and Sutton 2009, p.50). Each choice affects subsequent stages, and the resolution of these dilemmas shapes the personality of an individual. The stages follow on the next page:

Stage	Approximate Age	Description
Trust vs. Mistrust	Birth to one year	Development of trust between caregiver and child
Autonomy vs. Shame	Age 1-3	Development of control over bodily functions and activities
Initiative vs. Guilt	Age 3-6	Testing limits of self-assertion and purposefulness
Identity vs. Role Confusion	Age 6-12	Development of sense of mastery and competence
Industry vs. Inferiority	Age 12-19	Development of identity and acknowledge of identity by others
Intimacy vs. Isolation	Age 19-25+	Formation of intimate relationships and commitments
Generativity vs. Stagnation	Age 25-50+	Development of creative or productive activities that contribute to future generations
Integrity vs. Despair	Age 50+	Acceptance of personal life history and forgiveness of self and Others

(table from Seifert and Sutton 2009, p.50)

This developmental-social approach attempted to link the internal with the external; the cognitive with the context (Côté 1993, Côté and Schwartz 2002), and in so doing allowed us to examine the social and cognitive changes during adolescence. Erikson hypothesized that the establishment of ego identity and a self-image are the primary tasks at hand for adolescents as part of normative development. The tension during this time is in the trying out of different roles versus the finding and taking ownership of a role. Firstly, there must be a sense of unity over self-conception. In attempting to grasp this sense of unity, Erikson suggests that adolescents are

preoccupied with their thoughts, have difficulty in separating these from the thoughts of others, and as a result believe others must be as concerned as they are with issues such as appearance, feelings and behaviour (p.128). Secondly, there must be a sense of continuity about self-conceptions over time (p.128). These conceptions are both threatened (as well as potentially strengthened) by the upheaval of adolescence – and the associated rapid physical, emotional and cognitive changes that occur during this period. Opportunities for involvement in positive roles are important during this time – bringing stability to this upheaval, but Erikson argues that the selection of such roles can present a paradox for adolescents whereby:

> "He (sic) would rather act shamelessly in the eyes of his elders, out of free choice, than be forced into activities which would be shameful in his own eyes or in those of his peers."
>
> (Erikson 1968, p.129)

A similar paradox is seen in relation to potential career choice, where Erikson argues that some adolescents would prefer not to work at all, rather than pursue a career that leaves them personally unfulfilled (p.129). For Erikson then, the process of finding a mask that fits, necessarily involves moving out of the sphere of influence of the family, and into a space for one's self. Moving out of this sphere of influence is a necessity – and Erikson's choice of language in describing attempts to deny young people this opportunity is deliberate; drawing on the analogy of a cornered animal defending its life, and arguing that 'there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity' (p.130).

3.3.1.2 Extending understanding – beyond Erikson

Scholars have argued that grand psychological theories such as that of Erikson are founded on positivist assumptions about science as the discovery of principles that govern a mind-independent reality (Gergen 1992, 1994, Kvale 1992, Rosenau 1992). Such assumptions, these authors argue, are now outdated. Postmodernists (see for example: Foucault 1980, Lyotard 1984, Rorty 1989, 1990) have laid some further accusations related to the usefulness of these theories, such as their ethnocentric foundationalism, naive realism, presumed universalism, and rampant individualism (Martin and Sugarman 2000). Such shortcomings, these authors argue, serve to constrain our consideration the contextual and historical influences on development,

and have repressed recognition of the particularness of experience and knowledge within unprivileged groups. While a possible critique of Erikson specifically may be that he lacked theoretical precision (Côté and Levine 1987), those who have followed in the neo-Eriksonian line offer more clarity. Marcia was one of the first to elaborate on Erikson and sought to operationalise Erikson's concepts (1980b). For Marcia two key components of identity formation are 'exploration' (the degree to which adolescents have considered and explored alternative identities) and 'commitment' (the degree to which they have made decisions on their identity and have committed to these decisions). Through juxtaposition, Marcia defined four categories of development depending on the degree to which adolescents had explored and committed to a particular identity. 'Diffusion' described a state where little exploration or commitment had been carried out. 'Foreclosure' described a state of commitment, with little exploration. 'Moratorium' described a state of active exploration with little commitment, and finally 'achievement' described a state of commitment arrived at following significant, meaningful exploration. Once criticised as being useful only as a typology (Côté and Levine 1988, van Hoof 1999, Meeus *et al* 1999), more recently consensus is emerging that 'shifts in these statuses represent normal, developmental change as opposed to purely being a typology of individual difference' (Lalor *et al* 2007, p.39). As such, this typology has made a significant contribution to identity theory (Waterman 1988). The concept of moratorium is important in illustrating the 'storm and stress' experienced by adolescents (Kidwell *et al* 1995).

Relatively speaking, moratorium describes a state of greater exploration relative to commitment and is the important developmental work outlined by Erikson earlier that adolescents must do during this period of their lives. It is characterised by increased open-mindedness, generation of multiple alternatives when faced with important decisions and critical thinking (Berman *et al* 2001). The exploration is a process of examination and discovery of who and what one might be in the world, with commitment to an identity being the eventual resolution of this undertaking. Critical to navigating this exploration for adolescents are suitable adult role models, however the position adolescents occupy in society, in a discrete space between adulthood and childhood, can make identifying with appropriate roles difficult – particularly in the context of increasingly complex economies which offer

significantly fewer meaningful opportunities for early school leavers (Steinberg 1991, p.29). Indeed Steinberg argued that while there may have been many alternative viable pathways to adulthood in the past, increasingly in modern industrial societies, the only meaningful post-adolescent role for young people today is the role of a student, and the only meaningful pathway to adulthood is the completion of protracted formal schooling (p.29). 'Rolessness' then describes a lack of the meaningful roles mentioned above in which to participate (Wolverhampton 1988, Steinberg 1991), and is a barrier to identity achievement especially felt by disadvantaged young people who are less likely to benefit from schooling as their more advantaged peers, due to systemic inequalities. Rolelessness can be described as a cyclical process (Csikszentmihalyi and Reed 1984): adolescents who spend insufficient meaningful time engaged with adults, will find less opportunity to do so in the future, as adults lose confidence in adolescent's abilities, and accordingly impose limitations on adolescents' opportunities for further engagement.

3.3.1.3 Exploration of roles:

As stated above, it is important that adolescents are afforded an opportunity to explore roles in order to establish a sense of identity. Lacking in such opportunity to experiment appropriately can bring about a state of diffusion – an apathetic state that has been noted to contribute towards a number of the negative outcomes and maladaptation commonly seen in the psychological discourse on adolescents. Such maladaptation includes poorer academic performance (Berzonsky 1985), drug use (Jones 1992) and depression (Marcia 1993).

Engagement in experimentation can be difficult however for adolescents, as they can find that in the process of pushing boundaries, they become the focus of scrutiny and critique. From a sociological perspective, the older structural functionalist understandings of experimentation emphasised that the pushing of social boundaries and testing of norms was functional and indeed entirely necessary for societal cohesion (Merton 1968, Durkheim 1982) because by pushing boundaries adolescents can both challenge and reinforce ideas of right and wrong in society. However what is lacking in functionalist accounts is a place for power. In many societies some groups are better positioned to influence these ideas of right and wrong, and it is due to such power differentials that much of the academic interest in young people in the decades following the Second World War (Valentine *et al* 1998), were largely been

concerned with condemning adolescents of working class origin in particular (Cohen 1955, Cloward and Ohlin 1960, Miller 1958, Matza and Sykes 1961, Downes 1966). Such focus at that time served to create a conception of adolescents as aggressive young people, more concerned with the pursuit of thrills than the taking up adult roles in the workplace (Matza and Sykes 1961). Psychological literature at the time also became increasingly concerned with understanding 'deviant' adolescents who engaged in risky behaviours such as drug use and promiscuity (Jessor and Jessor 1975, Jessor 1976) and sought to identify underlying cognitive explanations for such deviance (Jurkovic and Prentice 1977). The inference from this sociological and psychological attention approaching the turn of the millennium was that 'all teenagers were potentially delinquent or deviant' (Valentine *et al* 1998, p.11), and required intervention and correction.

With this said, the turn of the millennium also marks the beginning of a turn in psychological discourse; an acknowledgement of the need to shift focus away from the negative depiction of adolescence. The latter half of the last decade in particular marks the rise of constructivist (Ungar 2004) rather than normative understandings of adolescence, in which adolescent resistances are framed not as deviancy, but rather as forms of resilience, by taking the significance of social identities and collective experiences of young people engaging in resistance into account (Bottrell 2009). It is within this discourse that educational resilience and buoyancy (discussed in further detail in the next chapter) are placed.

3.3.1.4 Section Review

This subsection served to outline the historical tension in the literature on adolescence between perspectives that interpret adolescents' actions as normative and functional, and perspectives that view them as deviant and dysfunctional. The adolescent identity development theories of Erikson, and the later Marcia, along with the structural functionalist construction of adolescence by Durkheim and others presents the normative and functional role adolescence plays as part of wider society. While it is important that adolescents both explore and identify suitable roles to play as part of their identity development, this process is fraught with political difficulty which was introduced here and discussed further below.

3.3.2 Deviant interpretations of adolescence

As outlined in the above sub-section, a tension exists between the developmental normative interpretation of adolescence development and a social reality where adolescents find their development interpreted as 'deviant'. This deviant interpretation is discussed in the section below, charting its origins in the early work of the Chicago School, and the increasing understanding of 'labelling' during the 1960's, which began to offer an understanding of the unequal distribution of power between those labelled, and those positioned to apply labels. This appreciation of the political nature of the social world and the inequity inherent was an underpinning theme of the later work of the CCCS, and while their work was subject to some critique, this underpinning is fundamentally consistent with a social reality where adolescence remains a period marked by social stratification. Postmodern interpretations of health (Gergen 1994, 2001), as well as resilience (Ungar 2004, 2008, Bottrell 2007, 2009), acknowledge that those with the power to control discourse related to health and resilience, have the power to define what is meant by health and resilience. Postmodern framing of resilience, therefore, disrupts notions of deviance; and instead defines it as 'the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse' (Ungar 2004, p.342)

3.3.2.1 Adolescence Subcultures

A contemporary turn to focus on the positive actions of adolescents takes places in the context of a historical perception of adolescents as 'deviants'. This conception has arisen as a result of a social landscape characterised by the inequity of power between adolescents and those in positions to shape discourse concerning them. Depictions of adolescent subcultures have a long history in social research, with early research closely focused on delinquent subcultures. In the 1920's research originating in Chicago began to describe youth gangs and the role that both economic and ethnic marginalisation had in the formation of mentalities of defiance in areas of disadvantage (Park 1925, Thrasher 1927, and later Whyte 1947). As outlined by Giddens and Sutton (2013), during the early 1960's sociologists working from an interactionist perspective began to focus on the social construction of deviance with reference to the power differentials inherent in who gets labelled as deviant, and those in positions of power from where they can apply labels. This

perspective assumes that no act is intrinsically ‘deviant’ – instead, deviance is a social construction; involving laws, courts, prisons, and collective interpretation. The central argument of Becker (1963) and Tannenbaum (1938) was that deviant identities were produced through the process of labelling, rather than through deviant motivations themselves, and that labelling served to prevent members of the labelled group being considered as ‘normal’, and the process of ostracising them publically through labelling, only served to strengthen their ties to their ‘deviant’ subcultural group. The process of labelling can also lead to a paradox, whereby those who try to correct deviant behaviour, may, in fact, provoke further deviance as a result of their efforts. This process was first outlined by Wilkins (1964) and is also illustrated by Cohen (1972) in his account of the drastically exaggerated reporting in the UK media of minor clashes between ‘Mods’ and ‘Rockers’ in the town of Clacton in 1964. This exaggerated reporting, an example of a moral panic, succeeded in labelling these groups as deviant ‘folk devils’, but was in effect a pyrrhic victory, and also succeeded in heightening interest in future gatherings of Mods and Rockers, drawing larger crowds and creating a larger problem. In Ireland, media attention towards adolescents has also been demonstrated to be quite negative broadly. In a study of Irish newspapers by Devlin (2006), the data indicated that over three separate months, over eighty-five percent of stories relating to young people presented them as either perpetrators or victims of crime, or otherwise vulnerable in some way, leading Devlin (2006, p.47), to conclude that Irish media tended to portray adolescents as either ‘being a problem or having problems’. A similar focus on adolescent vulnerability can been seen in the recent *State of the Nation’s Children* Report (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2014), in which the word ‘teen’ is used on six occasions, each in relation to teenage pregnancy and births, while all but one of the sixteen references to ‘adolescent’ in the same document refers to young people in the context to admission to psychiatric care.

The work of the CCCS at Birmingham University is related to the above construction of adolescence as a form of cultural rebellion. This line of research drew on the work (Taylor *et al* 1973), who theorised deviance to be deliberate, and often a political response to inequality. Deviants were those then who chose to engage in acts that challenge the status quo. In this way, Taylor *et al* reject the functional accounts of deviance and the labelling perspective above. The specific

focus of research in the Birmingham tradition were the spectacular youth subcultures based on distinctive style and music, such as: the 'Teds' (Jefferson 1973), 'Mods' (Hebdige 1974), 'Skinheads' (Clarke c.1973), 'Punks' (Hebdige 1979), 'Bikers' and 'Hippies' (Willis 1978). While it is noted that the interpretations of CCCS theorists were not entirely consistent (Hodkinson 2007, p.4), the majority view was that these subcultures were a subversive stylistic resistance by young people, who found themselves in a position of contradiction between the hegemonic values of capitalism and the working class culture of their parents (Clarke *et al* 1976). Youth subcultures then offered a compromise between maintaining identification with parents, and space to create and express autonomy and difference from parents (Cohen 1972, p.26); or what (from a developmental psychology perspective) Erikson and later Marcia might term a space in which to explore (i.e. moratorium).

However it is worth noting that while adolescent subcultures provide a platform for rebellion, they do not solve the issues of inequality of power in any meaningful way (Clarke *et al* 1976, p.47); instead the rebellion is symbolic rather than material, meaning that amongst other outcomes, there was an inevitability to Willis' working class kids continuing to get working class jobs (1979). Indeed as pointed out by Hebdige (1979) subcultures would eventually find even the symbols they had appropriated to define their identity would be later recognised for their profit making potential – leading to the commodification of spectacle (Brooks 2003), and the proliferation of 'cool-hunters' – agents of big brands tasked with identifying the next symbol to be watered down and mass marketed to the public (Klein 2010).

3.3.2.2 Critiquing subcultural understandings of adolescence

While the subcultural approaches discussed above remain significant and valuable beyond the delinquents they first described, such approaches have not been above critique. For example, several feminist writers problematise the invisibility of women in the male-dominated discourse on youth subcultures during the 1980's (Marshall and Borrill 1984, Griffin 1985a, 1985b, McRobbie 1991). McRobbie and Garber (2006) for example, pointed out that much of the subcultural studies to that point focused distinctly on boy's subcultures, and on their on their entry to work. Feminist authors seeking to address this invisibility conducted textual and ethnographic studies on an array of topics, such as McRobbie's examination of girls'

comics (1978), and dance (1984). Others examined school (Griffin 1985b), and magazines (Winship 1987). Feminine bonding, romance, consumption and use of clothes, make-up and popular music were distinctive elements of these subcultures (Lewis 1991, Nava 1992, Gannetz 1995). This research broadly concluded that due to restrictions on girls leisure time (girls were often more closely monitored by their parents relative to boys) they were often unable to engage in the spectacular leisure activities of boys, and as a result, girls culture was created in their bedrooms and in fitting rooms (Gannetz 1995, p.95), rather than on street corners.

Griffin argued that for the majority of adolescent women at the time the main objective was to attract a boyfriend and that femininity was constructed to secure a future married life (1985b). However this is countered by the view that much of the work of the feminist writers above fails to capture the realities of those who rejected these distinctive hyper-feminine elements, the end result of which is the omission of both 'tomboys' and lesbians from this construction of girls subculture (Valentine *et al* 1998, p.17). Similar criticism is made against the marginalisation of ethnic cultures in CCCS studies (Valentine *et al* 1998, p.19) and in doing so, these studies failed to capture an empirical reality where urban youth cultures are profoundly influenced by black styles of dress, music, dance and fashion in particular (Hebdige 1979).

Geoff Stahl problematizes the simplistic presentation of the media that is common in CCCS writing. The role of the media in CCCS writing is an integral part of the apparatus of the control culture and to the success of the dominant hegemony – through labelling 'folk devils', and creating 'moral panics' which marginalise members of youth subcultures (Stahl 1999, p.16). Thornton (1995) argues that rather than this oppositional construction – the media should be viewed as integral to the formation of subcultures, facilitating their proliferation through television, radio, magazines, and pamphlets. Thornton also argues that the media function as a network of distribution through cultural and social hierarchies of what she terms 'subcultural capital' (Thornton 1995) borrowing from (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu outlines how various forms of capital including cultural, economic, social and symbolic (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1990b, 1998) are acquired and distributed according to a logic that is specific to each of the fields in

which these are active constituents. Cultural capital, for example, is a form of knowledge which actors acquire through education as well as upbringing and is distributed through the field of cultural production. Schools, in particular, serve as a hierarchical and structured space in which this capital is distributed (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). As Bourdieu argues:

> "Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis."
>
> (Bourdieu 1984, p.173)

For Bourdieu, production could not exist if not for already pre-existing tastes which offer a selection for actors, providing opportunities to select a system of stylistic features. For both Bourdieu and Thornton, such cultural capital can become embodied (a style) to the point that it becomes second nature, empowering actors with a 'feel for the game', or a 'habitus' that allows actors to make appropriate decisions in particular situations:

> "Habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification of these practices. It is the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted."
>
> (Bourdieu 1984, p.170)

For Thornton, this subcultural capital can be both personified and objectified:

> "Just as books can and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable hair-cuts, and carefully assembled record collections… Just as cultural capital is personified in 'good' manners and urbane conversation, so subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the know', using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles."
>
> (Thornton 1997, p.202-203)

Subcultural capital then attempts to locate social groups in a complex multidimensional space – with positions determined not only by what you know, but whom you know (Thornton 1997).

3.3.2.3 Post-subcultural theory

More recently, the approach taken by the CCCS has also become a target for criticism. Cohen argues that with the exception of the work of Willis, there was a marked absence of primary qualitative data collection – instead relying heavily on secondary literary sources, and the semiotic methodology and Marxist perspectives underpinning much of the CCCS work may have imposed interpretations on subcultural participants (1980), rather than reflect their realities. Portrayals of subcultures also tended to be 'static' and 'frozen' (Waters 1981), although this is disputed by Thornton (1997). Other critiques of the insufficiency of methodological rigor and articulation of theory are found in (Roberts 1983, Coles 1986, Hollands 1990, MacDonald 1991, Pilkington 1994). Such criticisms, coupled with rising youth unemployment which shifted research interest to young people's transitions to the labour market, led to the abandonment of the subcultural approach (Shildrick and MacDonald 2006).

In their place, a wave of post-subcultural studies has proliferated (Redhead 1993, 1997, Muggleton 2000, Bennett 2000, Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003, Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004), which describe contemporary youth culture as organised around individual lifestyle and consumption choices, rather than class-based ones. This contemporary literature then paints youth culture as quite fleeting – with young people moving quickly through styles – and concepts as depicted in Bennet's 'neo-tribes' (2000), the 'scenes' depicted by Stahl *et al* (2003) or the 'lifestyles' depicted by Miles (2000) to account for this post-modern shift towards a broadly class-less interpretation of cultural identities.

This post-modern shift draws on a Weberian perspective that focuses on the meaning of the social interaction for participants (Shields 1996). Another key author in this post-modern shift is Redhead (1995) – who dismisses the CCCS approach as no longer appropriate (see also Redhead 1997) and believes subcultures were 'produced by subcultural theorists and not the other way round' (Redhead 1990, p. 25). Under post-modern theory, subcultures react creatively through both consumption and

identity to construct meanings that can be liberating from subordination. Such approaches de-emphasise social constraint in favour of agency, in finding meaning in subcultural practice (Blackman 2005, p.8).

From a postmodern perspective, some argue that through personal style and possessions, consumption has supplanted one's social role or job as the most important site of identity formation (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992, Bauman 2005, Sassatelli 2007), and others, especially those writing from a Marxist perspective, argue that the very processes of identity formation themselves encourage and sustain practices of consumption (Giroux 1993, Slater 1997, Hennessy 2000, Fine 2006). Moran contends however that the practice of building an identity is better understood as emerging alongside the emergence of consumption as a means of doing so.

There have been three important conceptual frameworks which have developed since the beginning of the post-subcultural turn, as discussed by (Bennett 2011). The 'neo-tribe', was a concept of was originally developed by (Maffesoli 1996), in order to account for new patterns of sociality in postmodernity. The neo-tribe is 'without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form' (Maffesoli 1996, p. 98). Two major empirical studies of contemporary dance music drew upon neo-tribe theory (Bennett 1999, Malbon 1999), and the findings of both of these studies were the contention that fluid membership of the dance club crowd was indicative of a neo-tribal sensibility. This neo-tribal sensibility was inspired by the fragmentation of youth style and the fragmented text of dance music itself. The strength of the neo-tribal approach is the way in which it allows for new understandings of how and why young people are brought together in collective affiliations, emphasising taste, aesthetics and affinity as the drivers of participation, (Bennett 1999), relative to subcultural approaches which emphasise class, community, race and gender (Bennett 2011).

'Lifestyles' were first applied by Veblen, drawing on the work of Weber, to analyse the leisure classes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Chaney 1996). Of particular interest in the lifestyles framework is issues of wealth and status. During the 1990s, in a context of what (Giddens 1991) referred to as reflexive modernity there was a resurgence of interest in lifestyle theory, coinciding with an

increasing focus on cultural consumption as a basis for the construction of identities and lifestyles. According to Chaney (1996, p. 92), lifestyles can be described as 'creative projects', relying on 'displays of consumer competence'. 'Ways of life' are 'typically associated with a more or less stable community [and] displayed in features such as shared norms, rituals, patterns of social order and probably a distinctive dialect' (1996, p.97). Lifestyle theory has informed the work of Reimer (1995) and Miles (1995, 2000). The cultural consumption patterns of contemporary youth has led Miles to suggest that late modernity has witnessed a 'transition from pragmatic and unified subcultural identities into a shifting mosaic and juxtaposition of styles' (1995, p. 36),

Finally, Straw's (1991) examination of music taste and collectivity gave rise to the conceptual framework of 'scenes'. Scenes often transcend particular localities, 'reflect[ing] and actualiz[ing] a particular state of relations between various populations and social groups, as these coalesce around particular coalitions of musical style' (1991, p. 379). Bennett (2011, p.496) argues that the scene has been highly influential among subcultural theorists as a framework. Music scenes function as spaces where musical taste and related aesthetic sensibilities bind members together, rather than class or community. Scenes are also in a state of constant evolution and are often transient in nature. Such qualities cohere with the essence of the post-subcultural turn, and they are considered key among post-subcultural theorists who contend that scene serves as an adequate framework to explore issues of collectivity and cohesion around popular music relative to subculture, which is argued to be too rooted in essentialist assumptions concerning the fixity of class and community (Kahn-Harris 2004 , Stahl 2004)

However, this post-modern shift has come under scrutiny itself. While Redhead argues that in contemporary society subcultures are inauthentic; and lacking depth, and therefore only require a surface treatment (Redhead 1993, p.23-24), the lack of empirical evidence in his work renders it subject to the same criticism Redhead himself levels against the CCCS (Blackman 2005). Blackman also argues that in Redhead's attempts to avoid grand narratives which might be suggestive of imposition or determinism, his accounts are guilty of being 'individualistic' 'superficial' and 'lacking in critical reflection' (2005, p.9-10). Some authors (such as MacDonald *et al* 2000, Cieslik 2001, Hollands 2002, Blackman 2004, Shildrick

and MacDonald 2006) call for social structures to be more widely integrated into postmodern accounts of adolescence. While post-modern writers like Muggleton argue that 'youths from different social backgrounds can hold similar values that find their expression in shared membership of a particular culture' as a result of the contemporary emphasis on consumption rather than production (2000, p.31), Roberts counters that it 'beggars belief' that youth culture can be constructed as class-less, when empirical evidence from the life-phases that both proceed and follow youth continues to suggest them to be significantly socially stratified (1995, p.15).

Postmodernism offers some important strengths to afford a greater understanding of adolescence – particularly with respect to social media membership. In a similar way to how postmodern theorists argue 'face-to-face' identities are constructed through a bricolage of goods, styles and other media (Marwick 2013), so too are online profiles constructed through the language of media, and actively negotiated with others (Perkel 2008). Identity in social media sites is often expressed through customization. Examples of same include blogs, homepages and online profiles; as well as digital tokens such as pictures, avatars, icons, nicknames, fonts, music and video (Marwick 2013). These customisations become symbolic markers of personal identity (Papacharissi 2002). Early homepages, before standard templates such as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), were created gave the appearance of an opportunity for individuals to represent themselves however they wanted. However, homepage owners defined themselves through a process of negotiation with others, establishing an interpretive context for their online selves by linking to the homepages of friends, employers, and educational institutions (Wynn and Katz 1997). The proliferation of commercial sites such as Facebook or Twitter, however, has had a limiting effect on user's ability to engage in context specific presentation of themselves. One such effect is that of 'context collapse' (Marwick and boyd 2010, Marwick 2013, p.9). Large social network sites like Facebook and Twitter benefit monetarily from capturing as much demographic data on users social circle, and many group friends, family members, co-workers, and acquaintances together under the umbrella term 'friends' (boyd 2006). In real-life it's possible to alter self-presentation depending on where and with whom one is interacting; in broad social sites, one transmits information to many different types of people simultaneously.

This creates conflict when the norms of these groups conflict, making it difficult to vary self- presentation based on environment or audience (Marwick and boyd 2010).

3.3.3 Section Review:

This section served to outline some key themes in the areas of adolescent subculture. It can also be understood to be a discussion of power. While Erikson's social-developmental approach, the subsequent work of Marcia, and from a sociological perspective, the structural functionalist understanding of Parsons understand adolescence to be a time where exploration is both formative as well as necessary, such accounts do not allow sufficiently for the realities of a social landscape where power is unequally distributed, and where adolescents can find their experience of moratorium is subject to critique from those in privileged positions in society who are placed to label them as deviant. Historically, there has been much interest in the deviance perspective, which can be traced from the work of the Chicago School. As interest in the effects of labelling on deviance began to develop, these questions of power became integral to the understanding of adolescence. Such questions of power were a common underpinning theme of the depiction of adolescent subcultures in the work of the CCCS, where the stylistic rather than material resistance to the dominant arbitrary is ultimately an exercise in futility. The approach of the CCCS has been subject to some rightful critique from feminists, and ethnic minorities in particular. The post-subcultural turn, which has emerged since the turn of the millennium, has given rise to a number of conceptual frameworks in which taste and related aesthetic sensibilities are positioned as the primary focal points around which groups of young people organise into fluid, and rapidly changing groupings The post-modern turn in subcultural studies, which has given rise to 'neo-tribes', 'lifestyles' as well as 'scenes' has seen seek to emphasise agency (through consumption) over constraint. However, some post-subcultural writers have themselves been critiqued by contemporary writers who argue that it is spurious to attempt to disentangle adolescence from a social reality in which social stratification is so apparent.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter served to examine some key themes in adolescent literature. The first section described the origins of the construct, highlighting that it emerged as the increasing complexity of the workplace required protracted periods of formal

education, giving young people a distinct platform, segregated from the world of adults in which to experiment with identity. This social change coincided with the emergence of consumption in western society – and many cultural approaches to examining identity concurrently examine consumption. Definitions for adolescence are contested. Some definitions such as (Crider *et al* 1983) define adolescence in terms of biology only – beginning at puberty, and ending at age nineteen. Other definitions, such as that of the ESRI (2012) are more nuanced, pointing to chronological age, as well as psychological and emotional changes and experiences. Sociological definitions note the arbitrary nature of the hiatus between childhood and adulthood and emphasise the experimentation with 'adult' roles and the lessening dependence on the family. The second and third sections served to outline key themes in the areas of adolescent identity and subculture. These sections are concerned with the unequal distribution of power. In section two, Erikson's social-developmental approach is discussed, as is the subsequent developments offered by Marcia. These authors underline the necessity of moratorium – an active process of exploration – for normative and functional adolescent development. Erikson's work, as well as other psychological 'grand theories', are not without their critics. It has been argued by scholars that such theories are founded on positivist and outdated assumptions about science as the discovery of principles that govern a mind-independent reality (Gergen 1992, 1994, Kvale 1992, Rosenau 1992).Postmodernists too, including Foucault (1980), Lyotard (1984), and Rorty (1989, 1990), also contend that such 'grand theories' stand accused of ethnocentric foundationalism, naive realism, presumed universalism, and rampant individualism (Martin and Sugarman 2000). Such shortcomings, these authors argue, serve to constrain our consideration the contextual and historical influences on development, and have repressed recognition of the particularness of experience and knowledge within unprivileged groups. From a sociological perspective, Parsons also understood deviance in adolescence to be both normative and important for societal cohesion. By testing and reinforcing how people understand and differentiate right from wrong, Parsons argued that deviance is an indispensable aspect of a functional society. Despite this normative understanding, such accounts do not allow sufficiently for the realities of a social landscape where power is unequally distributed, and where adolescents can find their experience of moratorium is subject to critique from those in privileged positions in society who are placed to label them

as deviant. Section 3.3.2 charts this initial research interest in adolescent deviance, a line of research that can be traced to the Chicago School. During the 1960's, as interest in the effects of labelling on deviance began to develop, these questions of power became integral to the understanding of adolescence. In the work of the subcultural studies of the CCCS during the 1980's questions of power underpin the understanding of the stylistic resistance offered by adolescent subcultures against the dominant arbitrary. More recently, the post-subcultural turn has emerged, in which post-modern writers emphasise consumption as a form of agency, rather than social constraint, as the focal point around which young people coalesce. This thesis analyses the experiences of young people in schools and how they adapt to and negotiate their social worlds, and is concerned with positioning adolescent resistance as a form of resilience., Subcultural lenses, which are specifically concerned with the inequity of power, offer useful tools to do so.

Chapter Four: Perspectives on Academic Resilience and Buoyancy

4.0 Introduction

> "A constructionist perspective invites us to examine how race, gender, class, ability, and other factors affect not just access to health resources but, at a more fundamental level, our definition of resilience itself."
>
> (Ungar 2004, p.360)

As important as it is to understand the many ways in which people's lives are adversely affected by unfavourable circumstances, it is just as important to try to learn from the experiences of those who succeed despite such circumstances. Such people are *resilient* to their adversity. The rationale for examining resilience is that in understanding the challenges which some people face in the course of their development as well as the way these people recover, mechanisms of adaptation and coping will be revealed that can be used to guide interventions with others at risk (Masten 1994). In this chapter I shall briefly give a history of the origins of resilience as a concept, as well as outline the more recent developments in this field, that have seen academic *buoyancy,* emerge as a distinct construction. It is this academic buoyancy which this research is particularly concerned with, and this has been defined as a student's ability to overcome the setbacks that are typical of everyday school life such as poor grades, deadlines and challenging homework (Martin and Marsh 2008a). In this chapter, I shall outline some of the key points from the debates on the usefulness of academic buoyancy and resilience, as well as the calls from researchers in the field for a greater understanding of the social processes, that give rise to these observed practices. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'(1984) has been identified as useful to do so (Rigsby 1994, Morales and Trotman 2005). The habitus can be understood as an intermediary position in the structure-agency debate, neither a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but rather arises from the interplay between the two over time. This habitus gives rise to dispositions which are both shaped by past events and structures, and that shape current practices and structures and also. Crucially the habitus also conditions our very perceptions of these practices and structures (Bourdieu 1984, p.170). In this sense, Bourdieu

argues (1984, p.170) the habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, 'without any deliberate pursuit of coherence… without any conscious concentration'. Rigsby (1994, p.91) contends that research on resilience must give serious attention to theory building which focuses on the understanding of this interplay which gives rise to the habitus: i.e. 'the causal structures and processes that give meaning and direction to social life'. Constructivist perspectives on resilience argue that the perceptions which arise from the interplay between structure and process are critical to how resilience is framed in postmodern society (Ungar 2004, Bottrell 2007, Bottrell 2009).

4.1 The Origins of Academic Resilience and Buoyancy: A historical overview

In order to place this research in context, it is first necessary to give an overview of the theoretical development of the field of resilience, as was flagged in chapter one. The concept of resilience has its origins over forty years ago in psychology, founded on studies of schizophrenia. Schizophrenics who displayed competency in the workplace and in their relationships with others prior to suffering from the disease tended to suffer from the mildest forms of schizophrenia (Masten *et al* 1990). In these studies, it was the resilience, rather than pathology, which was the focus of research for the first time. Following from this early work, interest in the concept of resilience expanded considerably, and while an in depth discussion of each of the branches of resilience research that have arisen from this early empirical work is beyond the scope of this thesis, significant contributions have been made in the areas of mental illness (Masten and Coatsworth 1995, 1998), chronic illness (Wells and Schwebel 1987), poverty and violence (Richters and Martinez 1993, Luthar 1999), socio-economic disadvantage (Rutter 1979, Werner and Smith 1982, Garmezy 1991, 1995), catastrophic life events (O'Dougherty-Wright *et al* 1997), maltreatment (Moran and Eckenrode 1992, Cicchetti and Rogosch 1993, 1997, Beeghly and Cicchetti 1994). Of concern to this research are the contributions to academic resilience which describes success in spite of chronic adversity in school, and particularly academic buoyancy which describes how students successfully navigate the 'everyday stress' of schools, such as receiving negative feedback and juggling competing deadlines (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009).

The studies noted above (grounded in what can be understood as the classical positivist perspective of resilience) concern themselves with three objectives: describing and explaining the unusually positive outcomes for the subgroup of resilient individuals in each case, to predict how it is this resilience comes about and finally to control future maladaptive outcomes using these predictions. In these explorations, observers noted considerable diversity in terms of life outcomes in people more likely to be disposed to psychopathology and sought to inform preventative measures and practice by trying to understand these pathways away from risk (Masten and Tellegen 2012). Initially, these efforts sought to understand personal factors of resilient individuals. High self-esteem and autonomy have been identified as markers of resilience in young people by Masten and Garmezy (1985), and autonomy emerged as a significant theme in this research and is discussed later in this thesis. There have been moves away from simply identifying the factors promoting resilience since the early nineties, towards developing an understanding of the underlying processes behind these factors (Garmezy 1991). This research continues in this constructivist vein – examining the processes that are apparent in the school experiences of students in two second-level Irish schools which result in some young people appearing to be disposed to success in school and others less suited to the requirements for success in the school arena. In this context – this research answers recent calls in the field of academic buoyancy in particular where it has been observed that 'future research would do well to explore these issues using data derived from… observing students' responses to everyday setback and the implications for their achievement and engagement' (Martin 2014).

4.1.2 What is Resilience and how does it come about?

A number of perspectives of resilience are helpful for us to define this concept from a psychological perspective. It has been described as a heightened chance of success in school as well as and in other life accomplishments, despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions and experiences (Wang *et al* 1994). It has also been also described as a dynamic process of adaptation in the face of significant adversity (Luthar and Cicchetti 2000). This positive adaptation is multifaceted, generally categorized in terms of displays of competence in appropriate developmental tasks at a particular stage of life (Luthar and Zigler 1991). According to Garmezy (1991a), resilience is the result of the interplay of three factors. This

typology is helpful to organise these factors in a meaningful way, and in the next sections, these will be examined in turn: a) personal factors, b) family factors and c) external factors. The interplay of these over time gives rise to an individual's habitus, and how they perceive the structures and processes in which they are situated.

Personal factors are those that are particular to each individual. According to Condly (2006), the two most widely cited personal factors facilitating resilience are high cognitive ability and an easy-going temperament. Cognitive ability affects resilience in a number of ways. Firstly, it allows adolescents to reason with what is happening in their worlds – to distinguish between what is controllable and what is not and also it allows them to choose and modify effective supportive environments. However, high cognitive ability is not always a protective factor. Luther *et al* have found that children who seem to be resilient (based on an assessment of their social competence derived from their teacher's perceptions, peers' perceptions and school grades) tend to suffer more from emotional distress because, it is believed, they are more sensitive to emotional stimulation than their seemingly non-resilient peers (1993). However such seemingly resilient children are also believed to be able to identify courses of action to mediate the effects. While designating high cognitive ability as an *individual* factor is grounded in an understanding of intelligence as genetically linked, it is worth noting that this understanding is becomingly increasingly outdated, and contemporary understandings of 'high cognitive ability' argued it is substantially environmentally influenced (Nisbett 2009). Socio-cultural learning theories have now supplanted earlier genetic understandings (Penuel and Wertsch 1995, Wertsch 1998, Vygotsky 1978, Vygotsky 1986). There are others who point to the importance of the 'easy-going' temperament. From the age of one, such infants were more frequently described by their caregivers as 'very active'; the girls as 'affectionate' and 'cuddly', and the boys as 'good-natured' and 'easy to deal with' (Werner 1989). As children, they show regular positive reactions to new stimuli in their environment, adapt easily to changes in their environment, have predictable daily habits (such as sleep cycles), and generally have positive moods and emotions (Thomas and Chess 1984). 'Easy-going' children contrast with the other typologies described by Thomas and Chess (1984); namely the 'slow to warm up' and 'difficult' children. 'Slow to warm up' children have low activity; either withdraw or

adapt slowly to new situations, and tend to withdraw from new people. 'Difficult' children generally reacted negatively to new stimuli, were less predictable in daily habits, and were overly emotional, irritable and fussy. In the cohort tracked by Thomas and Chess (1984) 'difficult' children were far more likely (70%) to receive psychiatric treatment than 'easy-going' children (18%). However, as noted by (Lerner *et al* 2003, p.543), 'goodness of fit' between parental expectations and children's temperament is important in interpreting such categorisations, and 'goodness of fit' does vary by culture. (Korn 1978) for example notes that in the Thomas and Chess studies, European-American parents were more likely to work outside the home than Puerto Rican parents, and accordingly were more likely to report stress, fatigue and anger at their children's arrhythmic sleep patterns – which may contribute to their children being labelled as 'difficult' relative to the children of Puerto Rican parents. According to Scarr and McCartney (1983), people are able to modify their environments and elicit either positive or negative response from it. Those with an easy-going temperament are more likely to conjure positive responses from their environments. The connection between resilience and an easy-going temperament suggests a link to the Five-Factor personality model (McCrae and Costa 1987, 1997, 1999, McCrae and Terracciano 2005) of which neuroticism (emotional stability) is a component. The influence of personality on resilience has been investigated elsewhere (Nakaya *et al* 2006, Fayombo 2010), and low neuroticism (high emotional stability) has been demonstrated to be significantly correlated with resilience. Both of these studies also noted positive correlations between resilience and each of the other Five-Factor components. Condly (2006) also posits that easy-going temperament may allow an adolescent to interact more effectively with his or her caregivers, bringing about a more positive response from them in return. There are other aspects of the interplay with caregivers and the family that plays a role in facilitating resilience – and the role of the family is the focus of the upcoming section.

The dynamic between young people and their family also plays an important role in facilitating resilience and forms the second of Garmezy's factors (1991). According to Gribble *et al* (1993), who examined the role of the parents, in particular, the authors found that the attitudes parents have towards their children is correlated with levels of resilience in children. The parental attitudes held by the parents of children

who are resilient to stresses were more positive than those held by the parents of susceptible children, with the result that resilient children had a better bond with their parents and received guidance more frequently from them relative to their susceptible peers. Conrad and Hannon (1993) showed that the interplay with the family is complex in nature, and can at times be a source of tension in itself. Sometimes parents can be the source of stress for young people, in which cases resilient young people will turn to their peers for support. However, and perhaps counter-intuitively, it has been shown that even where parents themselves are the source of stress, maintaining a strong warm relationship with them still serves to facilitate resilience (Kauffman *et al* 1979). Ultimately, however, the importance of family factors in facilitating resilience declines as young people grow up, as the struggle for independence that is a feature for most as they transition from childhood to late adolescence is characterized by the young people distancing themselves from the parents (Condly 2006). To understand resilience in the context of later adolescence, therefore, we must appreciate the importance of factors external to the child – and in particular, this research is interested in the school as an external arena where adolescents are presented with opportunities to establish relationships with peers and supportive adults and to develop new senses of identity. The role of the school is discussed in the upcoming section.

4.1.3 External factors: The school

External supports offer opportunities with which young people can interact to develop resilience. Condly (2006) notes that resilience is developed most successfully when an individual, as well as their family, benefit from the interaction. The structure of schools means they bring both adolescents and other supportive adults together, which has the potential to offer resilience developing interactions in addition to those experienced in the home environment (Milgram and Palti 1993, Crosnoe and Elder 2004). It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine the school as a particularly important social arena that has a role to play in fostering resilience.

Schools merit special examination as an external factor as they have the potential to be the arena through which adolescents form bonds with supportive adults (teachers) as well as bonds with other peers. The ways in which schools contribute to the fostering of resilience has been extensively examined (Winfield 1994, Catterall 1998, Gilligan 2000, Crosnoe and Elder 2004, Morrison *et al* 2006, Downey 2008).

Downey presents effective strategies for facilitating resilience-building opportunities in young people (2008). Downey's research presents twelve recommendations for positively influencing young people's resilience which – to summarise briefly – focus on the importance of guiding students toward feeling responsible for reaching consistently high expectations, promoting high self-esteem, and finally building healthy interpersonal relationships by providing opportunities for meaningful interaction through cross-age tutoring and cooperative learning (the complete list of recommendations forms Appendix A). It is fair to conclude (as Downey does) that there is little 'earth-shattering' in the recommendations above, and encouragingly, because 'veteran teachers will recognize them as the principles of sound pedagogy' (p. 63), educators need not depend on external programs when trying to promote resilience. The interactions that take place in the classroom are a powerful mechanism in their own right. Downey draws upon the American educational system to make her conclusions, but while there is no significant comparable Irish research - to confirm that her findings may be valid in this context also it nonetheless useful to look to other western education systems to inform our perspectives in Ireland. Examining the twelve recommendations offered by Downey, it is apparent that the concern for teachers must be to create a caring environment and provide students with opportunities to raise their self-efficacy and self-esteem. Others, such as Gilligan, have offered similar findings to the discourse on resilience – again pointing to these school-based processes in developing resilience of young people, and highlighting both the role of the teacher as well as the role of peers in the social aspect of the school break time in particular which offers an opportunity to form supportive relationships and develop resilience (2000). Morrison *et al* also note the importance of the school break time in this context (2006). Contemporary research is beginning to investigate ecological approaches to improving student outcomes in schools, through school-based programmes to enhance young people's resilience (Song *et al* 2013), such as the ClassMaps Framework – which specifically links student resiliency with their engagement in schools. Aside from forming bonds with caretakers and peers, schools also offer students opportunities to develop expectations of efficacy and competence, developing an internal locus of control or a sense of self-determination, and expanding on students' capacity for self-control (Doll and Lyon 1998, Fredricks *et al* 2004). Song and colleagues also note (2013, p.62) that academic engagement can be similarly understood as mediated through a)

a sense of relatedness between teachers and students: in which both contribute to a caring and supportive social community, b) students' perceptions of their competence: in that students who expect to be successful behave in ways which predispose them to experience success, and finally c) student autonomy: in which students act as executive directors of their own learning (Furrer and Skinner 2003, Fredricks *et al* 2004, National Research Council 2004). Accordingly, it is argued (Song *et al* 2013, p.62) that 'high quality relationships and supports for students' developing autonomy and perceived competence are characteristics of success-promoting tiers of influence within students' ecosystems', and elsewhere whole-school approaches (albeit at primary school level) under such socio-ecological frameworks (Lee and Stewart 2013), have been demonstrated to significantly improve students' sense of familial connection, community connection, peer support and overall resilience.

4.2 How young people experience autonomy in school

As noted above, there is considerable affordance suggested in the work of Furrer and Skinner (2003), Fredricks *et al* (2004), and Song *et al* (2003) for teacher's to positively influence students' academic resilience (and accordingly their buoyancy) through developing their students' sense of autonomy, through providing opportunities for students to act as executors of their own learning. Given that this thesis is concerned with the development of academic buoyancy in young people, perspectives on how young people experience autonomy in school forms the focus of this section and uses the framework of Habermas (1972) to analyse the differential levels of autonomy which pedagogical perspectives of young people.

4.2.1 Perspectives on curriculum

Curriculum theory is a contested space (Fraser and Bosanquet 2006). Some definitions of curriculum understand it simply as the 'content' to be learned. Skilbeck (1984), for example, describes the view of curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted to and reproduced by students. Cornbleth (1990) refers to the approach of viewing curriculum as a tangible product. Such understandings separate the content, from the process by which this content is delivered, and such a content-focused conception of the curriculum can be conceived of as 'a specification', 'a written prescription', 'a book of instructions' and 'a statement of

aims', (Stenhouse 1975, pp.1-4). However, curriculum can also be understood in terms of *experiences* from which learning is derived in classrooms or schools (Strange 1992, Beane 1993, Kern 1998, Marsh 2004, Rogers and Horrocks 2010). The Department of Education and Science in Ireland has previously described curriculum as:

> "more than content. The curriculum in schools is concerned, not only with the subjects taught, **but also with how and why they are taught** and with the outcomes of this activity for the learner."
>
> (Department of Education 1980, p.18, my emphasis)

Cornbleth (1990, p.24) contends that curriculum is concerned with experience; 'the actual, day-to-day interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and milieu'. Such a view of the curriculum is believed to be grounded in experiences and concerned with the processes that enable student learning (Stenhouse 1975; Fraser and Bosanquet 2006). Such understandings position curriculum and learning as contextually shaped social and cultural constructions (Young 1971, Kemmis 1986, Grundy 1987, Cornbleth 1990).

Habermas (1972) asserts that knowledge is constructed in accordance with values and assumptions, and actions serve specific interests that facilitate the propagation of social values (Habermas 1970b, 1972, 1974). He argues that worthwhile knowledge is constructed according to three cognitive interests:

(i) prediction and control
(ii) understanding and interpretation
(iii) emancipation and freedom

(Habermas 1972, p.301)

Habermas terms these three 'knowledge-constitutive interests' the 'technical', 'practical' and 'emancipatory' interests of knowledge respectively (Habermas 1972) will be used as a framework to analyse the how autonomy can be afforded to young people so as to influence their academic resilience and buoyancy positively.

4.2.1.1 Technical Interest and authoritarianism

The Habermasian conception of the 'technical interest' of knowledge (prediction and control) aligns with the constricted definitions of curricula that delineate curriculum as the content which must be to be delivered to students. Habermas argues that extending control society and over nature drives the technical interest of knowledge (1972) and that 'knowledge that makes possible the control of natural processes turns into knowledge that makes possible the control of social life processes' (1972, p.47). This technical interest is also rooted in a positivistic philosophy, and a classical humanist value system (Skilbeck 1976). The classical humanist value system employs Freire's (1970) 'banking model' of education where teachers are seen as 'authoritative masters of an academic discipline, teaching in a formal, instructional and didactic way' (Carr 1998, p.327). In this classical humanist value system, students are reduced to passive recipients of information, devoid of any agency. Such positioning may not afford young people opportunities to develop academic resilience or buoyancy. The historical context of the Irish education system has been described by Schmitt as both 'traditional and authoritarian' (Schmitt 1973, p.50). Teachers have historically adopted an authoritarian disposition – 'the only way in which order within the learning environment could be secured for all' (Downes and Gilligan 2007, p.16). The technical paradigm is inherent is the prevailing paradigm inherent in the Junior Certificate Programme as will be discussed in Chapter Six. Extending control in this way, however, is not conducive to affording young people opportunities to exercise autonomy.

4.2.1.2 The Practical Interest and consensus

Habermas' (1972) conception of the 'practical interest' of knowledge focuses on understanding and meaning-making within a 'historical-hermeneutic' context. This interest is focused on understanding the environment based on a 'consensual interpretation of meaning' (Grundy 1987, p.14) through interaction. Participants engage in 'action oriented to mutual understanding' striving towards a consensus of meaning (Habermas 1972, pp.310-312). Communication is, therefore, crucial to derive an understanding of meaning (Bullough and Goldstein 1984, Hoffman 1987). From this standpoint, actions are considered meaningful, and Carr and Kemmis (1986) cite teaching as a meaningful action. The practical interest of knowledge,

therefore, recognises the role of the teacher and student in the learning process and promotes communication and a deliberate dialogue between participants (Habermas 1974; Gleeson 2010). The practical and technical approaches can, therefore, be differentiated with respect to the role of the student. Within the technical approach, the teacher is the 'knower' and treats students as objects to be acted upon. In taking a practical approach, the relationship is more of equal partners in communication. Usher (1996) argues that the focus shifts from a positivist view of prediction and control, to an interpretivist view of interactions and meaning making. This interpretivist approach is concerned with 'intersubjective meaning based on consensual norms and expectations' (Ewert 1987, p.351). The interpretivist perspective underpins the practical interest, and is evident in the Irish context in the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme which is described in Chapter Seven:

> "This programme will focus on the needs and interests of students using a variety of methodologies, making maximum use of local resources and paying particular attention to involvement of the local community. **Thus, the programme will not be just a school-based programme, but will have an important community dimension**."
>
> (Department of Education 1995, p.56, my emphasis)

Habermas' conception of the practical interest of knowledge can also be understood as being aligned with the constructivist perspective. Constructivism recognises that learning is a search for individual meaning-making which is the guiding pedagogic practice (Hein 1999). Furthermore, meaning is intimately connected with experience; both prior experiences that students bring to the classroom and the active, experiential learning which takes place in the classroom (Caprio 1994). The constructivist resilience perspective discussed previously also recognises the centrality of the prior experiences of young people (Ungar 2004, Bottrell 2007, 2009).

4.2.1.3 Liberal Progressivism and personal development

The liberal-progressive philosophy developed as a response to the classical-humanist ideology; and it is concerned with individual autonomy, democracy, and an individual's right to understand their world. Russell (1945) notes that liberalism rejected the notion of control over individuals; whether those position to wield such

control were members of the church, the monarchy, or of governments, and instead had early democratic tendencies. As noted above, the practical interest of knowledge is focused on human understanding and sees humans as having worth and merit which is rooted in the liberal progressive focus on individualism (the progression of society takes place when human beings have a greater voice in society).

The liberal-progressive belief is that education and teaching should be concerned with developing the person, as opposed to simply passing on subject knowledge. The tendency of liberalism is towards utilising education to prepare young people to live in a democracy, drawing upon the learner's capacity to communicate and interact with others in other to engage in critical thinking and debate (Dewey 1916). Within this ideology, students are encouraged to critically engage with the process of learning to derive their own meaning and understanding of knowledge, and accordingly, this perspective affords young people the greatest autonomy over their learning experience. Such an ideology may also most readily lend itself to facilitating the resilience-building learning environments noted by Furrer and Skinner (2003), Fredricks *et al* (2004), and Song *et al* (2003). Dewey (1916) believes that the child brings personal and experiential knowledge to the learning context and students need to be autonomous in their learning. The liberal progressive value system incorporates elements of Habermas (1972) 'practical interest' of knowledge which encourages students to develop their own understanding of knowledge through communication and social interactions. This orientation also incorporates constructivist elements as there is a focus on active methods of learning and on engaging the interest of the learner.

4.2.1.4 The Emancipatory Interest and Praxis

Habermas' emancipatory interest (1974) has a distinctly political agenda, intending to eliminate repression and domination through the identification and eradication of unnecessary social constraints. Habermas argues that an emancipated society is one:

(a) based on freedom, equality and democracy

(b) In which illegitimate repressive forces have been dissolved

(c) That promotes individual and social empowerment

(Habermas 1974, p.22)

The emancipatory interest concerns 'a transformation of consciousness in the way one perceives and acts in the world' (Grundy 1987, p.99). While the practical interest seeks to understand the social world, the emancipatory interest critiques it, in an effort to make it more egalitarian (Tripp 1990). A social system can be described as repressive if it prevents a person from developing his or her full capacity for freedom and autonomy and schools can be describes as examples of such systems (Habermas 1974; Ewert 1987 Through dialogue, teaching becomes a two-way engagement between student and teacher (Freire 1972, p.53), in which reflection is a key determinant in whether or not emancipation is realised. Habermas (1974) contends that the capacity to achieve freedom is based on a person's ability to be self-determining and self-reflective.

The philosophical position which underpins this emancipatory approach is critical theory. As opposed to theories which are concerned only with understanding or explaining the world, critical theory is a social theory which is oriented toward critiquing and changing society. Horkheimer (1937, p.242) argues that a theory is 'critical' to the extent that it not only seeks to explain and understand and society but also seeks to 'liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them'. Underlying this process is the belief that existing structures are socially constructed, and therefore can be transformed through social action (Ewert 1987). Critical theory can also be applied to education, where it is a movement toward increased democratization and emancipation of both individuals and schools (McKernan 2013). Critical theory seeks to 'interrogate and transform the *status quo* in education' (Gage 1990, p.140) and 'curriculum as praxis' has been argued by Grundy (1987) as an approach through which this can be achieved.

Critical theory and the emancipatory paradigm are linked with *praxis,* which has been described by Kincheloe to be 'action informed by reflection with an emancipatory intent' (1991, p.177). Grundy (1987), whose application of praxis to the curriculum was primarily informed by the work of Freire (1970) summarises the main agendas of curriculum as praxis as follows:

(i) Curriculum develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection.

(ii) *Praxis* operates in the world of interaction, the social and cultural world*:* Learning must be recognized as a social act.

(iii) Teaching and learning are seen as a dialogical relationship between teacher and learner, rather than as an authoritative one.

(iv) Knowledge is a social construction. Through the act of learning, groups of students become active participants in the construction of their own knowledge.

(v) *Praxis* assumes a process of meaning-making which recognizes meaning as a social construction.

(vi) Praxis means acting with, not upon, others.

(Grundy 1987, pp. 115-116)

In *curriculum as praxis*, the question of whether curriculum practices serve to emancipate participants is constantly asked, and power dynamics are closely scrutinised: 'whose interests are served by the curriculum, what curriculum would promote greater equity emancipation and social justice, how is power distributed in the teaching and learning process and how can it be more equitably distributed?' (Grundy 1987, p.122). The liberal-progressive approach to teaching can be described as largely coherent with curriculum as praxis, as it focuses on the role of the teacher in the role of a facilitator in a democratic classroom. In this democratic classroom, the student voice can be welcomed as learners might be empowered to make decisions (Dewey and Boydston 1981). Furthermore, Grundy (1987) and Freire (1972) accredit 'negotiation' with students in this way, as best suited to a process of liberating education.

Critical and emancipatory perspectives underpin many explorations of the intersection of culture and teaching (see Sleeter and Grant 1987, Ladson-Billings 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, Sleeter 2001). Ladson-Billings argues that effective culturally-relevant pedagogy: 'not only addresses achievement, but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity, while developing critical perspectives which challenge inequities which schools (and other institutions) perpetuate' (1995, p469). She argues that teachers must display a fluid connectedness with their students, forming a community of practice in which students work collaboratively, and with shared responsibility (p. 480). Such approaches would allow students to gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality and ways in which these social problems might be eliminated' (Suzuki 1984, p.308).

Sleeter and Grant illustrate the important distinction between 'teaching the culturally different' and education which is 'multicultural and socially reconstructionist' (1987). 'Teaching the culturally different' is an approach to teaching which emphasises:

> "building bridges between cultures to facilitate individual achievement and social mobility, rather than combatting unequal distribution of goods and power among racial groups."
>
> (Sleeter and Grant 1987, p.423)

This can be contrasted with 'multicultural and socially reconstructionist teaching', which aims to 'prepare young people to take social action against social structural inequality' (p.434-435). The authors go on to ask teachers to reflect on:

> "whether better education for Hispanic children should aim chiefly to teach them what White children are taught – without changing what White children are taught (Teaching the Culturally Different)… or help them to learn to fight racism alongside White children (Multicultural and Socially reconstructionist)"
>
> (Sleeter and Grant 1987, p.436-437)

While argued in the context of teaching ethnic minorities, Sleeter and Grant's commentary may offer pause for thought with respect to the incorporating the concepts of resilience and buoyancy into teaching. While these concepts may be concerned with equipping young people with the tools to reach goals in spite of adversity, they do not readily call into question whether the goals to be met are culturally relevant for all students. It also does not query whether the adversity might be better addressed by equipping young people with the tools to critically challenge it, rather than merely cope with it. While postmodernism reframes capitalist grand narratives in terms of unequal gift exchange, where labour is marketed and consumed rather than exploited (Baudrillard 1993), others dispute whether such explanations undermine 'the pervasive destructive capacity for exploitation that accompanies capitalism' (McLaren 2016, p.210). Accordingly, McLaren argues that critical educators must remain mindful of modes of production in globalised societies, and the inherent dangers of internationalised class domination.

4.2.2 Review

Habermas' technical interest is also rooted in a positivistic philosophy, and a classical humanist value system (Skilbeck 1976), and draws on Freire's (1970) 'banking model' of education. Under this paradigm, teachers assume the role of 'authoritative masters of an academic discipline, teaching in a formal, instructional and didactic way' (Carr 1998, p.327). In this paradigm, students assume a passive, subservient role, in which they are devoid of any agency. Schmitt argues that Irish education is grounded in such 'traditional and authoritarian' understandings of the role of students and teachers (Schmitt 1973, p.50).

Habermas' practical interest of knowledge interprets young as more than merely passive recipients of didactic instruction, and instead, this paradigm seeks to facilitate and encourage young people to an understanding of their own environments. This perspective promotes increased communication, dialogue and action within a learning environment (Carr and Kemmis 1986), but Habermas (1974) argues that the practical orientation lacks in social awareness and social vision. There is no explicit reference made to learner agency within the practical interest of knowledge. Instead, values and norms are simply reinforced through greater understanding of information and knowledge. It can be therefore argued that the practical interest of knowledge lacks a critical outlook on society (Habermas 1974; Horkheimer 1982). This critical outlook is the focus of Habermas' 'emancipatory interest'.

The emancipatory interest of knowledge is distinctly political and is underpinned by critical theory perspectives. While the practical interest seeks to understand the social world, the emancipatory interest critiques it, in an effort to make it more egalitarian (Tripp 1990). Critical theory and the emancipatory paradigm are linked with *praxis,* which has been described by Kincheloe to be 'action informed by reflection with an emancipatory intent' (1991, p.177), and is coherent with liberal-progressive approaches to teaching and learning. Such approaches seek to empower students – through fostering democratic classrooms where student input is welcomed and helps to shape the curricular experiences. Emancipatory approaches are necessary to allow marginalised learner to accept and affirm their cultural identity, as well as to 'allow students to gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression

and inequality and ways in which these social problems might be eliminated' (Suzuki 1984, p.308). Emancipatory approaches also afford a lens through which resilience approaches may be critiqued. While there is a role for teachers in supporting young people to develop the tools to cope with adversity, it is important that this endeavour does not serve to mute the necessary dialogue between teachers and students in which the adversity being faced might be critiqued.

4.3 Contemporary Discourse: The emergence of Academic Buoyancy

As highlighted above, research on resilience has diversified as academics sought to apply the principle of examining those who thrive despite their exposure to risk to other fields. Work which was initially focused on schizophrenics has laid the groundwork for examinations of young people who thrive despite their challenging circumstances in school. Indeed as research has examined the school, and particularly the pupils more closely – it is perhaps not surprising to note that the discourse has continued to evolve. Such analytical processes to identify 'at-risk' status have also been borrowed from epidemiology, as discussed in Chapter Two, and while the measurement of probabilistic outcomes may identify correlations, such correlations do not reveal causation – and as such are not effective practice. Contemporary literature now acknowledges that the pathways that allow young people to cope with chronic adversity and milder 'every-day' adversity in an academic context are distinct, but quite closely related (Martin and Marsh 2008a, 2008b, 2009, Martin *et al* 2010, Martin 2014).

Martin and Marsh point out (2008a) that a problematic aspect of the discourse on academic resilience as well as resilience discourse more generally prior to the latter half of the last decade was that it focused on a small number of individuals, who experienced the greatest adversity. Comparatively little was known of the coping mechanisms that allowed the unstudied majority of individuals to navigate milder ups and downs of everyday life (Martin and Marsh 2008a, Martin *et al* 2010). It has been demonstrated that the dispositions that allow young people to cope with the everyday stress of school life are distinct from (although correlated to) those that allow them to cope with chronic stress (Martin and Marsh 2008a, Martin *et al* 2010).

Their construct is a '5C' model for understanding buoyancy. The '5C's' of this model consist of the following dispositions: 'confidence' (self-efficacy), 'co-ordination' (planning), 'control', 'composure' (low-anxiety) and 'commitment' (persistence). These dispositions have been shown to be correlated with students' enjoyment of school, class participation as well as general self-esteem (2006). Subsequent work by Martin and Marsh (2008a) in the Australian high-school context uses confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling to identify a number of further correlations:

- Students' self-efficacy, academic engagement and relationship with their teachers are positively correlated with academic buoyancy
- Students' levels of anxiety and academic buoyancy are negatively correlated

Initial explorations in this area have suggested a number of adaptations to pedagogy that shows promise (Martin and Marsh 2006, Martin *et al* 2010). For example, by taking pedagogical approaches that emphasise mastery tasks, teachers can support young people in developing their self-efficacy. Teachers can employ individualised tasks to aid this (Schunk and Miller 2002). Teachers can draw on Bandura (1997, 2006) to challenge negative self-beliefs, and lastly can help students to create appropriate goals (Locke and Latham 2002). Evidence which argues against the use of authoritarian pedagogical strategies is offered by (Latham *et al* 1988), who have found that where goals are assigned to participants tersely, and without rationalisation, it leads to performance which is significantly lower than for participatively set goals. Taken together, these mastery approaches, enhanced self-beliefs and appropriate participatively-set goals can enhance self-efficacy (Martin *et al* 2014). Encouraging students to self-regulate their progress towards these as appropriate (Zimmerman 2002) can also contribute towards enhancing students' planning and persistence. Lastly, research suggests that students can develop a greater sense of control when teachers demonstrate through their students that effective strategies and consistent effort are crucial for accomplishment. This can be complimented by giving consistent feedback – particularly in terms of rewarding students – so that students have clarity on what they have done to earn the reward (Thompson 1994).

4.3.1 Current limitations of our understanding of resilience and buoyancy:

This section discusses some critical perspectives evident in literature related to academic resilience and buoyancy. It has been noted in the literature, for example, that there have been marked differences in how it is defined (Luthar *et al* 2000). Such definitions range from being aspects of a person's actions in the face of stress to being a mathematical construct – the positive end of the distribution of development amongst at-risk individuals. Luthar *et al* also note significant variation in methodology between researchers when examining resilience – including different opinions on what is defined as 'risk' or on what the manifestation of 'positive adaptation' is. Given these observations, it is perhaps not surprising that critics of this concept have downplayed its value due to the lack of consensus amongst the experts in the field regarding what they are measuring, and how they measure it (Luthar *et al* 2000). However, these authors point out that diversity in methods is essential in order to get a complete understanding of a multi-facetted phenomenon such as resilience, and that clarity in definition can be obtained once researchers are more explicit in conveying what exactly they are studying.

There are other definitional problems with resilience according to Luther *et al.* (2002). Of note is the way in which the word resilience is defined interchangeably as a personal trait and as a dynamic process. There is, according to Luthar *et al.* more weight behind this criticism and they urge more caution to researchers in this respect and advocate the clarification of thinking:

> "In future research efforts it is imperative that investigators exercise caution in their use of terminology, with clear indication on when their work is focused on a process and not a personality trait."
>
> (Luthar et al. 2000, p 4)

Indeed taking further issue with the validity of the concept of resilience, Bartlet (1994) goes on to attack efforts to define resilience as a personality trait at all, rather than as a process of a group of events as suggested by (Masten 2001). Bartlet points out that attempting to define resilience as a trait is almost impossible to do empirically in any specific way, and that any attempts to do so will suffer from 'observer subjectivity of biographical events and is too closely dependent on observer inputted stresses' when describing an individual's life in a challenging

situation (1994, p98-99). He points out the danger of letting empirical success in measuring resilience as a trait convince us that there is a non-problematic concept represented by that successful measurement. Kaplan (1964) calls this 'operationism in reverse'. Bartlet argues that that the triangulation of the above that is necessary to arrive at a conclusion as to who is and who is not resilient can give rise to such operationism in reverse, if researchers do not refer to the triangulation required to measure resilience. One must concede that as buoyancy is 'resilience to the everyday stress' as opposed to 'resilience to the chronic stress' such criticism from Bartlet could also potentially apply to buoyancy.

Bearing the above criticism in mind, this research aims to specifically link observations of adaptive dispositions to the class of events giving rise to them (similar to Masten 2001). The instrument discussed in Chapter Eight should serve as a tool for reflection for teachers, and means of situating student-centred metacognition-building pedagogy, rather than used to make de-contextualised judgements about student capabilities. Indeed more recently, Martin (2014) has also called for greater understanding of contexts; the classroom processes that present students with 'everyday setback', and Martin has also pointed out that the differing levels of 'educational capital': ability, prior achievement, race and socio-economic status, are likely to impact on students' levels of buoyancy (Martin *et al* 2010). The need to understand the social processes that endow some young people with relatively more 'educational capital' than others has also been highlighted by Rigsby in relation to academic resilience (1994). Similar calls to examine situations in tandem with dispositions are made by Mischel and Shoda (1995). Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' may be useful to help us to do this, and indeed some commentators specifically identify the usefulness of the 'habitus' concept to aid a more nuanced understanding of resilience (Rigsby 1994, Morales and Trotman 2005).

Another caution worth noting is that resilience and buoyancy concern preparation for the future, with 'helping young people to develop the capacities they will need to thrive' (Claxton 2008, p vi). Such preparation, however, focuses on how certain disadvantaged individuals 'adapt' themselves such that they can be considered similar to their advantaged peers. Such work, however, should not serve to mute a worthwhile conversation problematising whether the education system adequately

considers (and differentiates in response to) the contexts which require students to 'adapt' in the first instance. Uncritically transposing a 'you can do it' mentality, generalised from the success of 'resilient' students could be seen a patronising (O'Brien and Ó'Fathaigh 2004, p.11), and such 'emulation models' cannot be considered rightfully liberating (Freire 1970, p.54). While there may be merit in exploring resilience and buoyancy in schools, this should not subvert an important investigation into whether non-traditional learners might even be better catered for by non-traditional forms of learning (O'Brien 2016, p.152).

4.3.2 Review

In this first section of the chapter, the theoretical origins of resilience and buoyancy were discussed. Founded on early positivist studies of schizophrenia, where the resilience rather than the pathology was the focus (Masten 1994), research interest has diversified to examine individuals who flourish in the face of adversity in other fields. In the education field, there has been much research interest in the role schools can play in fostering resilience (Winfield 1994, Catterall 1998, Gilligan 2000, Crosnoe and Elder 2004, Morrison *et al* 2006, Downey 2008). Recently, a line of research has sought to examine the 'everyday resilience' that allows all students to cope with the ups and downs of everyday school life (Martin and Marsh 2008a, 2008b, 2009, Martin *et al* 2010, Martin 2014). Of particular interest in the context of this research is the role which the autonomy afforded to students with respect to their education plays in influencing their buoyancy and engagement. Affording such autonomy to students would require a departure from the authoritarism which is typical of the Irish context (Gleeson 2010), towards more liberal-progressive emancipatory approaches. Curriculum as praxis (Grundy 1987) may afford opportunity through which this could be achieved. It is worth noting that resilience theory is not without critique. Bartlett for example – is critical of the notion that resilience can be discretely 'measured' without due consideration of the contextual factors which give rise to it. One must account for the process that gives rise to the outcome. Conceptually similar criticism is seen in Ireland in relation to educational disadvantage, and the way in which the 'outcomes' of disadvantage are often presented unproblematised, and without reference to the societal inequalities that give rise to the outcomes. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' may be useful to help

us to do this (Morales and Trotman 2005, Rigsby 1994), and is the focus of the next section.

4.4 Furthering our understanding: Habitus and Practice

As per the critique of Bartlett above, who dismisses the notion that resilience can be measured without acknowledging the social context that gives rise to it, as well as the need highlighted by Martin *et al* (2010) to increase our understanding of the social processes that give rise to buoyancy in young people, it becomes necessary to discuss the development of dispositions from a social theory perspective. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of socialisation offers us some theoretical tools to do so (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

4.4.1 Bourdieu, Habitus and Practice

Just as Bartlett correctly argues that we must refer to the processes that give rise to measurable traits in young people – so too must we problematise the societal structures that give rise to these processes. Bourdieu's theory of reproduction, therefore, allows us a lens with which to challenge the tension between the capacity of the school to be the site of empowerment for young people, while simultaneously being the site that disempowers, by directly contributing to the unequal valuing of the psychological and material resources of those being assessed.

To state very succinctly – Bourdieu provides an account explaining how social structure gives rise to characteristic dispositions that enable the competent performance of social practice (Nash 2003). We can think of school as a 'field' which provides a context of opportunity. In this field, young people's resilience becomes a 'practice' arising from their 'habitus' (Rigsby 1994). Bourdieu's view of society is one consisting of numerous 'fields' (Jenkins 1992) in which agents and agencies compete for power (p. 84) . Most fields tend to have 'dominant' and 'dominated' groups, occupying higher and lower positions respectively in the field as a result of this competition, because resources and power are rarely distributed evenly (p.85). This dominant/dominated dualism is true of school in Bourdieu's eyes, and the intricacies of the field of education will be elaborated on further below. The role of education is to reproduce culture by means of the habitus. Bourdieu defines an individual's 'habitus' as:

> "Systems of durable transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them."
>
> (Bourdieu 1990b, p53)

Bourdieu formed this concept from studies on the Kabyle people discussed in *Sociologie de l'Algérie.* In observing the Kabyle, Bourdieu saw that social order was maintained so long as the mechanisms for maintaining the society continued (Bourdieu 1963). The habitus has been described by Lizardo (2004) as having roots in Levi-Straussian structuralism and Piaget's genetic version of structuralism. It does much theoretical work in Bourdieu's account, attempting to encapsulate and overcome the dualism between objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu 1988). Lizardo (2004) posits that we cannot separate the habitus from 'cognitive operations' in the Piagetian sense (1970), who demonstrates how 'higher order' mental operations are built upon a mastery of 'lower order' motor operations. In *The Logic of Practice* (1990b), Bourdieu's debt to Piaget's conceptualisation of the link between the physical and the cognitive is clear; where the perceived legitimacy of social order is:

> "a state of body… the pre-verbal taken for granted world that flows from practical sense. Enacted belief, instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automation that 'leads the mind unconsciously along with it' as a repository for the most precious values."
>
> (Bourdieu 1990b, p.68)

This automation gives rise then to a 'practical sense' which in turn gives rise to practices that are in the eyes of the actor 'informed by common sense' (p69). Another example – which names Piaget directly is illustrated in *Distinction* relation to music: 'pitched not so much beyond words as below them, in gestures and movements of the body, rhythms' (1984, p.80). Lizardo then argues that the body itself can be 'both the primary site of operations… which can also become 'locked in' (conserved) through the sustained repetition in socially produced action contexts' (2004, p.20). Thus, different class positions will generate a continuum of experiences that will produce concrete bodily reflections of said positions (p.20).

We can say, therefore, that:

> "Bourdieu casts dispositions as a form of embodied cultural capital, inculcated through childhood experiences and the cultural practices and values of the classroom, which in turn are shaped by the structures and practices of the schooling system."
>
> (Deakin Crick and Goldspink 2014, p.29)

The reference to 'structured structures' in the Bourdieu's account of habitus has led to much academic debate, between those who believe the importance of structure in Bourdieu's account aligns too closely with structuralism from a Lévi-Strauss perspective (1978) – and thereby falls into the determinist trap (King 2000, Jenkins 1982, 1992, Schatzki 1996, Howson and Inglis 2001), and others who believe the construction is in itself not inherently deterministic, and effectively synthesises a new position between structuralist and intentionalist (Nash 2003, Lizardo 2004, 2009, Hilgers 2009, Manning 2009).

The position taken in this research is that the habitus concept effectively allows an avenue for agency change. Indeed Bourdieu's responses to such accusations are threefold (Bourdieu 1990a). Firstly he points out that the same habitus can produce different responses when placed in a different field. Secondly, within a particular social field, any changes can bring about a change in the habitus. Finally, changes in the habitus can be brought about through socio-analysis – or knowledge of the social determinisms (Bourdieu 1998). It is worth pointing out that Jenkins offers a rebuttal to Bourdieu's defence against determinism, noting that the first two offerings require a change in the social field (structure) to bring about a change in the habitus – i.e. determinism (1992). While this may indeed be true, Jenkins, perhaps conveniently, dismisses the defence of awakening through sociological analysis. This, even if as ill-defined as Jenkins accuses it of being, leaves the door open for actors to modify their own situation and act if they see fit to do. This awakening and knowledge of the determinisms affords both teachers and young people an opportunity to engage with differences in power relations to school – as the primary site of cultural reproduction. Such affordances could be offered through 'curriculum as praxis' Grundy (1987), whose application of praxis to the curriculum was primarily informed by the work of Freire (1970) as discussed previously. This perspective seeks to constantly question

whose interests are served by curriculum and teaching is understood as a dialogic and conducted with emancipatory intent. The power relations and role of the school in the context of Bourdieu's sociology is the subject of the next section.

In order to discuss Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction in relation to the French education system, a significant caveat must be stressed. For Bourdieu, theory must be situated firmly in the context of empirical evidence, or else be dismissed as 'conceptual gobbledygook' (Wacquant 1989). To attempt to generalise his 'thinking tools' to other contexts would be like 'crossing borders but with empty suitcases' (Harker *et al* 1990, p.99). There is however much to be gleaned from these thinking tools. Habitus certainly isn't exclusive to France, nor are the constructions of fields or struggles for power. Understanding Bourdieu's reproduction theory, therefore, is worthwhile as it offers us an explanation for why the status quo in society seems perpetual – which can offer useful practical boundaries for what can and cannot be achieved by resilience and buoyancy as we currently understand it. These concepts are certainly not magic bullets to the persistent percentage of young people who 'chosen' (from a Bourdieuan perspective) to become early school leavers for example; and to argue otherwise risks reducing our perspective to one where the victims of inequality are blamed for their circumstances (Rigsby 1994). What Bourdieu offers us then, is a plausible explanation for why the working classes tend not to succeed in the education system, as a function of their dominated position in the field, and as such can be considered as a 'scrupulous and constructive approach in the study of disadvantaged learners' (O'Brien and Ó Fathaigh 2005, p.68).

4.4.2 Cultural reproduction as a function of power relations

In discussing an outline of Bourdieu's observations of the French education system and its role in the reproduction of wider French society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) it is necessary to illustrate using a number of key terms: 'pedagogic action', 'symbolic violence', 'pedagogic authority' and 'pedagogic work'. 'Pedagogic action' is what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence' in that it is 'the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power' (1977, p.5). Dominant groups carry out symbolic violence against the dominated groups by arbitrarily deciding which aspects of the dominant culture are worth transmitting to the dominated group. In order for pedagogic action to be successful, there must be an unequal distribution of power between those carrying out the action and those onto whom the action is being

carried out. This relationship of unequal power means that the dominated classes submit to the message being delivered by the dominant class – and view it as legitimate. This message tends to:

> "reproduce the system of cultural arbitraries characteristic of that social formation, thereby contributing to the power relations which put that cultural arbitrary into the dominant position."
>
> (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.10)

In the context of the education system, this difference of power gives rise to an unequal playing field, whereby some, namely middle class students, that share the culture of their teachers will tend to be advantaged relative to working class students who do not share these cultural values. Related work by Bernstein (1971, 1973, 1975a, 1975b) argues that middle class students are advantaged, in part, because in school:

> "Every item in the present is finely linked to a distant future, consequently there is no serious class of expectations between the school and the middle-class child… more importantly, the child is pre-disposed to accept and respond to the language structure of communication."
>
> (Bernstein 1975a, p.165)

This sets up the middle classes for a relatively more successful time in school. This power differential noted above gives rise to what Bourdieu calls 'pedagogic authority' (p.11). It has a dual effect, both of hiding the power relations which give the power groups their pedagogic authority, as well as misdirecting a sense of legitimacy onto pedagogic action. The legitimizing effect of pedagogic authority causes acceptance, or what Bourdieu calls 'misrecognition', of dominant class values by the dominated class (p.13). How successful this misrecognition is, is based on how closely the aspirations and values of the primary habitus are in line with those of the education system. When carried out over a sustained period of time, the pedagogic action referred to above, can be termed 'pedagogic work'. The function of pedagogic work is to bring about a secondary habitus. According to Bourdieu pedagogic work:

> "must last long enough to ensure a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of the internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA [pedagogic action] has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary."
>
> (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.31)

Therefore, what Bourdieu is theorizing here is that pedagogic work brings about a secondary habitus which is durable – and will give rise to actions in keeping with the principles of this secondary habitus. Because these principles are those of the dominant class, pedagogic work can facilitate the perpetuation of the status quo. Being an extension of pedagogic action, the success of pedagogic work depends on the similarity between it and the primary habitus of those onto whom the work is being done. Bourdieu also points out (p.36) that pedagogic work enables the dominant class to reproduce its culture without resorting to repression or 'physical coercion' of the dominated. The mechanism through which pedagogic work carries out its function is multifaceted. The function of pedagogic work can be plotted between two extremes – either aiming to reinforce the primary habitus completely or aiming to replace it completely (p.44). Also, there are two forms of what Bourdieu calls 'inculcation' or imposition: 'implicit' and 'explicit'. To learn 'implicitly' is to learn unconsciously from practical experience. Bourdieu describes the relationship between a master and apprentice as an example of this mode of learning. 'Explicit' learning is learning from formalized principles. Again we see evidence of the influence of Piaget in this understanding of learning.

Bourdieu describes a mechanism through which pedagogic work can advantage the dominant class. Pedagogy tends to be 'explicit' in schools – valuing the delivery of 'verbalization and classificatory conceptualization' (p.49) meaning the dominant classes will relate to it more by virtue of its similarity to their primary habitus. In situations where the ability to think and perform abstract tasks such as this is taught in an implicit (i.e. unconscious) way, the advantage to the dominant class is all the more pronounced. What Bourdieu is suggesting here is that while schools are primarily concerned with conveying explicit abstract knowledge, the tools to think abstractly in order to grasp the explicit message are never conveyed – significantly advantaging those who came to school with a basic form of such skills. Such advantaged children are inevitably from a dominant class origin; as such values are

generally held by dominant class parents and can, therefore, be acquired in the home environment early in life. Through this mechanism, the dominant pedagogic action is disseminated quickly amongst those whose primary habitus has conferred on them a mastery of the dominant culture – i.e. amongst those who were of a dominant class origin in the first place. Conversely, those who have not obtained this prerequisite mastery (the dominated classes) are excluded and eliminated. However, this is only the beginning of the process of disadvantaging. Adolescents, as will be noted below, disengage as a result of their interpretations of the social worlds, and feeling 'othered' in school as a result of their social backgrounds.

4.4.3 Bridging the social and the psychological

There are some interesting insights here that can inform resilience and buoyancy discourse as called for by several commentaries highlighted in earlier sections. Bourdieu theorises that not every young person enters the field of education equally equipped with a habitus likely to succeed. To challenge this would require educators to experience the sociological awakening to which Bourdieu refers – recognising the education system sets arbitrary success criteria for the field, and these criteria advantage certain students at the expense of others.

Marx argues:

> "Men [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."
>
> (Marx 1852, p.10)

Bourdieu's concept of habitus has the capacity to bridge the social psychological analysis of individuals on the one hand, and the macrostructural analysis of social systems on the other (Morrow and Brown 1994, p.221-222), drawing on the concept of mediations (Sartre 1963). Such mediational analysis implies that an analysis flowing from a concern with social integration potentially can be both social psychological and sociocultural, involving an analysis of actors (as agents or subjects) along with an analysis of mediations (the sites of social agency and institutional reproduction). Also implicit is that there can be both macrostructural and sociocultural dimensions to an analysis of system integration – involving

analysis of a social system (the configuration of its mediations; such as social class), as well as its particular mediations (the sites of agency and social reproduction).

The habitus allows students to make their own history ('predisposed to function as structuring structures'), but not in circumstances of the students' choosing (it is itself a structured by the field). Altering these circumstances requires systemic change; including the examination of the processes that advantage and disadvantage certain groups in schools, and the role of pedagogic action in school settings, in which teachers are system workers. This should not be ignored, and this thesis explores the teaching roles teachers could play to empower students to develop their buoyancy. To revisit the adaptations to pedagogy suggested by Martin *et al* (2010) and Martin and Marsh (2006), one could certainly envisage a role for educators to help students develop their self-belief, scaffolding their ability to self-regulate their own progress, and distributing consistent feedback to students to notify them explicitly why they have or have not achieved a reward for any particular task. One could certainly also recognise a role to make the implicit understanding that some students may have that consistent effort towards appropriate goals is the key towards accomplishment, into an explicit understanding amongst all students. Further motivation is offered in the Irish context where it has been noted that pupils attending urban schools have an acute awareness of the inequalities within the system and that students view themselves are 'selected' for particular roles within the school on the basis of their social background (McElwee *et al* 2002, p.198). This awareness, the authors argue, leads disaffected young people to question their school identities, and influences them to reject and challenge the values of the school system simultaneously. This rejection, the authors argue, results in young people who unconsciously collude in their own disempowerment (p.198).

Drawing on Habermas' (1974) emancipatory interest, it is important that the pedagogic work necessary for teachers to positively influence their students' resilience serves to emancipate them. The emancipatory interest of knowledge is concerned with agency and empowerment, in which the student takes the role 'not simply as an active rather than a passive 'receiver' of knowledge, but as an active creator of knowledge along with the teacher' (Grundy 1987 p.101). Through this, teaching becomes a two-way engagement between student and teacher (Freire 1972, p.53), in which reflection is a key determinant in whether or not emancipation is

realised as students and teachers aim to ‘interrogate and transform the *status quo* in education’ (Gage 1990, p.140). Pedagogic action can then be classed as ‘action informed by reflection with an emancipatory intent’ (Kincheloe 1991, p.177), and coherent with *praxis* (Grundy 1987, p.122). Furthermore, Grundy (1987) and Freire (1972) accredit ‘negotiation’, as best suited to a process of liberating education.

However, the prevailing context of the Irish education system can be understood as both ‘traditional and authoritarian’ (Schmitt 1973, p.50). Teachers have historically adopted an authoritarian disposition – ‘the only way in which order within the learning environment could be secured for all’ (Downes and Gilligan 2007, p.16). This prevailing technical interest’’ is also rooted in a positivistic philosophy, and a classical humanist value system (Skilbeck 1976). In this classical humanist value system, students are reduced to passive recipients of information, devoid of any agency. Positivistic approaches lend to individualised understandings of young people’s resilience and encourage emulation. Uncritically transposing a ‘you can do it’ mentality, generalised from the success of ‘resilient’ students could be seen a patronising (O'Brien and Ó'Fathaigh 2004, p.11). Additionally such ‘emulation models’ cannot be considered rightfully liberating (Freire 1970, p.54). Without adequate negotiation with students, there is a danger that the arising pedagogic action on resilience may simply place cultural value on a different arbitrary which is no less incongruent with the values of students at risk. Doing so may continue to marginalise adolescents, and adolescents deal with differentiation and marginalisation in different ways, including both resistances and conformities. It is possible however to draw on constructivist resilience perspectives (Ungar 2004, Bottrell 2007, 2009), and on the concept of resistance, as an alternative to individualised conceptualisations of oppositional behaviour and personal deficit, which are decontextualized from social conditions. Such resistances are understood as ‘practices which express opposition to rules and norms in specific contexts, and which contain critiques of social relations, from the lived experience of marginalisation’ (Bottrell 2007, p.599). Through praxis and negotiation with students to critique and transform the status quo in society, pedagogic action on resilience could prove emancipatory.

4.4.4 Review

This section discussed the capacity of the concept of habitus to bridge the social psychological analysis of individuals on one hand, and the macrostructural analysis of social systems on the other (Morrow and Brown 1994, p.221-222), drawing on the concept of mediations (Sartre 1963), to answer calls in the literature to understand the processes which give rise to buoyancy and resilience (Martin 2014). The habitus is capable of both structuring as well as being structured, synthesising an intermediary position between structuralist and intentionalist (Nash 2003, Lizardo 2004, 2009, Hilgers 2009, Manning 2009). The education field sets arbitrary criteria for success, meaning some students, by virtue of their more closely aligned habitus, are more likely to be successful in school than others. As teachers, we are positioned to modify our practice – drawing on praxis in order to empower our students and scaffold them in developing buoyant dispositions that will better allow them to succeed in education – as asking our students to change themselves (as inherent in positivistic understandings of resilience), absolves the education system of responsibility for perpetuating inequitable outcomes for your people.

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical origins of resilience and buoyancy were discussed. Founded on early positivist studies of schizophrenia, where the resilience rather than the pathology was the focus (Masten 1994), research interest has diversified to examine individuals who flourish in the face of adversity in other fields. In the education field, there has been much research interest in the role schools can play in fostering resilience (Winfield 1994, Catterall 1998, Gilligan 2000, Crosnoe and Elder 2004, Morrison *et al* 2006, Downey 2008). Recently, a line of research has sought to examine the 'everyday resilience' that allows all students to cope with the ups and downs of everyday school life (Martin and Marsh 2008a, 2008b, 2009, Martin *et al* 2010, Martin 2014). Of particular interest in the context of this research is the role which the autonomy afforded to students with respect to their education plays in influencing their buoyancy and engagement. Affording such autonomy to students would require a departure from the authoritarism which is typical of the Irish context (Gleeson 2010), towards more liberal-progressive emancipatory approaches. Curriculum as praxis (Grundy 1987) may afford opportunity through which this could be achieved. It is worth noting that resilience theory is not without

critique. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' may be useful to help us to do this (Morales and Trotman 2005, Rigsby 1994), as it has the capacity to bridge the social psychological analysis of individuals on one hand, and the macrostructural analysis of social systems on the other (Morrow and Brown 1994, p.221-222), drawing on the concept of mediations (Sartre 1963)., to answer calls in the literature to understand the processes which give rise to buoyancy and resilience (Martin 2014). The habitus is capable of both structuring as well as being structured, synthesising an intermediary position between structuralist and intentionalist (Nash 2003, Lizardo 2004, 2009, Hilgers 2009, Manning 2009). The education field sets arbitrary criteria for success, meaning some students by virtue of their more closely aligned habitus, are more likely to be successful in school than others. Praxis may afford teachers an opportunity to empower students to critique an inequitable social world. By understanding resilience to be resistance against inequity, rather than merely the possession of particular traits, constructivist approaches may facilitate this empowerment.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.0 Introduction

> "The prime ethical responsibility of the researcher is to pursue worthwhile knowledge; no other goal should be substituted for this"
>
> (Hammersley and Traianou 2012, p.5)

In this chapter, the methodology of the project shall be outlined. This chapter opens by stating the research questions, followed by a rationale for selecting the methods used to answer each question and a discussion on the philosophical considerations underpinning the research. A rationale for the selection of the data collection strategy for each research question is argued, and this chapter then moves to detail the ways in which the data was collected and analysed as well as the ethical considerations which underpinned the project. The chapter concludes with a summary which reviews the key points of the chapter.

5.1 The Research Questions

To place the upcoming discussion of the methodology of this research in context, it is necessary to re-state the research questions:

1. How is student i) resistance and ii) buoyant adaption to school made evident in their construction of identities and performance of school-based practices?
2. Are there any distinguishing features of this buoyancy that can be identified in young people, and if so what are these?
3. How can teachers help develop students' capacity for buoyancy?

These research questions have been generated against the backdrop of the current and persistent problems of early school leaving in Ireland, and socio-economic inequalities in educational outcomes for young people. While the period since the economic down turn in 2008 has seen marked improvements in school completion rates, with approximately 90% of young people now completing second-level (Ireland 2014, 2015), a disproportionate number of disadvantaged young people are still represented amongst those who underperform in second-level, as well as those who do not complete second-level at all. The buoyancy concept as a lens through which to examine early school leaving is a novel approach in the Irish context. Much

of the current Irish discourse on early school leaving is markedly quantitative in nature. Boldt first made such commentary in relation to pre 'Celtic Tiger' (Boldt 1994), and until the publication of the *No Way Back* study (Byrne and Smyth 2010), Boldt's same studies remained the only significant qualitative contributions to the Irish discourse on early school leaving over the intervening time. There is, therefore, merit in examining the lived experience of buoyancy and how it manifests in schools – and the first phase of this research took a qualitative approach to understand this significant new ground in the Irish context. Building on the insights gained from this first phase, the second phase sought to develop and deploy a buoyancy questionnaire that would serve as a tool of reflection for 581 second-level students and their teachers. Some of the data gathered in answering these questions, therefore, concerns how young people interpret their world (idealism), and some of the data concerns their dispositions/practices which are in a sense pre-cognitive, and therefore requires a quantitative measure of sorts. The forthcoming sections will go on to illustrate the philosophical considerations in devising the research strategy.

5.2 Perspectives in social research

> "When it is claimed that science is special because it is based on the facts, the facts are presumed to be claims about the world that can be directly established by a careful, unprejudiced use of the senses. Science is to be based on what we see, hear and touch rather than on personal opinions or speculative imaginings. If observation of the world is carried out in a careful, unprejudiced way then the facts established in this way will constitute a secure, objective basis for science."
>
> (Chalmers 1999, p.1)

The above quote from Chalmers discusses the oft held (and erroneous) view on nature of science – and how with precise enough observation, true objectivity is possible. There is opposition to such objectivism in the realm of social research, however. In fact, as noted by May (2001, p.1) and Baert (2005, p.147), even within the natural sciences there is a multitude of different perspectives on phenomena, as well as different ways of gathering and analysing data. Baert argues that it is folly to attempt to fit the social world to a 'methodological straitjacket that barely fits the natural sciences' (p.149). May goes on to argue that contestation, rather than all-

embracing explanations, and diversity of method, rather than unity, are favourable because:

> "there are political and value considerations which affect our lives. These are not within the power of science to alter, nor in any democracy should they be."
>
> (May 2001, p.8)

Giddens argues that such contestation is inevitable because unlike objects in the physical world, humans in the social world 'are self-aware beings who confer sense and purposes on what they do' (Giddens 1997, p.12). In this section, these contested perspectives in social research are discussed. While this research adopts the position that any research methods employed must be considered in the context of a researcher's views on world and the purpose and meaning a researcher ascribes to the term 'understanding' (Cohen *et al* 2007, Hitchcock and Hughes 1995), it does so from a pluralist perspective to research design. Research questions may inherently lend themselves to being more appropriately dealt with by one method than another. It is necessary to discuss philosophical perspectives on knowledge and understanding which arms researchers with the conceptual tools to ascertain the most appropriate methods to use. Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest a four stranded debate is useful to frame one's understanding. These debates which are outlined below incorporate perspectives on ontology, epistemology, human nature and finally methodology.

5.2.1 Ontology: Nominalism and Realism

Ontology refers to the nature of reality, and the ontological debate draws a divide between nominalism and realism (Kolakowski 1972). For the nominalist, reality consists of the names, categories and labels we use to structure the world around us. Reality is, therefore, an artificial rendering of classificatory systems that makes our navigation of the external world convenient. The nominalist does not recognise structure as objective – the classification of different categories is instead a subjective exercise. Realism, on the other hand, posits that the social world is, in fact, both objective and tangible. It exists independently of our ability to appreciate its make-up (i.e. the inability to meaningfully label a particular aspect the social world does not render it any less 'real' than that which we can label meaningfully).

The objective nature of the social world also means that the individual has no part in its creation (Keat and Urry 1975). Also of note is 'critical realism' which argues a qualitative distinction between 'social facts' and 'facts' of nature, the former being created and re-created by our own actions as human beings:

> "In social theory, we cannot treat human activities as though they were determined by causes in the same way as natural events are. We have to grasp what I would call the double involvement of individuals and institutions: we create society at the same time as we are created by it… Social systems are like buildings that are at every moment constantly being reconstructed by the very bricks that compose them."
>
> (Giddens 1982, p.13-14)

Critical realism also argues that human beings have a unique capacity to change their behaviour in response to knowledge about their behaviour. Consequently, social life is always in flux: 'If we regard social activity as a mechanical set of events, determined by natural laws, we both misunderstand the past and fail to grasp how sociological analysis can help influence our possible futures' (Giddens 1982 pp. 14-15).

Bourdieu also resists attempts to reduce reality to either of the extremes above. He maintains a monist position, and 'refuses to establish sharp demarcations between the external and the internal' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.22). Bourdieu seeks to overcome the reduction of sociology as either objective or subjective by instead proposing a genetic structuralism capable of subsuming both positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.5). Bourdieu's sociology seeks to understand not only the most 'profoundly buried structures', but also the 'mechanisms which tend to ensure their reproduction or transformation' (Bourdieu 1989, p.7). These structures in effect exist twice. Bourdieu describes this as objectivity of the 'first' and 'second' order (Bourdieu 1984, 1990b). Objectivity of the first order refers to the distribution of capital (or the material resources to be competed for), while objectivity of the second order refers to the templates (systems of classification of mental and bodily schemata) from which the practical activities (thoughts, judgements, feelings) of the social agents arise (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.7). Bourdieu then argues that society consists of relations of power as well as relations of meaning, and in effect can be understood as a dialectic in which 'human beings make meaningful the world

which makes them' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.7). The model, therefore, is realist, but is one where nominalist representations have an impact on objective reality, where subjectivism and objectivism are turned into '*moments* of a form of analysis designed to recapture the intrinsically double reality of the social world' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 p.10–11, original emphasis).

5.2.2 Epistemology: Positivism and Anti-positivism

While the nominalism-realism debate describes the nature of the social world, the positivism – anti-positivism (epistemological) debate concerns the ways in which individuals seek to predict, observe, and explain what happens in their social world (Walsh 1972, Giddens 1974). Positivists seek these predictions, observations and explanations using the same conceptual tools that are prominent in natural sciences, and seek evidence to establish causal relationships and other patterns in observations. Positivists differ subtly in their interpretation of evidence. 'Verificationists' argue that the growth of knowledge can be observed as we gather increasing evidence that supports our hypotheses. As our evidence increases so too does the tendency to accept that hypotheses supported by it are verified (i.e. what we cannot demonstrate to be false, becomes true). 'Falsificationists' such as Popper (1963), wield the weight of evidence differently - arguing that the growth of knowledge is measured by the increasing body of hypotheses which we can demonstrate to be false (i.e. there is no way of knowing the truth; there is just that which we cannot demonstrate to be false). Counter to these positions is that of anti-positivism. While anti-positivism takes many forms, it is useful to summarise that many perspectives reject the notion that science can generate objective knowledge of the social world of any kind (Douglas 1970). The social world is instead relativistic, and the only meaningful comprehensions that can be ascribed to the activities of the social world are those derived from the perspective of the individuals involved in these same activities. Explanations are therefore subjective rather than objective, and derived from 'inside' rather than 'outside' i.e. if the social world is what we name it to be (i.e. is not truly 'objective') then objective measurement is not possible, and meaning is all that matters.

5.2.3 Human Nature: Voluntarism and determinism

The voluntarism-determinism debate concerns the interpretation of the freedom of humans in social-scientific theory (Burrell and Morgan 1979). On one end of the

spectrum, human activity is interpreted to be completely autonomous and free-willed (voluntarism) and, on the other extreme, activity is completely determined by the structures in which the activity is located (determinism). Social theory inclines towards one or other of these points of view or indeed may adopt a position intermediate to the two. Such intermediary positions (discussed in Ritzer 2011, p.225-226) attempt to account for the way in which social order perpetuates while its constituents pursue their own needs and wants and Archer argues (1988) that this integration of has been the major research interest in European sociology in the latter twentieth century. Two such intermediary theorists, Archer (1988) and Giddens (1984), diverge on their interpretation of structure and agency as either a dualism (Archer) or a duality (Giddens). For Giddens, agency and structure cannot be disentangled, and one impacts upon the other; and structure can either serve constrain or enable (1984). For Archer (1988), on the other hand, agency and structure must be separated to analyse their relationship to each other more effectively as distinguished entities. Bourdieu interprets the structure-agency relationship as dialectic. For Bourdieu, the internalised mental structures that constitute the habitus both shape the field, as well as become shaped by the field: 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (1990b, p.53). The field (and access to the capital unequally distributed within it) then serves to constrain some individuals/groups. The final major integration theorist, Habermas (1987, p.130-131) discusses the lifeworld as the taken for granted stock of understandings of the social world which gives social agents' experiences meaning. Habermas argues that 'by this taken-for-grantedness, we designate everything which we experience as unquestionable; every state of affairs is for us unproblematic for us until further notice' (1987, p.130). The lifeworld can be considered as a micro-level world where people interact and communicate (Ritzer 2011, p.226). Arising from this lifeworld is the system world, the increasingly independent and powerful apparatus of capitalism, which exerts control over this lifeworld.

5.2.4 Data Collection: Ideographic and nomothetic methodology

Ideographic and nomothetic methodologies comprise two alternative approaches to understanding the social world. Ideographic approaches focus on 'getting inside' situations, as one can only understand the social world through acquiring first-hand experience of that world (Blumer 1962, 1969). Such approaches require the

researcher to explore the background and history of the subject at hand, and the analysis of the insights from same is inherently impressionistic. The researcher utilises qualitative methods; diaries, field notes, and biographies (amongst others) to formulate these impressions of the social world. Nomothetic approaches utilise the protocols and techniques used in the study of the natural sciences. Hypotheses are tested with scientific rigour, using quantitative techniques such as surveys and questionnaires (Cohen *et al* 2007).

5.2.5 Problematising the objective-subjective dichotomy

Burrell and Morgan argue that although these four debates are oftentimes conflated in literature (1979, p.7), they should be more rightfully treated as analytically distinct, although positions adopted within these debates can be (and often are) related to each other. The extreme positions outlined above are reflected in two of the major traditions in social research over much of the last two centuries – namely 'sociological positivism' and 'German idealism' (1979, p.7). As can perhaps be inferred by the reference in the name, sociological positivism reflects the assumption that there exists an 'objective' understanding of the social world – and this understanding is sought through applying the nomothetic methods derived from the study of the natural world (which also has an objective order to it). Sociological positivism adopts realist ontology, backed by a positivist epistemology and a deterministic view of human nature. In opposition to this is German idealism, which assumes that the universe is a subjective construction, and so adopts ideographic methods to understand these subjective perspectives. This is backed by an anti-positivist epistemology, and a voluntarist view of human nature (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

Broadly speaking, researchers on both the sides of this divide have argued that their methods are more suited to understand the world than the other. Furthermore, there are purists from both an idealist perspective (Guba and Lincoln 1989, Lincoln and Guba 2000, Schwandt 2000, Smith 1983, 1984) and positivist perspective (Nagel 1986, Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998) that would view their methods as being mutually exclusive, and inherently incompatible with the methods of the opposing tradition (Howe 1988). There is a third group of authors who have taken issue with such entrenched stances. From the positivist perspective, such authors argue that despite adopting rigours such as verification/falsification and objectivity in order to

orientate towards the concept of science, there remain inescapable and inexorable human (subjective) decisions to be made within quantitative research (Onwuegbuzie 2002). In relation to this piece of research, some pertinent examples (adapted from a discussion by Johnson and Onwuegebuzie 2004) of such decisions might include: the system of values that resulted in my selection of early school leaving and buoyancy to examine, the subjective belief that I have developed an instrument to measure a targeted construct of buoyancy (see Chapter Eight) within subjective measures of validity, the values that result in choosing the tests and items for the measurement of buoyancy, and how the scores on these measurements are interpreted. Lastly, there are subjective values underpinning the decisions of what data I deemed worthy of emphasis, and the conclusions drawn from same. Johnson and Onwugebuzie conclude that there can be no value-free 'objective' research, though as a regulatory ideal such objectivity may be useful to strive towards (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, p.16).

Similar arguments can be made in relation to the idealist perspective; which is also not immune to criticism. For example, while all research involves some subjective decisions as argued above, Guba concedes that an unqualified relativism is logically self-refuting, and hinders systematic appraisal of research quality (1990). Johnson and Onwugebuzie offer an anecdote illustrating the likely negative outcome for a driver on the wrong side of the road, to demonstrate how complete agency is demonstrably at odds with the constraints of structure (2004). More recently, however, these authors point out, some agreement has emerged between qualitative and post-positivist researchers concerning previously contentious philosophical matters, such as individuals having varying interpretations of what is 'reasonable', that our observations are functions of our backgrounds, as are the hypotheses we formulate based on these. Another point of convergence is that more than one theory can be supported by a single data set, and that evidence is more correctly thought of as probabilistic, rather than final, and lastly that researchers cannot be 'value-free', and these values are shaped in part by the research communities in which the researcher is situated (Johnson and Onwugebuzie 2004 p.16). Therefore for the purposes of situating a perspective, the insights above suggest that entirely relying on the methods of one tradition over the other risks risk distorting and biasing the

perception of the social activities being investigated (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.141), as well as narrowing the research perspective (Duffy 1987, Carr 1994).

5.2.6 Critical Realism as an intermediary position

This research adopts a critical realist position, which posits that social situations embody assumptions concerning the ability or otherwise of individuals to act in the world in the context of structural and/or situational enablements or constraints (Cruickshank 2002). Critical realism offers an alternative to the established paradigms of positivism and interpretivism (Houston 2001, McEvoy and Richards 2003) and is founded upon *a priori* or necessary truths about the nature of the world. A tenet of the theory is that progress is possible due to the enduring structures and processes which provide a point of reference against which theories can be tested (Bhaskar 1978). The position suggests that complete explanations of events and processes in the social world cannot be reduced to the intentions of individuals without reference to structural properties, or indeed cannot be reduced to structural forms without reference to the intentions and beliefs of individuals (Scott 2007, p.15). It is also impossible to fully apprehend reality, given that our perceptions are shaped by our theoretical resources and investigative interests. Therefore, the empirical feedback which we receive from the accessible aspects of the world (which is mediated by the discourses available) mediates our knowledge of the world (Sayer 2004). Bhaskar (1978) outlines three different ontological domains or modes of reality:

- The empirical – aspects of reality that can be experienced either directly or indirectly
- The actual – aspects of reality that occur, but may not necessarily be experienced
- The real – causal mechanisms and structures which are not open to observation and therefore cannot be apprehended directly. As such, they are only inferred through a combination of investigation and theory construction.

Critical realists argue that the real world operates as a multi-dimensional open system, in which effects arise due to the interaction between structures, mechanism and human agency. While causal mechanisms have the potential to make an impact, the actualisation of the mechanism is dependent upon the variable conditions in

which the mechanism operates (Lawson 1997). Accordingly, a critical realist argues that it is more appropriate to think in terms of the tendencies that are produced by underlying causal mechanisms, rather than in terms of empirical generalisations (Lawson 2003). Critical realists acknowledge the value of interpretivist methodologies that focus on discourse, human perception and motivation, as human reasons can serve as causal explanations (Bhaskar 1989) but are critical of interpretations which fail to integrate such discourses to the underlying social structures. Bourdieu argues:

> "if it is good to recall, against certain mechanistic visions of action, that social agents construct social reality, individually and also collectively, we must be careful not to forget, as the interactionists and ethnomethodologists often so do, that they have not constructed the categories they put to work in this construction"
>
> (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 10)

Bourdieu utilises the concepts of habitus and field (discussed in Chapter Four) to account for this interaction between structure and agency.

5.3 Data Collection Methods

In the context of this critical realist philosophical position, this section of the chapter serves to outline the data collection methods that were used to answer each of the research questions and the considerations that influenced the process of data collection. The insights reported above, suggest that reliance on the methods of one research tradition or the other risks distorting and biasing the perception of the social activities being investigated (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.141), as well as narrowing the research perspective (Duffy 1987, Carr 1994). Bourdieu also points out the affordances of utilising approaches which understand social actors' interpretation of their world, in tandem with approaches which identify broader patterns (Bourdieu 1984, p.22).

Consistent with such a framework, this research is divided into two related but distinct phases. The first phase comprises of two case studies, in which data was gathered in an observer-as-participant capacity. This phase sought to understand young peoples' interpretation of their social world and the construction and performance of school-based practices. As will be reported later, young people's resistance and their buoyant adaption are evident in the performance of these

practices. The buoyant adaption of students who were identified as being likely to complete school successfully was coherent with adaption reported elsewhere (Martin and Marsh 2006), although this research queries whether this adaption could be better supported through emancipatory approaches to pedagogy. The second phase of the research adopts a quantitative approach to understanding patterns of these buoyant dispositions in the wider population, and how these relate to young peoples' orientations towards school completion. To do so, a survey instrument was adapted from the conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2006) and administered to a total of 581 students in second level schools. Each phase of the research will be dealt with separately, beginning with Phase One.

5.3.1 Phase One

Phase One of the research was concerned with investigating the perceptions and lived experience of young people and adopted ideographic methods to investigate these perceptions. Recruitment letters were sent to eighteen DEIS secondary schools in the Munster region, of which five school principals responded with interest in participation. Three of the five principals required the agreement of their school's Board of Management in order to proceed, and two of these schools subsequently declined to participate in the research. One of the responses from a Board of Management expressed a desire to pursue alternative research opportunities, and the second Board of Management response expressed concern that in the context of facilitating several teaching-practice students, the presence of a researcher may prove disruptive. Of the three schools who agreed to participate, necessary consent from parents, students and teachers was secured from two schools. The data arising from these participating schools is reported in Chapters Six and Seven. In the third school, consent was not received from a majority of students, and accordingly, data collection did not proceed. Agreements were made with the participating schools that a report would be compiled following completion of the research articulating the key insights so as to inform practice in the school.

Data collection took place in the first school (Smithstown, reported in Chapter Six) between February and May 2010, and took place in the second school (Goodwin, reported in Chapter Seven) between September and December 2011. Smithstown College is situated in the centre of a large urban town in the Munster, and to cohort

selected for study were in their third year of the Junior Cycle programme. The students of Goodwin College were in the first year of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. Goodwin College is situated in a suburban area of a large city in Munster. The case study groups were selected on the basis that they offered differing perspectives. The *Education (Welfare) Act (2000)* establishes a statutory requirement for young people to attend school until they have either reached the age of sixteen or until they have completed three years of post-primary schooling (Government of Ireland 2000). Accordingly, while most students in Smithstown were attending school (in part) due to the statutory requirement for them to do so (constraint), the students of Goodwin (Chapter Seven) had, from a statutory perspective, more volition regarding their decisions to continue in school. Their lived experience can be therefore classed as comparative (Yin 2009). Interviews with School Completion Programme (SCP) staff in both locations took place in advance of data collection. The SCP staff indicated that approximately 10% of the cohort in Smithstown were (in their opinion) likely to leave school early, while in Goodwin these estimates were upwards of 40%. While such perceptions were informative, I did not hold them to be fixed truths. I probed all students to ascertain their perceptions of their likelihood of completing school, and while the perceptions of students and SCP staff were largely coherent, such perceptions, as part of how young people construct their identities, are in flux.

The group selected in Smithstown was a Junior Certificate group and totalled twenty-two pupils in all, composed of eight girls and thirteen boys. This class are described by their teachers as the most 'academic' of the school's three class groups at Junior Cert relatively speaking. They are a range of nationalities represented in the cohort: Slovakia, Poland, Germany, Belarus, Morocco, Nigeria, Iraq, the United States as well as Ireland. The students, termed 'International' students by school staff, constitute eleven of the twenty-two pupils. This group was selected specifically because it was felt it was most indicative of the situation in Smithstown generally – the Irish pupils likely to complete school in the main, and a very significant number of the 'international' students likely to leave early.

The mid-nineties marked a shift in terms of the visibility of diversity in Ireland (Smyth *et al* 2009, Byrne *et al* 2010). As these students reach the end of their Junior Cycle experience, they have progressed through a school-system characterised by

greater linguistic and ethnic diversity than previous generations (Tormey and Gleeson 2012). Ethnicity has been described as a symbolic meaning system – allowing for the organisation of social reality by Tovey *et al* (1989), and allowing group formation in a way which evolves over time as new meanings become associated with particular cultural markers and contexts (O'Connell 1994). These symbolic cultural markers can be understood as cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, Devine 2009), and as such are intrinsically linked to power (Bryan 2008, 2009, 2010, Devine 2009) and so ethnicity has an impact on how these young people actively build their multiple and overlapping identities (Tormey 2006).

While the day-to-day interactions between students and teachers are through English, there was a large disparity in the 'international' students' proficiency through this medium. For example, two of the students – a Moroccan named Jack, and German named Aidan were comfortable and fluent in both written as well as spoken English, but on the other end of the spectrum - two further students Mason and Ava (both Hungarian) had little written English and only spoke only in broken English sentences when required of them. Both were much more comfortable speaking in Hungarian, which served to limit their ability to compete effectively for the cultural capital at stake in the field. Because the research questions seek to gain the insight and hear the stories of the students who are most likely to succeed despite their at-risk status, this group was selected on the basis of having the highest relative proportion of students considered likely to complete senior cycle – whether through the Leaving Certificate Established, or the Leaving Certificate Applied.

The senior cycle experience in Ireland consists of three strands – the Leaving Certificate Established (LCE), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) which are also state certified. The students in the Goodwin case study were in year one of the LCA programme. The LCA strand of the senior cycle experience is intended for students who either do not intend to pursue third-level education or for students whose needs, aspirations and aptitudes are not catered for by the LCE or LCVP strands (NCCA 2001). The class consisted of ten girls and eleven boys. There are two nationalities in the group, one Polish male, with the remainder being all Irish nationals. All the students share a conversational fluency in the English language. Prior interviewing with school teachers in Goodwin indicated that six of these students were perceived as being of

very high risk of leaving the programme early – five Irish (four male, one female) and the Polish male student, and the SCP staff believed these students were unlikely to complete year one of the programme. Both of the case study schools participate in the 'School Support Programme' overseen by the DEIS scheme (which as discussed in Chapter Three is the policy instrument of the DES to address educational disadvantage in Ireland)

5.3.1.1 The lived experience - Case studies

This first phase of data collection comprised of two case studies. Consistent with the critical realist position outlined above, case studies allow analysis of a phenomenon in its context (Yin 2009), acknowledging that this whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Nisbet and Watt 1984, p.78). Participant observation was the principal method of data collection in an 'observer as participant' role (Bryman 2004), and this was further supported by interviewing as well as focus groups. Considering I would have no control over events during the observation components of data collection (observing lessons) Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) note that case study approach is particularly appropriate . The case study approach was both exploratory and comparative (Yin 1984) – seeking to understand the lived experience of students with a view to generating hypotheses.

The case study approach has many advantages. Adelman *et al* (1980) argue that case studies recognise complexity and embeddedness of social truths and are therefore representative of reality. They are usually accessible and immediately intelligible – even to non-academics (Adelman *et al* 1980, Nisbet and Watt 1984), and can potentially embrace and build on the unanticipated events and variables in a way that is rarely possible with larger scale data collection instruments such as surveys (Nisbet and Watt 1984)

Case studies however also have disadvantages. Nisbet and Watt (1984) argue that case studies are potentially not generalisable due to their idiographic nature. Yin (2009) counters this claim, pointing out that case studies offer an opportunity for analytic rather than statistical generalisations. These are concerned not with generalising statistically from representative samples, but with the generalisation of theories – helping other researchers understand phenomena (2009, p.15). Additionally, and crucially in the context of this research, Stake and Trumbull (1982)

have pointed out that qualitative approaches allow for naturalistic generalisation – where readers (teachers, and others concerned with students and their experiences in schools) see applications for themselves (awareness of buoyancy, problematising structures) and their practice as teachers (incorporation into their teaching and advocacy) in the research.

Issues of reliability and validity in case study research are contested (Bryman 2008 p.55). While Yin (2009, p.72) outlines the necessity to create a rigorous methodological framework to allow generalisation towards an external reality, Stake (1995) argues that the researcher's role is more rightfully not that of a rigorous methodologist, but rather an interpreter. Within Stake's framework, the researcher is a constructivist – less concerned with building a picture of an external 'objective' reality (as ontologically this does not exist), and more concerned with 'thick description' (p.102), integrating both the situation and its context, as well as providing readers with 'good raw material for their own generalising' (p.102).

5.3.1.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity forms an important concept in this research, acknowledging that in a context where there is no value-free, objective knowledge, one's subjectivity comes under scrutiny (Pillow 2003). Reflexivity can be used by researchers as a method to 'better represent, legitimize or call into question their data' (Pillow 2003, p.176). Bourdieu describes reflexivity as an action which serves to bend back on (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), which is similar to the definition offered by Davies

> "a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research."
>
> (Davies 1999, p.4)

An examination of literature, however, reveals that reflexivity is a contested process. Both Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.41), as well as Patai (1994), are critical of the proliferation of the self-confessional auto-biography as reflexivity. Patai sees no need for undue 'self-absorption' (1994, p.64), as 'we do not escape the consequences of our positions by talking about them endlessly' (1994, p70). Bourdieu and Wacquant argue a need to be mindful of three biases which may blur the sociological

gaze (1992, p.39). The first of these are the social origins and co-ordinates of the researcher. This can be mediated by self-criticism through the form of autobiography; however, Pillow cautions that techniques such as monitoring the self through such confessional journaling can only be done under the assumption that a unified fixed self is knowable (2003, p.181). Bourdieu and Wacquant argue that further depth of reflexivity is necessary, and the second of the biases they identify concerns the position of the sociologist in the field of academia. Bourdieu argues that as cultural producers, sociologists are under the sway of forces of attraction and repulsion as they compete with others in the field of power by defining themselves in relational terms. Such 'sway' may manifest itself, as Trinh argues, as a compulsion to 'represent the Other for the master' in such a way that offers the difference expected (1991, p.68). Finally, Bourdieu notes the 'intellectualist bias' which 'entices us to view the world as spectacle' (1992, p.39). Overcoming this bias requires an examination of how knowledge is constructed in sociology to overcome the divide between the researcher and the researched.

Mindful of the above, I utilised a research journal to chronical my insights on my social co-ordinates with the research topic, my insights on the social organisation in the fields discussed below, and lastly my insights on data collection as I collected it. In doing so, I sought to embrace the opportunity to ask questions which served to 'defamiliarise the familiar' (Bauman 1990), as I re-entered the arena of secondary school, and tried to understand the perspective of students quite unlike the perspectives I held when I was their age, mindful that I would require their input to do so (Trinh 1991, p. 67).

5.3.1.3 Access and Managing Impressions

To address the research questions, ethnographic methods were employed to understand this lived experience of buoyancy in both case study schools. While agreement was also obtained from the principal and staff of a third school, there were considerable logistical difficulties in obtaining the consent from students and parents, and so this school was excluded from the study, as mentioned above. In addition to the ethnographic observational element of the study, focus groups were also used as a supportive method of data collection. The focus groups allowed the participants a platform through which to voice their opinions, in a less formal context

relative to the 'in-lesson' setting of the observations. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the detail of this phase of the research.

As mentioned above, ethnographic methods were employed in the case studies. Once consent was received from the school principal, teachers, and a majority of the students and parents in the target class groups, data collection commenced, and all individuals concerned were free to withdraw their consent prior to the completion of data collection (copies of information documents form Appendix B). School staff aided me in giving background information on the academic history of students involved in the research, as well as giving their assessments of the likelihood of students completing school. I conducted the classroom observations by joining the class groups for the duration of the study periods and documenting the day-to-day experiences of the students both in lessons and at break times. These observations were documented as field notes, as per the framework of Burgess (1982). Burgess suggests (1982, p191-192) 'substantive', 'methodological' and 'analytical' field notes as a useful typology. Substantive notes focus on the 'main observations, conversations and interviews… lists of names, places and events' (p.191). Methodological notes include the 'details of the circumstances in which the researcher has gathered data' (p.191) documenting the informants, and the relationships the researcher has with them. Lastly, because field research involves 'simultaneous collection and analysis of data' (p.192), analytical field notes comprise of the initial efforts at analysis; and seek to highlight initial themes that can be explored and developed. Examples of these field notes are included as Appendix C. In support of the observations; focus groups were also utilised with students who agreed to make this commitment. The students and I agreed on the location and duration of these focus groups – which were held during ordinary school hours in all instances. The focus groups served to clarify my understanding of the contexts and to allow a narrative platform for the students to interpret their experiences. A total of sixteen students were willing to make the commitment to participate in focus groups in classrooms during break-times. With the remaining participants, I clarified my understanding of their experiences through unstructured interviewing - speaking with them during their break-times in the school yard and the corridors, making field notes based on these conversations and expanding the field notes to illustrate the conversations as soon as was feasible afterwards. Palmer stressed (1928, p.171) that

while unstructured interviewing takes the ‘appearance of a natural interesting conversation’, the skilled researcher ‘bends, guides and controls’ the conversation to service the research interest at hand, using both verbal cues (remarks, comments and follow-up questions) as well as non-verbal cues (gestures and facial expressions) to encourage more details from participants. Whyte similarly argued that conflating ‘unstructured’ with ‘non-directive’ is a grave error, and such interviews are in fact ‘structured’ in terms of being orientated towards the research problem at hand (1982, p111).

Two key issues in the case studies were to gain access to as well as establish a rapport with the target groups. Schools are what Bryman describes as ‘closed’ locations (2004, p.294), and therefore formal permission from school authorities was required before access was possible in both instances. Initial contact to establish this access was made by telephone to school administrations, who forwarded my contact details to school principals, and informed the principals of my intention to send them a research brief outlining the purpose of the research. The principals were invited to contact me to discuss the brief when they had reviewed it, and follow up contact was made with principals who hadn’t contacted me after one week. In all, an agreement was received from five school principals, which gave rise to data collection in two locations (due to other stakeholders refusing consent). I assumed what Bryman describes as an ‘overt’ role (2004, p.195), in which my purpose and intentions were made clear. Once the consent was obtained from the two participating schools, I was assigned to a gatekeeper (in both instances, a teacher of the targeted class group), who introduced me to both the other teachers and to the students as a doctoral researcher from the University of Limerick. I briefed teachers and students of the targeted classes about the nature of the research. While the teachers were able to complete their consent forms on the school premises, due to data protection legislation, student and parental consent forms were couriered to and from the parents/guardians by the students in the targeted classes, to get them signed by their parents. Follow-up phone calls were made by the Home School Community Liaison Co-Ordinators in both schools where these forms were not returned within one week to progress securing consent.

In assuming an overt research role, I considered how students’ and teachers’ perceptions of me might potentially result in them modifying their actions during the

observations. In advance of commencing research, I identified that teachers might feel uneasy with the protracted period I would be observing their classes if they felt that such observations may result in critiques of their competence which may then be published in the public domain. Hislop notes that when Whole School Inspection Reports (which examine the performance of schools in Ireland) were first made public, this was a source of major anxiety for teachers (2012). To allay such fears, I made it explicit in the initial briefing both orally, and in writing, my intention was not to develop comparative judgements of their competence. During initial briefings, I also articulated the necessity for student anonymity in the final reports which would be provided to schools at the conclusion of the research. These reports, as mentioned earlier, were intended to inform practice within the school settings. Given that the staff of both case study schools contained 'insider knowledge' (Kaiser 2009) of the research settings, I was particularly concerned about the risk of 'deductive disclosure' arising from these research reports. Deductive disclosure has the potential to occur when descriptions of individuals or groups become identifiable to individuals who are familiar with the research context (Sieber 1992). Qualitative research, which aspires to generate rich description, is particularly vulnerable to the risk of deductive disclosure – and therefore it was important that data from participating students was anonymised. The teachers and principals were sensitive to the potential this anonymity may have to give rise to a platform in which students could make disparaging remarks of a personal nature about school personnel that would go uncontested. Accordingly, both participating schools imposed a requirement (as a condition of their on-going participation) that I did not allow data collection to serve as a platform for students to make such disparaging comments about their teachers. Iphofen notes the dilemmas researchers face in balancing conflicting concerns in authoritarian research locations:

> "In some cases, for example when researching children under the legal age of consent, consent will need to be taken from both the child subject and the parent/guardian, or in highly authoritarian communities consent to interview a subordinate may be needed from a superior."
>
> (Iphofen 2015, p.33)

Schools present a combination of both of the above positions – requiring the consent of the participating students, the staff of their schools who have an authoritarian relationship with them, as well as the parents/guardians of the students. Accordingly,

I was presented with a dilemma in which potentially silencing an aspect of the students lived experience appeared to be inevitable. On the one hand, giving the undertaking to censor what students could and could not discuss in relation to their teachers in order to preserve their anonymity, risked silencing potentially important aspects of their lived experience. On the other hand, conceding the anonymity of the students in the final reports, particularly in an authoritarian setting, would likely have resulted in students censoring or misreporting their lived experience regardless. Iphofen continues:

> "Hence the need for a researcher to be a skilled diplomat and negotiator in ensuring the fairest outcome to all stakeholders – and, in order to maintain transparency, able to record fully the rationale upon which the decision was based."
>
> (Iphofen 2015, p.33)

Accordingly, to balance the interests of the participating schools and the students, I preserved the anonymity of the students and censored some conversations which began to steer towards making remarks of a personal nature against teachers. I concede that this decision silenced students' lived experiences of frustration and marginalisation. However, the alternative option too would (at best) have resulted in students censoring themselves, fearing potential harm that may arise from failing to engage in socially desired responding (Paulhus 1991) to my questions given the authoritarian setting.

In addition to having to mitigate the competing concerns of teachers and students, I also had to attempt to manage the fact that I was a 'cultural stranger' to the group of students I sought to investigate (Deegan 1996). My academic history includes a completed Leaving Certificate, and undergraduate teacher-education programme, before then embarking on doctoral studies that brought me back into second-level schools again in an attempt to understand them better. Certainly my history maps much more closely onto Willis's 'ear-oles' (1979) than it does that of 'the lads' that I would be more likely to encounter and need to win the trust of in the course of data collection, to understand the processes that foster buoyancy in some, and result in disengagement for others. I must concede that integration into what was culturally distant to me was much more difficult than I initially anticipated. Accounts of ethnographic fieldwork suggest that such integration is a matter of:

> "sharing in life activities… learning the language, rules and mode of behaviours, and role requisites, assuming the same dress and appearance, tasks and responsibilities and becoming subject to the same pressures and constraints."
>
> (Woods 1986, p.34)

However such accounts leave understated the bureaucratic, professional as well as emotional challenges (Lee-Treweek and Linkogle 2000) which those engaged in ethnographic fieldwork are faced with, and are reported in the next two chapters in more detail. I was certainly convinced of the what Agar (1996) describes as the 'personal' as well as the professional discipline of ethnographic fieldwork on completion of my data collection.

Part of this difficulty concerned the tension between being an 'adult', while simultaneously 'not' being an adult in the field. Part of managing access and building rapport with the students as well as the teachers in both study locations required all of us to adjust to my presence in their environments. Both teachers, as well as students, struggled with this initially – particularly with breaking down the practice that all adults should be afforded deference in the field. This practice was internalised by both the teachers as well as the students, and coloured my very first interaction with the first cohort in Smithstown:

> "I met with the group today for the first time and was introduced by the class group's tutor during her own Science class with the group. I was allowed fifteen minutes to explain the nature of the research to the students as well as to distribute the consent forms. I was frustrated that I was introduced as 'Mr. Comerford', as we had only just discussed how I wished to be introduced in the corridor on the way to the classroom. After being introduced I immediately moved to correct the mistake, but I'm struck by how 'taken-for-granted' this practice is. Even when only just consciously having a discussion about it, the teacher immediately reverts to introducing the adult guest as someone to be afforded respect."
>
> (Journal 1/2/10)

I also noted several examples of students struggling to distinguish me (an adult, but not a teacher) from the other adults in the field who were teachers. As mentioned above, students in both cohorts initially addressed me as 'Sir', as would be expected of them if I were any other adult in the field. During initial focus groups (discussed

in greater detail below) in classrooms, students would engage in the practice of 'raising their hand' before speaking. In the first study group, following the initial setback of being introduced as an 'adult', rapport and trust as a friendly cultural stranger was established by drawing on Hargreaves (1967), Fine and Sandstom (1988) and Deegan (1996), with what could be described as attacks of blindness, or a sympathetic gazes, which helped the students to establish that I was not an authoritarian figure in the field. Approximately six weeks following the initial introduction, while a teacher was briefly called out of a classroom on an errand, Philip spoke with me for several minutes about the nature of my work in the University of Limerick, before eventually querying how he could be sure I hadn't been planted by teachers to spy on students (Field notes, 15/3/10). Later that day, and the following day, during Maths classes, Aidan began to 'test' this theory, deliberately making faces at me, and waving at me while the teacher's back was turned in order to see my reaction. By not reporting his misbehaviour to his teachers (taking a sympathetic stance, or suffering this attack of blindness), I was able to establish trust with the group, and helped the students to differentiate that some adults in the field were concerned with regulating their behaviour (teacher, tutors, etc.) and others such as myself were not.

5.3.1.4 Extending understanding – Focus groups and Interviews

The prerequisite competencies required for focus groups are flexibility, objectivity, empathy, persuasiveness, and good listening skills (Denzin and Lincoln 2000,p. 652), and there are a number of reasons to include focus groups into the research. Firstly, it can be difficult for researchers to relate to their research participants if they are from different socio-economic groups (Morgan and Kruger 1993). These authors found that focus groups can be of great benefit 'because the interaction in focus groups provide a clear view of how others think and talk' (p.16). Relative to semi-structured or unstructured interviewing of individuals, focus groups allow a more authentic picture of the lives of the adolescents in the context of their peer groups to be drawn for the researcher to interpret and are therefore a favourable supporting method of data collection. Furthermore, in a focus group setting the opportunity is afforded for respondents to probe each other's points of view. In doing so, individuals in a focus group may decide to modify their own responses or concur/disagree with another's point of view which they may not have necessarily

thought of on their own. In this way, the focus group can create an environment in which a wide variety of views on the issue under scrutiny can be explored (Bryman 2004, p.348). Lastly, the use of the group interaction element of a focus group affords the opportunity to observe the participants coming to terms with the phenomenon of early school leaving in a way which is consistent with symbolic interactionism – that meaning can only be constructed through an individual's interaction with others (Bryman 2004, p.348).

Bearing the above in mind, there were a number of important considerations which informed the conduct of the focus groups. Merton *et al.* (1956) point out that the facilitator must be mindful to prevent one or more individuals from commandeering the discussion, to encourage the co-operative participation of recalcitrant individuals as much as is feasible, and lastly to ensure that the entire group responds to ensure the fullest coverage of the topic at hand. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.652) further point out that the dominance of one or a coalition of individuals may lead to a 'group-think' mentality which would also serve to detract from efforts to elicit a complete representation of opinions of the topics at hand. Fortunately for me, the students who engaged in the focus groups were co-operative and enthusiastic, and the recalcitrance referred to by Merton *et al.* was not a major issue (their enthusiasm apparent through these students' willingness to volunteer a portion of their lunch breaks 'in class' for this purpose). I did have to gently intervene on a number of occasions during focus groups to ensure that the sessions were not commandeered by the particularly extroverted group members, to allow every member an opportunity to air their opinions. While a number of students did not meet for focus groups as agreed, I respected their autonomy and offered instead to reschedule at a time that was more appropriate, if they so wished. While the 'in class' setting for focus groups allowed me to easily take notes as conversations developed (seated at desk), for students who were unwilling to volunteer their lunch breaks 'in class', I accommodated them to voice their opinions outside of the classroom (in the school yard typically). While such settings occasionally precluded me taking notes as conversations happened, I endeavoured to commit accounts of conversations to paper as soon as possible. Almost all students were happy to be engaged like this.

5.3.1.5 Recording the Data

As outlined above unstructured interviews and focus groups were utilised to support the ethnographic observations. Because the classrooms were vacant during break times, they provided a quiet space for focus groups to take place (as well as be audio-recorded where students consented to this). In doing so, one must argue that the focus groups were less ecologically valid as I never observed students remaining in classrooms during break-times other than for focus groups. They instead spent this time in common areas or the school yard. The unstructured interviews on the other hand – which always took place where students would ordinarily spend their break times could be perceived as being more ecologically valid. The unstructured interviews were expanded from memory, assisted by field notes taken as soon as possible following the encounters, as were the non-recorded focus groups. Where sessions were recorded, these recordings were transcribed subsequently. The decision on whether to record focus groups required careful consideration on my part, as well as consent from the students, as there are pros and cons associated with this approach. While recording allows for limitations of memory, and incorrect first impressions (Bryman 2004), it may also constrain the group dynamic by making students self-conscious. In order to alleviate this difficulty as much as possible, audio-recordings were introduced a number of weeks into the observations, to allow the students to become comfortable in my presence.

5.3.1.6 Making meaning from the data

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe codes as tags for assigning units of meaning to the inferential information compiled during the ethnographic phase of the research. These tags serve an organisational role – categorizing information to allow related clusters and segments to be pooled and examined together. Coding was a two-step iterative process (Saldaña 2013). Observational data and interviews were initially coded thematically. For example, insights related to student engagement in class grouped together. As observations proceeded, groupings and codes were revisited as new insights into the reality emerged that deepened my understanding of the students' lives. For example, initially many students reported liking subjects they found easy, but as conversations with students developed, it became clear that students had different definitions of 'easy' – including how much homework they were assigned in a particular subject, and how much success students experienced in completing tasks, and this necessitate the creations of subgroupings for feelings

concerning homework and experience of success. Revisiting codes and groups also allowed me to identify inconsistencies, and modify inappropriate grouped or coded data.

Despite these measures, qualitative data analysis is an inherently subjective process. Miles and Huberman argue that 'what you 'see' in a transcription is inescapably selective. A critical theorist sees different things than a deconstructivist or a symbolic interactionist does' (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.54). Because of this subjectivity, bias cannot be eliminated from the research design – only countered to a significant degree. To do this, I enlisted the help of an expert group at the University of Limerick. This expert group comprised three teacher-educators from the University of Limerick with doctoral level experience of analysing qualitative data sets. Together this expert group and I coded the same transcriptions and discussed the challenges we faced. Miles and Huberman describe this process as 'check coding' (1994, p.64). The discussions brought clarity to my thinking – and allowed me to refine definitions to allow us to come to shared understanding that the codes and emerging themes were meaningful. These themes which emerged in this phase of the research were compared with existing literature with respect to resilience literature; the themes mapped broadly onto those identified by Martin and Marsh (2006).

According to Dey (1995, p.203), 'making maps is certainly a useful way of making sense of data' because they facilitate an analysis of the connections between themes and categories in qualitative research. Concept mapping has been identified as a technique consistent with a grounded theory approach (Miles & Huberman 1994), although the use of 'mental maps' (Dey 1995) and 'cognitive maps' (Ryan and Bernard 2000) have also been associate with alternative forms of qualitative inquiry. Drawing on the above, the conceptual maps created to connect data formed visual associations between themes (for example Appendix D). As the analysis of the transcripts gave rise to a number of themes, I prepared cut-outs of the emergent categories, and grouped similar themes together, arranged on large paper cards. I was then able to annotate various categories and groups of categories to indicate configurations that held significant explanatory power with lines and arrows. Concept mapping was valuable in condensing significant amounts of data to view it simultaneously. The creation of these maps went hand in hand with the continuing

analysis of the transcripts, and as these two processes progressed I was able to incorporate relevant exemplar quotes to provide greater depth to the structure headings and subheadings for many of the categories. The concept maps also offered a structure for the case study reports which follow in relation to Smithstown and Goodwin.

The post-structuralist position 'that all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate' (Harvey 1989, p. 48) is central to the analysis of this data presented here, as well as being coherent with Bourdieuian research. Post-structuralism pays attention to 'other' worlds and to voices that have for too long been silenced (Harvey 1989). Harding (1998) notes:

> "Starting thought from the lives of those people upon whose exploitation the legitimacy of the dominant system depends can bring into focus questions and issues that were not visible, 'important', or legitimate within the dominant institutions, their conceptual frameworks, cultures, and practices."
>
> (Harding 1998, p. 17)

Bourdieu's framework for analysis seeks to afford validity to social actors' situated understandings of their social world. He contrasts objectivist perspectives with the 'vision that informants proposed [to him] when, in their concern to play the game, to be equal to the situation created by the theoretical questioning, they turned themselves as it were into the spontaneous theoreticians of their practice' (Bourdieu 1990a, p.21-22). While subjective understandings are necessary, 'epistemological priority is granted to objectivist rupture over subjectivist understanding' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 10–11). Accordingly, a Bourdieuian approach to data analysis sees the need to problematise what people say as something other than either simply a reflection of 'what is going on in their heads' or a valid description of the social world (Jenkins 1992, p.41). Questions are raised about the degree to which the testimony of research subjects is reliable and about the limits within which they can reflect adequately upon their own practice (Jenkins 2002, p.32-33). The social actor's condition:

> "in a sense doubly limits him [sic], by the material limits which it sets to his practice and the limits it sets to his thought and therefore his practice, and which make him accept, and even love, these limits."
>
> (Bourdieu 1984, p.244)

As outlined earlier in this chapter, in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu's perspective, as described by his close collaborator Wacquant (1992, p. 7-9), is that structures have a double life: in 'objectivity of the first order' seen in the distribution of resources and means of appropriating scarce goods and in 'objectivity of the second order' in the form of a symbolic meaning system which provide templates for action for social agents.

> "A science of society thus understood s bidimensional… must of necessity effect a double reading… The first reading treats society …as an objective structure, grasped from the outside, whose articulations can be materials observed, measured and mapped out independently of the representation of those who live in it…Lest it fall into [a] reductionist trap, a materialist science of society must recognise that the consciousness and interpretations of agents are an essential complement of the full reality of the social world."
>
> (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.7-12)

Using this framework, perspectives then become an important object of study. Such perspectives make meaningful the world which makes the social actors who hold them (1992, p.7), and thus require careful scrutiny.

5.3.1.7 Section Review

This section discussed the data collection methods that were utilised in phase one of the research. This phase of research utilised a case study approach, to facilitate an understanding of the lived experience of young people in schools in an observer-as-participant role. In addition to the observational data, focus groups and interviews were utilised in order to capture the students' perspectives of their experiences, and how they reasoned what was happening in their social worlds. Coding the data that arose from this was an iterative process. Following initial coding which was carried out as soon as possible after observations, the codes were later revisited and developed/differentiated to accommodate the increasing complexity of this social world. To counter bias, an Expert Group of teacher-educators was convened at the

University of Limerick who also coded the emergent data. Arising from work with the Expert Groups some codes were revisited and clarified.

5.3.2 Phase Two: Access Revisited

Following extensive efforts to recruit additional case study schools, it eventually became apparent that in order to progress this research, it was necessary to adopt an alternative method of data collection. The protracted nature of data collection – which required observing many different classes led to feelings of apprehension amongst some teachers. These teachers felt that their practice may be 'on-trial' for the duration of my study – particularly in the context of the media attention (Walshe 2010) which followed the publication of the *No Way Back* report on early school leaving (Byrne and Smyth 2010). This media attention served to place schools, teachers and their organisational decisions under scrutiny – as these decisions were demonstrated to contribute to early school leaving, and this scrutiny also served to complicate my efforts to gather data. Lee (1993) describes how research can be regarded as sensitive if it has the potential to cause a threat to those who participate. In a climate of increased media commentary on the roles schools and teachers play in the process of early school leaving, teachers and staff became perhaps understandably cautious (or what Payne *et al* 1980 describe as fearful of exposure) due to my interest in understanding the perspectives of students who might be considering leaving school early. Despite assurances to teachers that the focus of my study was not to generate value judgements in relation to teacher performance, several teachers – particularly in the second case study school (Goodwin) – refused to participate. Such fears of being 'on trial' were compounded by industrial action being carried out in schools during the course of my research, with both of the major teacher unions in Ireland – the ASTI and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) – instructing their members to 'work-to-rule' during the period in which I was seeking to gather data (ASTI 2010, TUI 2010), in the context of a time of economic hardship and teacher retrenchment. A small number of teachers cited that such union directives were interpreted by them as constraining their ability to participate in this research.

In order to progress this research, it was, therefore, necessary to adopt an alternative method of data collection that would serve to allay teacher fears that they may be exposed as a result of participation, as well as remain coherent with the research

carried out to date. Accordingly, based on the themes which emerged in Phase One, which aligned broadly with the work of Martin and Marsh (2006), Phase Two of the research sought to develop a reflective instrument to explore the third research question further:

- How can teachers help develop students' capacity for buoyancy?

As the next chapters will show, students' individual and group identities impacted on decisions they made in relation to school, and students who perceived themselves as likely to complete school in Phase One had internalised the key values expected of them in both fields and modified their practices accordingly in order to bring about success. They were highly confident of their chances of success, relative to the students who perceived themselves as less likely to complete school. They believed that their success was not spontaneous; rather it required meticulous planning, as well as persistence in order to achieve their goals. When faced with set-back – the students likely to complete school remained composed, while those less likely to complete school reported higher anxiety. Taken together, this process or planning for success, and remaining persistent and composed even in the face of setback gave the students likely to complete school a sense of control of their chances of success. These competencies map closely onto those established in the literature on academic buoyancy (Martin 2014, Martin *et al* 2010, Martin and Marsh 2006, Martin and Marsh 2008a, Martin and Marsh 2008b, 2009). The second phase of this research sought to allow students as well as teachers an opportunity to reflect on the concept of buoyancy in school, and on how it can be incorporated into teaching and learning in a way that is helpful for students. Such reflection and teaching may benefit from an opportunity for the sociological analysis of which Bourdieu speaks (Bourdieu 1998, p.ix), in which social actors can come to modify their practices through awareness of the social determinisms. This reflexivity, in which students become aware of their own socially located and structured practices and beliefs, has transformative potential:

> "Self-knowledge… offers some of the most efficacious means of attaining the freedom from social determinisms, which is made possible only by knowledge of those very determinisms."
>
> (Bourdieu 1998, p.ix)

Indeed, Bourdieu himself made extensive use of quantitative data (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu *et al* 1963, Bourdieu and Passeron 1964), which is viewed as useful once read in context. As Lebaron argues:

> "There is an essential aspect of Bourdieu's work that has been somewhat neglected by those who have written about Bourdieu's theory, that is his constant concern for quantifying his data material and for putting his thinking in mathematical terms."
>
> (Lebaron 2009, p.11)

In seeking to define the elements of buoyancy, and in seeking ways in which the above elements might be expressed and related to one another amongst a large population across numerous different contexts, Cohen *et al* suggest a quantitative research design is appropriate (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.8). Phase Two of this research was concerned with the development and validity testing of an instrument that could allow students an opportunity to reflect on their buoyancy, and potentially inform our understanding of decisions to either complete school or leave school early. The themes which emerged in Phase One indicated that students' perceptions of their self-efficacy, persistence, locus of control, planning and anxiety appeared to influence their students' perceptions of their school experiences. A review of the literature with respect to these themes suggested considerable coherence with the work of Martin and Marsh (2006) discussed in Chapter Four. Two requests were made to the corresponding author to adapt a copy of the scales developed by them for the purposes of exploring buoyancy in an Irish context. However, neither request was responded to. Accordingly, an adapted 'Student Buoyancy Instrument' – (SBI – see Appendix E) was assembled using 39 items drawn from the 'Self-Efficacy', 'Planfulness', 'Anxiety', 'Industry' and 'Locus of Control' scales available from the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg *et al* 2006) in March 2012.

The IPIP inventory comprises an expansive database of 'free-to-use' personality-type scales, and the scales selected for the purposes of adaption were those which reported the highest validity. The items were assessed using a Likert scale ranging from 1-10 (1 – statement doesn't describe me at all, to 10 – statement describes me very well). In order to ensure their ethical suitability for use with children, it was necessary to remove some items from the 'Anxiety' subscale: *'I often feel blue'* and *'I get upset easily'*. The retained items from that inventory were less likely to cause

distress, for example: *'I am not easily worried by things' 'I am relaxed most of the time'.* The readability of the instrument was assessed in a two stage pilot in two schools (one primary and one second-level), and as reported below, there were amendments suggested by the pilot students to make some of the questions more meaningful for them.

In the course of adapting the instrument it was expected that the reliability analysis of each of the scales would differ from the originals, and so a Cronbach's alpha test – which is a measure of the average correlation of all the items making up a scale was performed to ensure that the modifications did not compromise the scales to an unacceptable degree. Nunnally (1994) argues that a Cronbach's alpha score of at least 0.7 is acceptable, and this position is echoed by George and Mallery (2003, p.231), who add that scores between .60 and .69 suggest that the reliability is perhaps questionable, but not unacceptable. The analysis of the modified scales suggested that while the modification did decrease the reliability slightly for four of scales developed (the exception being the locus of control scale), the Cronbach's alpha scores for each remained in excess of 0.7 (i.e. they retained acceptable reliability). The reliability of the modified locus of control scale increased slightly from the original (0.61 to 0.67).

5.3.2.1 Piloting and deployment of the SBI:

Before administering a questionnaire, it is necessary to ensure that it can yield accurate data. This can be verified through pilot testing (Boynton 2004, Fink 2006). This step is important because questionnaires can fail for many reasons. The responder may, for example:

- Fail to understand what was being asked,
- Be unable to complete the questionnaire
- Find the questionnaire too long
- Become bored
- Become offended

(Boynton 2004)

Such failures can be damaging for participants (inappropriate use of their time, potentially causing harm) as well as being an ineffective use of the researcher's resources. Fink offers a framework for piloting (2006, p.40) and this framework which was adapted for the purposes of this research, is discussed below:

Anticipate the circumstances in which the questionnaire will be conducted:

As the questionnaire would be administered during school time, to pilot the questionnaire, two class groups were recruited in October 2012 and completed the survey during normal school hours.

Choose respondents similar to those who will complete the final survey

Because the final survey was intended for Irish secondary school students, it was reasonable to estimate that students with a reading age of approximately twelve would be appropriate to pilot the survey. The first cohort of students in the pilot was a group of upper primary students with a reading age of twelve, and the second group of pilot students were a group of LCA year one students who also had an average reading age of twelve.

Enlist as many people as reasonable in the trial

Fink suggests that it is appropriate to end a trial when the feedback from the responders suggests little need for further refinement. The second pilot group made very few suggestions for further modification, and once their concerns were addressed the instrument was deployed.

Reliability: Focus on questions that students fail to respond to at all, or comments in the margins.

I encouraged the students who undertook the questionnaire to ask me questions if they had any difficulty with the language used in any of the items. For students who may have felt self-conscious at the prospect of putting their hands up in front of their peers, I suggested they make write their comments instead in the margins of the page. A question that caused considerable difficulty for the first pilot group was a locus of control item: '*I believe in the power of fate*'. Eight of the students in the first pilot group struggled to conceptualise what 'fate' meant in this context, and after I had explained its meaning to them, as a group they agreed that 'destiny' might be a more accessible word targeting the same construct, and the item was accordingly replaced with '*I believe in power of destiny*' on the groups recommendation.

The process of recruitment for the Phase Two of data collection was similar to that of recruitment for Phase One, with initial telephone contact with school staff to request the principal be made aware that an information sheet would be forthcoming by email, a period of time to allow the principal to review same, and subsequent follow-up contact to discuss the research. In all, seventeen school principals expressed interest and a willingness to participate, which was a marked increase in terms of interest relative to Phase One. The profile of these schools could not be considered representative of a national context. In particular, DEIS schools and vocational schools were under-represented in the final sample (despite considerable efforts to recruit them). Accordingly, the patterns reported in Chapter Eight should be taken as indicative. On the strength of the pilots, I was able to estimate that a second-level student with a reading age that was equivalent to their chronological age should be able to complete the SBI in 30 minutes or less, and this knowledge allowed school principals to select appropriate windows for deployment of the instrument to their students. Because personality-type questionnaires are typical of the learning experience of second-level students – particularly in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes – the principal was able to consent to students' participation *in loco parentis.* However, students were free to opt out of participation during the briefing session that preceded the administration of the SBI. In total, 571 students undertook the SBI from March to October 2013.

5.3.2.2 The use of self-reports in measuring personality type constructs:

Cronbach and Meehl (1955) suggest that psychological and personality constructs are inferred or 'postulated' traits of an individual. Such postulation is necessary because oftentimes in psychology, constructs are intangible (in comparison to, say, height or weight). It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that inferences that are made truly *do* originate from the target construct in question (Smith 2005). Construct validity describes the accuracy of a measurement of a theoretical construct (John and Soto 2007, Messick 1995, Ozer 1999). Methods of measurement of personality constructs fall into three broad categories: the self-report, the informant report, and behavioural assessment, and the selection of the most appropriate of these for achieving the most accurate measurement has been noted as a prominent issue in psychology (Pervin 1999).

Self-reporting, as can be inferred from the name, involves research participants describing what they themselves are like, and is quite prominent in social science (Schwarz 1999). McCrae and Costa (1999) point out that through the expression of 'enduring patterns of thoughts feelings and actions' people can convey vast amounts of information. Constructs similar to this construction of buoyancy, such as the 'Big Five' (Costa and McCrae 1992) can be measured using such self-reporting. There are a number of advantages to utilising self-reported methods to collect data. Kline argues (1993) that scoring such inventories is oftentimes straightforward. Paulus and Vazire add that self-reporting allows a practical and efficient way to obtain data from large numbers of participants (2007). Accessing high numbers in an efficient manner allows for statistical strength of final results to be improved upon (Westen and Rosenthal 2005). Paulus and Vazire also point out nobody is in a better position to access more information on an individual than the individual themselves (2007).

There is, however, a number of disadvantages to utilising self-reporting in social research. While it may be true as Paulus and Vazire argue that nobody is better positioned than the individual concerned to access information concerning themselves, Judd and McClelland (1998) add an interesting counterpoint; that self-reports are built on several presumptions, namely:

The individual concerned can *recognise* the psychological property the researcher is interested in.

- That they are *capable* of reporting the property to the researcher.
- They are *willing* to report it.

Kagan argues (2007) that self-reports rely heavily on respondents' interpretation of words and presumes that this understanding will allow them to access the meta-cognitive self-awareness to report on their traits accurately. Teachers, however, need to be aware of is that responders may not be able to capable of reporting on their mental processes accurately (Nisbett and Wilson 1977, Whitebread *et al* 2008, p.66). Teachers wishing to mitigate the effects of inaccurate self-reporting from their students may do so through systematic observation, and understanding of the social processes (Zimmerman and Schunk 2001) which give rise to these meta-cognitive abilities in their students (Whitebread *et al* 2008, p66). To aid students' ability to comprehend the questionnaire, it has been constructed so that students with a reading age of twelve are capable of comprehending it.

John and Robins (1994) posit that individuals may possess a distorted view of themselves, which may bias responses. Fiske and Taylor go further to argue that in general, people are predisposed towards self-enhancement – yielding an artificial rendering of the targeted construct (1991). Schwarz argues that it can be challenging to disentangle the inevitable age related changes in cognitive functioning, as well as the cultural differences in communication and cognition from the self-report process, meaning that any differences observed may be a result of a meaningful difference related to the targeted construct, a function of cultural or age related differences in the response process, or an unknown mix of both (2003). To address this issue, metrics are included to identify nationality and age of the respondent, so that meaningful comparison can be made between students of similar age and nationality, as well as ascertain for differences between these students and other groups.

Lastly, there is the issue of 'response bias', which is the tendency to respond on a basis other that the specific item content (Moskowitz 1986, Paulhus 1991). Similar to the argument by Fiske and Taylor, Paulhus (1991) argues that responders may seek to present themselves in a more favourable light than reality – a process termed 'socially desirable responding'. It is feasible that certain individuals may feel

pressure to conform to responses that are likely to win approval of others. This may manifest itself in students responding on the SBI that they are not likely to leave school early, as successful completion of school is certainly desired by their teachers, or equally reporting that they are very likely to leave school early to win the approval of peers when in reality they are less likely to. A possible extension of this research could include administering the SBI to young people who *have* left school early to investigate differing perceptions of buoyancy further – but within the time and resources available to this project this was not feasible here. However, as will be reported in the upcoming two chapters, student self-perception does impact on study behaviour, and so even if student's do not successfully recognise the properties of buoyancy in themselves (as per Judd and McClelland 1998), their self-perceptions are worthy of measurement none-the-less as due to their tangible impact on practice. The students who (for example) expected to be successful (high self-efficacy) modified their practice such as to experience success (through more persistent engagement with learning activities). These findings are consistent with Song *et al* (2013). And this engagement, coupled with self-efficacy, and low anxiety has been demonstrated by Martin and Marsh to positively impact on students' perceived levels of buoyancy over time. There is, therefore, value in seeking to understand students' perceptions of themselves. In addition to the measures outlined above, it is also prudent to point out that by using more than one approach (observations as well as self-reporting) lends itself to a more compelling case for construct validity for the buoyancy construct being targeted (Campbell and Fiske 1959), in addition, in an era of 'fast-data', John & Benet-Martinez (2000) argue research using multiple methods to measure the same concept is infrequent.

5.3.2.3. Review of Phase Two:

This section serves to review Phase Two of the study. Phase Two consisted of the development and deployment of the SBI, an instrument to allow teachers and students to reflect on the concept of buoyancy. The development of the instrument was a response to difficulties with recruitment of willing teachers to facilitate the observations due, in part, to the poor industrial relations climate that prevailed in schools at the time of data collection, and some teacher apprehension concerning their practice potentially becoming exposed as a result of my observations, despite my commitments to the contrary. Accordingly, in order to progress this research, it

was necessary to formulate an alternative method of data collection that was intellectually coherent with the work carried out to date. Drawing on the conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2008a), the SBI was assembled using 39 items drawn from the 'Self-Efficacy', 'Planfulness', 'Anxiety', 'Industry' and 'Locus of Control' scales available from the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg *et al* 2006). Following a two stage pilot to ensure that the tool could be understood by secondary school age students, it was deployed to a total of 581 second-level students across 17 different schools. The development of this research was also guided by ethical considerations that are the focus of the next section.

5.4 Ethics

In this section, the ethical framework of Hammersley and Tiaianou (2012) which underpinned this research is discussed. These authors recognise the following common research principals: the minimisation of harm, respect for autonomy, protection of privacy, reciprocity and equitable treatment of individuals and each of these considerations will be discussed in turn.

5.4.1 Minimising Harm

The principle of minimising harm challenges researchers to identify whether their research strategies are likely to result in harm to research participants, be it physical, psychological, financial, etc. (2012, p1). The priority for researchers should be the maximisation of the altruistic 'good' or beneficence that arises from research activity, coupled with active efforts to avoid, and, where this is not possible, to rationalise why research should include potentially harmful activities (non-maleficence).

Within the context of this research, there is a marked power differential between myself and the research participants, certainly in terms of age across all participants (adult versus adolescent). Accordingly, and overseen by the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee, I designed and distributed information documents and consent forms that were delivered to students, parents/guardians, teachers and principals for Phase One, and to principals for Phase Two. This consent was dynamic, in that participants were free to withdraw from data collection at any point up until the completion of the phase in question. In the case of Phase One, it would, therefore, have been feasible for participants to withdraw up to three months after

they initially gave consent, although none chose to do so. In Phase Two, students were free to refuse to complete surveys if they did not wish to participate and withdraw this consent during the data collection process (approximately 30 minutes in each school). School support personnel (school chaplains) were informed of the content of the questionnaires so that supports could be mobilised in the event that the surveys caused distress/psychological harm to students, in accordance with sound ethical practice in survey research (De Vaus 1996). Additionally, two items from the Anxiety Scale from the IPIP database were redacted so as to minimise the potential for distress to students. The items removed were *'I often feel blue'* and *'I get upset easily'*. The retained items from that inventory were less likely to cause distress, for example: *'I am not easily worried by things' 'I am relaxed most of the time'*.

5.4.2 Respect for autonomy

This principle is concerned with allowing people to make their own decisions with regards participation (or non-participation) in research (2012, p.2). This research agrees with the position adopted by Kellet (2005) that research on young people ought to rightfully be developed in collaboration with the young people concerned. Research should be carried out 'with' rather than 'on' them. With this in mind, the young people who participated in this research had their own voice in the participation process and completed their own consent forms (which were co-signed by a parent/guardian). On occasion in Phase One of the research, in particular, students who had made commitments in relation to focus groups did not fulfil these commitments. In these instances, students were not singled out for criticism but instead were warmly invited to reschedule at another time. Where focus group data was recorded, participants also had the power to request omissions and corrections to the transcriptions as they saw fit. Additional to the schools that participated in Phase One, there was one other school which withdrew consent prior to the commencement of data collection via a letter from their Board of Management to pursue a different research opportunity, and in a second school consent forms were received from a majority of teachers and the school principal, but crucially not from a democratic majority of the students – and so their inferred wish not to participate was respected. In Phase Two, students were free to refuse to consent, or withdraw consent during the data collection process and assured that any data would be destroyed if they elected to withdraw their consent – although none elected to do so.

5.4.3 Protection of Privacy

This principle concerns protecting the anonymity of research participants where it is possible to do so (Hammersley and Traianou 2012). Unless there is a compelling reason as to why details of research participants should be disclosed (and even in such cases providing the participants have consented to this), research methods should seek to protect privacy whenever possible. During Phase One, all field notes and arising research reports contain pseudonyms for all research locations and participants to minimise the possibility of any student or school being identified. These pseudonyms are used throughout this document, and pseudonym keys are stored electronically on encrypted files.

In Phase Two, it was also important to ensure confidentially for participants. De Vaus notes that the promise of anonymity promotes honesty and quality of response – particularly where the content of the survey is potentially sensitive. Additionally, assuring participants of anonymity encourages their participation – leading to a more representative sample respondents (De Vaus 1996, p.337).

5.4.4 Reciprocity

This principle refers to taking steps as a researcher to acknowledge that the process of research is a disruptive one for participants, which requires facilitation and co-operation from them (Hammersley and Traianou 2012). Reciprocity involves what research participants can expect in return for their sacrifice. In the context of this research, I have agreed to provide copies of reports arising from this research to the schools concerned with a view to supporting a discourse on buoyancy once the research has been concluded. While I had hoped that schools who participated in Phase Two would receive feedback in relation to the performance of their students; it would not be appropriate to build inferences on the strength of a non-representative sample of participants. In the process of participation, I did liaise with SPHE teachers, who were hopefully empowered with new ideas for their own teaching which they can use to support students to reflect on their buoyancy.

5.4.5 Equitable treatment of participants

This final principle challenges researchers to treat the various individuals and groups that a researcher comes into contact with equally, and in a way that doesn't show favouritism. During Phase One, I endeavoured to try to spend equal time with all

students; however, I found it easiest to connect with students who were of a similar disposition to me with regards to school. It is much easier to have a dialogue with a student who fundamentally does value school, and would like to see it improved than it is to attempt this same dialogue with a student who has completely disengaged with school and is more concerned with leaving it. Therefore while I am satisfied that I *attempted* to engage with all students fairly, and therefore treated them equally, I certainly have not obtained an equitable representation of their voices in my research notes and reports, as a result of their disengagement. Equality of treatment does not mean equality of outcome, but I am obliged to acknowledge the autonomy of the participants who have chosen to limit their input. In Phase Two, all students in each class group were offered an equal opportunity to participate if they chose to do so. Because Phase Two sought to identify trends and patterns in young people in order to create a useful reflection tool, quantitative methods were employed. Accordingly, in order to ensure that the SBI was as reliable and valid as possible, it was important to maximise the response rate (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.209). All students in Phase Two were therefore encouraged to participate in the research.

5.4.6 Preservation of dignity

The social responsibility of researchers is to preserve the dignity of research participants (Cohen *et al* 2007), and part of the process of ensuring that my interpretation of what constitutes the 'preservation of dignity' is an accurate and reasonable one, ethical approval from the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee was sought and obtained in advance of commencing this project. Recommendations from the committee in relation to information documents to inform the consent of participants was taken on board, and participants were directed to an external contact to address any queries to if they felt more comfortable directing these outside of the research team. As discussed above, consent was both voluntary as well as dynamic and participants were free to withdraw at any point prior to the completion of data collection. In accordance with the preservation of dignity, identifying markers were removed from field notes, and reports utilise pseudonyms to protect identities of participants. Additionally, the data arising from this research is in secure storage at the University of Limerick.

5.4.7 Section Review

This section served to outline the ethical considerations which underpinned both phases of this research. Guided by the framework outlined by Hammersley and Traianou (2012), this research aimed to minimise harm by acknowledging that there was a power differential between myself and the students, and inviting them to take ownership of their voice in this research – by consenting themselves (in conjunction with their parents). Additionally, the 'Anxiety' inventory from the IPIP pool was edited so as to make it more ethically suitable for use with young people, by removing items likely to be distressing. Secondly, the autonomy of participants was respected by constructing consent in a dynamic way – allowing participants to withdraw after initial consent, up until the completion of data collection during both phases. Privacy of participants was assured by using pseudonyms in field notes, and final reports. Original names of participants were stored securely in electronic format. Reciprocity concerns designing research in such a way as to make it mutually beneficial for both the researcher and participants. In return for participation, schools will receive copies of all future research reports/academic papers which arise as a result of this research. While participants in both phases were afforded an equal opportunity to participate, this has not resulted in equality of representation in the data that has been reported. Some students refused to consent, and such decisions were respected. Additionally, some students who were particularly disengaged from school contributed less prolifically than other more engaged students. Finally, the dignity of participants was preserved by obtaining authorisation from the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee to conduct this research. As well as ensuring ethical rigour in my research design, the process of obtaining this authorisation also afforded research participants the facility to contact an external independent representative from the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee to discuss any concerns with my research.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter served to outline the research questions which underpinned this research. Of interest to this study is ascertaining 1) how student i) resistance and ii) buoyant adaption to school is made evident in their construction and performance of school-based practices, 2) Are there any distinguishing features of this buoyancy that can be identified in young people, and if so what are these, and 3) how can teachers

help develop students' capacity for buoyancy? An overview of perspectives in social research was illustrated, as well as a rationale for the approaches to answering each of the three research questions. The first three research questions were concerned with students experiences in schools, and qualitative methods were selected in order to understand this lived experience. Based on the conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2008a), a quantitative metric was developed in order to understand the constructs underpinning academic buoyancy and to encourage teachers to reflect on buoyancy in their teaching. The response rate of schools to this quantitative approach was significantly higher. The development and deployment of the SBI allowed for the self-reported differences in confidence, composure, planning, autonomy and persistence in a sample of 571 students to be measured. The final section of this chapter discussed the ethical considerations that underpinned the research design, and the forthcoming three chapters present the results of these research strategies in greater detail. Chapters Six and Seven discuss the findings from Phase One of this research, and Chapter Eight outlines the results from Phase Two.

Chapter Six: Findings: Case Study of Smithstown College

6.0 Introduction to the findings chapters

In the forthcoming three chapters, I will illustrate the major findings of this research. These chapters discuss the findings from two case study schools, and the deployment of the earlier mentioned SBI to a total of seventeen further schools. In order to introduce these findings, I shall first outline the major themes evident within. These will be drawn upon and developed throughout the forthcoming three findings chapters.

Chapters Six and Seven examine two case study schools, Smithstown and Goodwin, and illustrate the nuanced ways in which the students are constructing their identity – a process through which the students both shape the fields of both locations, as well as be shaped by them. The identity constructions are complex, including gender identities, sexual identities, vocational identities, as well as ethnic and social identities. In constructing these, the students of Smithstown and in the following chapter Goodwin draw on a number of resources, some of which can be understood as originating from 'outside' school, including music, cartoons, and sport, and employment aspirations, as some of which can be understood of as 'inside' schools, such as friendship groupings, as well as their understandings of the curricula they are exposed to in each of the schools.

These findings challenge the appropriateness of the timing at which young people make hugely significant life choices in second-level schools. Students in both Goodwin and Smithstown wrestled with differing conceptions of what it is that employers want from them, and they employed differing practices accordingly.

For some students, schools is understood as a place which offers an opportunity to prepare for living, fostering skills which will be useful in the future, but for others who believe that they are marginalised within the field, the important skills are those that will not be learned in school, and can only be obtained through securing employment. The identity work and conceptions held by this latter group, and the practices that arise from these conceptions are argued to be a constructivist form of resilience.

The findings reaffirm the importance of resistance in understanding academic resiliency and buoyancy, by placing it in the context of power differentials in schools. Resilience and buoyancy describe a student's ability to persevere and achieve their goals and are lauded as positive characteristics in psychological literature. In the context of schools, the power differentials at play between adults who possess the power to frame what 'positive adaption' is, and the young people who must embody this positive adaption, means that a tension can be created when students do not share a belief in the values and the goals that are to be met. As part of the findings discussed later, the 'autonomy' element of the 5C model (Martin and Marsh 2008a) comes under critical scrutiny. While the etymology of the word 'autonomy' shows that it derives from the Greek words 'autos' and 'nomos' meaning 'deriving laws from one's self', because of the power differentials at play in the field of schooling, students are required to play a game, without great influence over the rules of play which they are expected to follow (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). While their experiences in school are routinized, they rarely learn the rationale for these routines – suggesting that that which the literature understands to be student autonomy might be better understood as students embodying the values and practices that their schools expect of them; and *conforming* to that which is imposed on them, rather than co-constructed with them. Bourdieu's account of cultural reproduction in schools also suggests that students whose primary habitus has positioned them to recognise and accept the values of school, are apt to more successfully internalise and embody them (likely to conform to the expectations of school) and are more likely to experience success, at the expense of others whose habitus has rendered them less likely to recognise these values. The findings from the deployment of the SBI also demonstrate qualified support for this finding and are discussed in further in Chapter Eight.

6.1 The Smithstown Case Study

In Chapter Five, I argued that the case study approach was a core element in gaining access to locally constituted social groups in schools. In this context, the local knowledge of these groups allows me to delineate an understanding of the processes giving rise to academic buoyancy, using the informants' own labels, terms and categories – in this way adding to the existing understanding of the 'outcomes' of these processes that has been generated by others (Martin *et al* 2010, Martin 2013,

2014, Collie *et al* 2015). By mapping potential patterns in these processes onto the social groups of young people in schools, I would be able to observe exactly how these variances were interpreted and given social meaning.

As such, Chapter Six forms the Smithstown College (Smithstown) case study, establishing the environment of the school and participants. It begins with a description of the locality in which the school is located followed by an account of my experiences, where I spent three months engaged in observation with a Junior Certificate class of twenty-two pupils from March to May in 2010. Smithstown is a DEIS school (designated disadvantaged) situated in a large county town within a five minute walk from the town centre. Both DEIS schools in the area are undersubscribed relative to the non-DEIS schools, and its catchment area is relatively disadvantaged according to the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO 2011). The catchment area is the focus of a targeted community employment scheme administered by a community development project.

6.2 A Walk around Smithstown

To set the scene of this account, this section gives a description of Smithstown. This is followed by some background information on the academic context of the school and the class group, which serves to define the case (Yin 2012), before the next section examines the students of Smithtown and how they create their individual and group identities, and the features of the academic buoyancy that emerged over the course of my observations of this cohort of young people.

Smithstown is located adjacent to a busy crossroads, approximately a ten-minute walk from the town centre. The crossroads forms an important focal point linking Smithstown's town centre to nearby major cities and thus is busy not only with private cars but also heavy commercial traffic, which passes within ten metres of the several classrooms in the building. There is a mature treeline shielding the view of the crossroads from the school on one side, and the other side of the school, the view is open – looking out onto a terrace of townhouses, and the entrance of a managed apartment complex. Once past the school grounds, these properties begin to change purpose from primarily residential to primarily office space. Walking up the steps on this side towards the main door, I am struck by just how 'boxed-in' the school feels in comparison to other schools I had experience either attending or teaching in,

which were set in mainly suburban areas. It's no more than twenty steps to cross from one side of the road to the main reception, and I wonder whether the school will struggle to keep the noise of the trucks outside; and particularly whether the students, the teachers and I will cope when windows have to be opened as we approach the summertime.

This reception area opens into a bright, modern and large communal space which is used for assembly, the walls of which feature graduation photos of past classes, as well the achievements of some notable exploits students have had in extracurricular activities – including local league championships in football, hurling, Gaelic football as well as basketball. Some underage hurlers have gone on to represent their county at senior level. A class has just started when I arrive first – and the quietness in this space seems a million miles away from the traffic outside, rather than twenty steps. The communal area has a prominent 'wall of flags' that documents the various nationalities of the students of the school. The display is headed by the Italian flag, and includes: Ghana, Russia, Macedonia, Andorra, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, Morocco, Albania, Poland, Austria, South Africa, Taiwan, Lithuania, Zimbabwe, Germany, China, the United States of America, Hungary, Belarus, Iraq and Ireland. I learn later that whenever a new student of a new nationality is added to the school community, a member of the first-year art class is tasked with creating a new flag for this feature. The assembly area is central to the rest of the school, which sprawls out to the left and right in a horseshoe shape. I'm greeted by the school's principal, and together we take a walk around. On leaving the communal area, it becomes clear that this is the most modern part of the school, and likely refurbished or redeveloped recently. The corridor to the left immediately hints at a longer history of this building – visibly older fixtures and fittings, paint notably more faded, and even a different muskier smell – a function perhaps of both the more confined spaces and higher footfall in this area of the school. We turn down a long corridor, which, the principal explains, houses some practical classrooms for Science lessons, Technical Graphics and Woodwork. The doors to the rooms do not have any glass – in my experience most modern buildings include this feature to help brighten the internal corridors – again suggesting to me that this section is at least twenty-five years old and likely more. The ceilings are quite high – and there is exposed piping running down the length of it. A number of the fluorescent lights in the corridor

aren't working, which when coupled with the glassless doors means there is little light in the corridor. Between this darkness, the exposed piping, and the sound of the machinery in the metalwork room behind us reverberating throughout the corridor, I could easily imagine myself approaching the engine room of a submarine, not a school's Woodwork room. Our tour continues up stairs – with corridors on the first and second floor of the school being quite similar though not as dark as the ground floor – benefiting from some more working bulbs. The second floor contains the Art room and seven general purpose classrooms. As we move up other stairs, there is a break in lessons, and I notice that the pleas made by posters on the walls for pupils to 'keep left' are largely ignored – leading to sometimes frantic congestion as students jostle between classes. I begin to take stock of the other notices and signs on the walls - the desire for Smithstown to keep their pupils motivated and focused on achievement is obvious as one walks around and sees the numerous framed posters featuring inspirational and motivational quotes. The stairwell on the second floor reads 'Aspire to climb as high as you can dream', on the third floor the poster reads 'Do something today that your future self will thank you for'. As we return to the reception, I'm struck by the feeling that we're coming back into the present, leaving a time and space largely unchanged from a time where parents and maybe some grandparents of these students went to school here, save for the paint on the walls, uncovered in places coat by coat, by curious student-archaeologists, carefully digging down through the strata. Who else 'woz 'ere'?

Most of the rooms share similar features – walls are adorned with examples of the junior students' work, and also feature posters from Science (diagram of an atom), Geography (a map of Ireland), History (the Second World War) lessons, and other charts which hint at the classes that are based there. Some rooms have older box-style televisions (advancing technology has seen these supplanted by flat screen variants) coupled with Video Cassette Recorders (advancing technology has moved through two iterations of disk based technology since these were the considered the state of the art), suggesting that its likely been a number of years since there was a major ICT investment in the school. One room used for adult education typing classes by night features mechanical typewriters that are surely much older than I am. Both teachers and pupils report a regular struggle trying to get the ventilation/heating balance right in classrooms, complaining that rooms are

perpetually either too hot or too cold. Outside of the main building, there are some other classes held in newer, purpose-built buildings for some practical subjects (a Woodwork workshop), and like most schools in the town, there are some prefabricated buildings housing general purpose classrooms also. The school has a range of PE facilities – an indoor hall, and an outdoor basketball court which doubles for football usage. Off-site access to an outdoor pitch as well as a local swimming pool further broadens the options available. With this brief picture of what the school is like in mind, I shall now give an overview the Smithstown's recent history with early school leaving, to place my findings in context.

6.2.1 Placing Smithstown in context: prior history of drop-out in the field

Prior to commencing observations, I liaised with the SCP co-ordinator of Smithstown in order to identify a suitable class. As part of this preparation work, I examined the schools' recent history regarding early school leaving. Over the period 2006-2009, a total of fifty-four pupils (5%) left Smithstown prior to completing second-level, and two major trends emerged. A majority of the early school leavers, fifty of the fifty-four drop-outs, are categorised by the school as either members of the Travelling community or 'International' students (Smithstown's term for any non-Irish nationals). In spite of the efforts of the School Completion Programme in Smithstown, there has not been much progress made in tackling early school leaving amongst Travellers:

> "There is still a considerable problem of early school leaving, poor attendance, and educational failure."
>
> (Smithstown School Completion Report, 2010)

International students make up the other chief group of early school leavers in Smithstown, largely of Slovakian-Roma community origin. Some of these students transfer to the local youth service; however, there are significant gaps in knowledge about student outcomes in other cases:

> "A sizable number transfer schools or return home, but we have no confirmation of their destination."
>
> (Smithstown School Completion Report, 2010)

6.2.2 Key demographics: Travellers and Romani students

According to the SCP staff, Travellers have in the main, tended to drop out prior to commencing Senior Cycle, with girls more likely to leave with a Junior Cert completed than boys. Travellers will generally do the Leaving Cert Applied should they chose to do Senior Cycle; however, few ever complete the programme. This trend is reversed amongst the Roma Community, with girls more likely to drop out than boys prior to the Junior Certificate examination. Boys will generally complete a Junior Certificate but are very likely to leave post-Junior Certificate in the event of a suitable work opportunity arising. The teachers and SCP staff of Smithstown report that in their experience this is due to the Roma custom of arranged marriages for teenage girls, and a view of teenage boys as 'workers' first and 'students' second. Such 'cultural' explanations for child-marriage and early school drop-out have been critiqued previously by Oprea (2005) as troublesomely incomplete, overlooking the complexities inherent in the socialisation role of schools. She points out that some Romani opt out of mainstream schools as a means of protecting the cultural identity of their children, from both the institutionalised as well as unintentional values and practices that preference the status quo. Oprea also points out that such opting out is also observed in middle class Romani for whom poverty plays less of a role in the decision.

Romani Boys and girls both tend to pursue the Leaving Cert Applied in Senior Cycle, and are understood to use the LCA's 'Work Experience' component as a mechanism through which to phase themselves out of school attendance, although transfers to the local Youth Service also account for many drop outs. This transition usually comes about through gradually seeking more and more days from their Work Experience employer, until such time as the student has effectively faded out of school entirely. The School Completion Report goes on to suggest that in Smithtown the issue of early school leaving amongst Irish working class males has been largely resolved – with these pupils now in the main completing second-level – whether it be through the Established or Applied variants of the Leaving Certificate.

From these points, it is reasonable to infer that the Junior Cert itself is a major milestone and a time of unrest in Smithstown – with most of the early school leaving occurring in the months around this examination. For this reason, there was merit in specifically targeting a Junior Cert group for observation.

6.2.3 Key Structures of the school

The characteristics of the field of Smithstown are important in light of the fact that students' social experiences can induce certain dispositions and habits (Laberge 1995) or an embodied sensibility (Calhoun 1998), giving rise to what can be understood in the context of this research as a 'school' habitus, tailored by and for Smithstown. At stake in the context of Smithstown, are forms of cultural capital (forms of credentialised educational qualifications such as the Junior Certificate being pursued by the cohort) and social capital (valuable or significant social relationships). While Bourdieu argues that physical capital can be conceptualised as an embodied form of cultural capital, others such as Shilling have argued that physical capital should be more rightfully understood in broader terms, which recognise the body itself as a form of capital (1991), giving rise to 'body work' inherent in the field, which is to say the work done to, by, or through, the body (Holroyd 2002). In Smithstown, the body is central to many practices of conformity within the official structures of Smithstown. The regulation of the behaviour of the groups illustrated above gave rise to a conversion of physical capital to cultural capital as will be explained in the coming paragraphs.

Bourdieu's construction of fields allows an understanding of Smithstown as a structured space. As well as the structuring of the physical space – its constituent classrooms, laboratories, workshops and prefabricated buildings; the social experience is also structured by hierarchical positions that the actors in the field held - each of which had its own label. The space in the field was regulated in a number of ways. It was regulated *physically* by assigning particular units of learning to specific locations – for example; Metalwork lessons took place in the Metalwork workshop. Another example of regulation of the physical space (and accordingly regulation of student bodies) was the imposition of 'seating plans' for certain lessons (History, Geography and also Art) which required students to sit at the same desk whenever engaging in these subjects. Space was regulated *temporally*, organising student's days into designated periods where learning takes place (lessons) and free times (breaks). My observations indicated that students use break times as an opportunity to move outside the school building itself (where lessons take place) to the schoolyard; for the purposes of socialising – serving to create a *de facto* distinction between the purposes of these two spaces. Lessons themselves were also

structured – beginning with some administrative work (taking attendance), followed by learning activities, and most lessons concluded with the assignment of homework. This temporal structuring is also seen in the decision to confine particular learning to particular timeframes – the most noteworthy example of which was the decision to structure the students' timetable such that History and Geography lessons were not adjacent to each other, despite the fact that these lessons took place in the same room, and with the same teacher for both subjects – this decision could serve to communicate (implicitly) to students that the learning which takes place in both contexts should be viewed as separate and distinct from each other. This routinized practice is an example of what Hargreaves points out as symptomatic of a wider 'balkanisation' of the teaching and learning experience that effects teachers as well as their students (Hargreaves and Macmillan 1994). Such decisions, when coupled with the vocational ideology which Smithstown communicates to its students, serves to legitimise perceptions that some units of learning (if linked to future career aspirations) should be viewed as more important by students than others, which will be revisited in a later section. Such perceptions are clearly problematic when part of the developmental work of adolescence in Erikson's terms (1969), is experimentation. Due to the high-stakes nature of the field of Smithstown, students may feel reluctant engage in such experimentation, even though it is desirable from an identity development perspective.

These temporal and physical regulations served to bring coherence and structure to the student experience, and it is suggested by Kirk that the institutional practice of regulating time and space to regulate young people's behaviour is the 'defining feature of schooling' (1999, p.184). These regulations also serve to legitimise the authority, order and control of the adults holding power in the field (Kirk 1999, Foucault 1977, Tait 2000)

The students' low position in this official structure, legitimated the need for them to 'play the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Those who did not adhere to the rules of the field (particularly Sofia and Charlotte) found themselves marginalised. Bourdieu suggests that through playing the game – understanding and embodying both the official and the unofficial rules of the field, young people acquire both the necessary physical capital and habitus to function effectively within it. One of the prominent official values communicated to students was that success was important,

and was a function of one's ability and effort. Such messages which equate success to one's ability plus their effort have been dismissed elsewhere by Lynch (1985) as a social fallacy, pointing out that many social positions from which high incomes accrue are not attainable through education credentials alone. The implicit values – what are referred to as the 'hidden curriculum' (Rosenbaum 1976, Anyon 1980, Wren 1999), are understood as an effective means through which students assimilate the norms and beliefs which will allow them to operate effectively in the field of school. On a conscious level, the success of the assimilation of the explicit and implicit values was evident in the way in which the students were (in the main) compliant with the behavioural requirements placed upon them by those positioned higher in the official structure, and through the high aspirations for success which the students held and the modifications they made to their practice to achieve these. Further to this, on an unconscious level, the success of the embodiment of the value of 'respecting adults' was evident from the occasional inadvertent slips students made in mistakenly referring to me as 'sir' at times, and engaging in the practice of 'raising their hand' before addressing me during focus groups or group conversations. Both of these practices would ordinarily be reserved for school officials, but because I also possessed the status of adult, the students occasionally engaged in these practices of respect and compliance subconsciously. The construction of habitus is useful here – allowing an understanding of how such unconscious behaviours can become inscribed into the body (Kirk 1993, Francis 2000). The next section introduces the students of Smithstown – those positioned lowest in the field.

6.3 The Classroom Context: Smithstown

It has been noted in the Irish context as well as internationally that the decisions which schools make with respect to in-school processes, as well as organisational decisions have an impact on student development and outcomes (Smyth *et al* 2007b). Smyth *et al* go on to note (2007, p. 4), that schools have considerable discretion with respect to decisions; such as the number and types of subjects they offer, how students access higher level subjects, and the school's disciplinary policy. Collectively, teacher's may (in partnership with other stakeholders such as managerial bodies and parents) be able to effect change in any of these areas. However, teachers have considerably more autonomy over their own classroom

contexts – which form the focus of this section. Smyth *et al* (2007, p. 5) highlight that a teacher's teaching approaches, their modes of assessment, their interactions with their students serve to mediate the student experience collectively and these three factors, along with the interactions between students themselves form lenses through which the classroom context of Smithstown will be overviewed.

6.3.1 Teaching Approaches

In this subsection, I offer an overview of the approaches to teaching in Smithstown, which I situate within the broader commentary of the OECD TALIS report on teaching and learning in Ireland (Shiel *et al* 2009). This report compared data gathered from Ireland, with data from Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Poland and Norway. The report investigated teacher's beliefs about teaching and pedagogical practices, and found that in Ireland, as well as each of the comparator countries, teachers tend to what could be described as constructivist beliefs about teaching (where, for example, they view their role as facilitator of active learning on the part of their students), than transmission beliefs (where, for example, they see their role as transmitting knowledge, and providing correct solutions). The report notes, however, that Irish teachers tend to support constructivist beliefs about teaching to a lesser extent than teachers in all of the comparison countries while teachers hold stronger direct transmission beliefs (Shiel *et al* 2009 p.6).

With respect to the organisation of learning activities, teachers across the TALIS were asked about their use of 'structuring' practices, 'student-oriented' practices, as well as 'enhanced' practices. Examples of 'structuring' practices include: stating learning goals, reviewing homework or checking student understanding. 'Student-Oriented' practices include as allowing student co-determination of lesson content, or giving students individually-adapted lessons, and finally 'enhanced' practices include the assignment of project work, debates, or activities in which students create products. Teachers across the TALIS countries (and mathematics teachers in particular) reported favouring 'structuring' practices more-so than either 'student-oriented' or 'enhanced' activities (Shiel *et al* 2009 p.7). In Ireland, this favouritism was even more pronounced than in the comparator countries – with Irish teachers heavily favouring 'structuring' practices, relative to either 'student-enhanced' or 'enhanced' activities.

While Irish teachers may report holding constructivist beliefs about teaching and learning, the reality of their lived practice suggests that students in Irish students tend to experience largely 'structuring-type' learning activities. Within the context of Smithstown, 'structuring' practices were observed to be the prevailing pedagogy experienced by the students. There were several examples of such structuring practices. In most lessons, teachers explicitly stated the learning goals for the lesson in question orally. In Science classes, these goals or outcomes were occasionally written on the blackboard – serving as a constant visual reminder. A common recurrence in every lesson observed in Smithstown was the teacher leading the reviewing of homework (it always formed the second activity following the taking of attendance). The typical approach was for teachers to call upon individual students to share their answers to homework questions with the class orally. Students were never afforded responsibility for assessing either their own homework or their peer's homework – the process was always directed by the teacher. Another typical teacher approach involved the use of oral questioning to assess student understanding of the material. This questioning usually invited volunteers to answer, but teachers in every class also utilised questions directed at particular students (calling on them by name) for the purposes of assessing understanding. Outside of assessing students, it was uncommon to see teachers interacting with students on an individual or small-group basis. Generally, when teachers utilised these strategies, it was to support attempts to differentiate the students' learning experiences with respect to lesson outcomes. For example, while most of the observed lessons were mixed ability (some students undertaking the higher-level learning track, and others undertaking the ordinary-level track), in every lesson the ordinary level students were in a small minority. When making learning outcomes explicit, teachers gave instructions to higher level students on a 'large' group basis (typically more than 15-20 students), while ordinary level outcomes were delivered to smaller groups of 5 students or less. In Mathematics lessons, it was typical for the teacher to work with ordinary level students on a one-to-one basis when undertaking classroom tasks.

Other than to differentiate learning outcomes for higher and ordinary level students, it was uncommon for students to experience other 'Student-Oriented' or 'Enhanced' activities. Where these activities did occur, they tended to be confined to particular classes. In Science lessons, for example, students undertook practical work in pairs

or small groups once every week to two weeks – however, it was unclear whether this was underpinned by constructivist beliefs, or rather underpinned by the availability of equipment and laboratory resources – as students only worked in small groups when undertaking practical assignments. In Technology lessons, students undertook project work which required a number of weeks to complete, and students reported that in English classes, they wrote essays in which they were asked to explain their reasoning/thinking at length. Aside from these activities, I did not observe other student-oriented or enhanced practices, such as teachers asking for student input on tasks, working in groups based on their ability, or exploring alternative viewpoints generated by students.

6.3.2 Modes of Assessment

In this subsection, I present an overview of the modes of assessment evident in Smithstown, and which I set in the context of previous examinations of Junior Certificate students experiences of their third year in secondary school (Smyth *et al* 2007b). Similarly to the commentary offered by Smyth *et al* (2007), the students in Smithstown reported during interviews that the proximity of the Junior Certificate examination had a marked effect on assessment strategies used in Smithstown. Themes of teachers adopting an 'exam focus' with respect to assessment recurred several times throughout interviews with students.

> "Homework has definitely changed this year – last year we might have gotten a few short questions to do from the [text] book, but since we came back after Christmas, every weekend we've to do a few questions from the exam papers."
>
> (Aidan, 24/03/2010)

> "It helps us get used to what the exam will be like – so I like practicing the [exam paper] questions."
>
> (Isabella, 24/03/2010)

> "In second year I don't really think we practiced many exam [paper] questions – but this year we do them a lot in class as well as for homework."
>
> (Philip, 25/03/2010)

Most of the students described this shift in their third year experience of being more 'pressured', and Lily echoed previous observations reported by Smyth *et al* (2007b) with respect to balancing new material while revising older material in third year:

> "Now we get new stuff for homework, and that might take you twenty minutes or a half hour, then you've still to read back through older stuff too – it's a lot of pressure."
>
> (Lily, 15/03/2010)

In Geography, History as well as Science lessons, students were offered feedback from their teachers using the criteria indicated in Junior Certificate marking schemes, to guide students to improve their performances. Teachers offered indications of key words and phrases which should be included in answers, as well as offering indications of what student responses may have scored if they were submitted in a hypothetical exam situation. In-class experiences being dominated in this way by the examination system are both typical and long-noted within the Irish context (Gleeson 2010, p.96-97), forming an example of the dominance of the 'technical interest' in Irish education (Gleeson 2010, p.122). Within this paradigm, the teacher takes the role of an authoritative master, while students are demoted to the role of passive recipients (Carr 1998, p.327). The modes of assessment in Smithstown were coherent with such a paradigm – with externally generated 'correct' knowledge dispensed by teachers to students in all subjects. In the section above, I noted that students were not afforded opportunities to assess or give feedback on each other's homework (feedback instead was given by teachers), or to co-construct learning activities, and this trend also applied to other in-class assessments. When students completed in-class tests, for example, these were appraised by teachers only, and students were not afforded opportunities to engage in these processes.

6.3.3 Teacher-student interactions:

Despite the fact that mixed-ability grouping was used in Smithstown, in the course of pre-observation meetings with the school principal and teachers of Smithstown, it became apparent that the group which was targeted for the study was perceived as the most 'able' of the three Junior Certificate cohorts in Smithstown. Such perceptions of 'ability', during the course of these pre-observation meetings were evidenced by descriptors of individual students as being 'strong' or 'weak' students. The concepts of 'ability' were not problematized readily in school discourse, but

there exists considerable academic debate surrounding the concept (see Gardner 1983, 1985, Herrnstein and Murray 1994, Devlin *et al* 1997), and while my professional position (in agreement with Lynch and Lodge 2002) is that the definition of 'ability' is neither singular, nor simply what is tested in schools. I also acknowledge that constructs such as 'ability' can be made real, by defining them as such (Znaniecki 1973).

The interactions between students and teachers were consistent with those reported elsewhere in the Irish context – particularly so with those reported by Lynch and Lodge (2002). For example, Jack indicated an awareness of the differing relative 'ability' across each of the three Junior Certificate class groups:

> "I think teachers believe we're the best class – they seem to push us harder. We're ahead of the other classes in some subjects."
>
> (Jack, 12/03/2010)

Other students offered similar insights to Jack, indicating that concepts of 'ability' were perceived as real amongst the students, and formed a basis for differentiating them from other class groups:

> Addison: I think teachers expect more from us than other teachers do of the other classes
>
> Lily: Yeah we don't really get away with much – they're strict, like.
>
> (Focus group, 12/04/2010)

Teachers also made intra-group comparisons related to the targeted group of students, with the language of 'strong' and 'weak' again common in discussing individual students in pre-observation meetings. Student's themselves offered evidence of internalising these labels, again offering evidence of constructs being made real, through being defined as such. Lily for example suggested:

> "I think teachers are more interested in the students who are doing well in a subject. They aren't as hard on them, and like they encourage them more."
>
> (Lily, 13/04/2010)

> "She knows I'm not interested, and that I'm dropping [the subject] next year, so she just leaves me alone. She doesn't expect much from me."
>
> (Elijah, 22/04/2010)

> "Some students might get detention for not having homework done, but others would just get away with a write-out. Usually, it's the better students who get the write-out."
>
> (Cayden, 12/03/2010)

These student insights align with data reported in Lynch and Lodge (2002, p.75) – that more 'able' receive proportionately less criticism from teachers, and that teachers appear to be more 'interested' in the academic development of the more 'able' higher level students. Lynch and Lodge also observed that teachers spend proportionately more time with higher level students relative to ordinary level students (p.75), however in this present study, classroom observation data diverges from this earlier observation. Instead, observation data suggested that individual attention was more likely to be paid to students believed to be less 'able'. With this said, in each lesson, only a small minority of students (a quarter or less) took subjects at ordinary level. To account for this, teachers differentiated their pedagogy by giving different tasks to higher-level and ordinary-level students. Higher-level instructions were always given first to the whole-class, with teachers following this up with different instructions for the much smaller groups of ordinary-level students. When teachers differentiated in this way, the effect was that the less 'able' students received the vast majority of the 'small group' and 'one-to-one' interactions with teachers. It with respect to the frequency with which students received praise or criticism for their work, it did however remain the case (coherent with data from Lynch and Lodge's 2002 observations) that the Adaptors and Internaliser students (who took the vast majority of their subjects at higher level) were more likely to receive praise for their work relative to Persistent and Fringe students (who were more likely to be criticised for their work). The next section describes these students.

6.3.4 The Students

On joining the class, my initial work was focused on ascertaining what the social hierarchy of the group was. Doing so would allow me to identify the most popular members of the class. I could then seek to align myself with these most popular

members, whose actions may, as has been proven to by Dijkstra *et al* (2008), be influential in shaping the norms of the classroom more generally. Initially I hypothesised these on paper, taking notes on the patterns in seating choices in classrooms where students exercised such choice, as well as observing whom the students interacted with during the inevitable classroom moments where teachers whole-class eye-contact was broken – such as while helping individual pupils with their work or constructing diagrams or explanations on the whiteboard. I also took note of which students socialised together during the transitions between classes, as well as break times. Once I felt I had a strong indication of what the groups were, I asked the class for their help in completing my picture by asking each of them to fill in a document that asked them to tell me their three closest friends in the class. The structure of the class friendships was distinctly hierarchical, with a small handful considered to be a 'best friend' to many of the class, and a link between how close one was to these most popular members, and how popular one was amongst the class, in general, being quite apparent (see Appendix F). These popular pupils displayed adaptability, being able to transcend the other cliques and moulding to fit them as necessary. In the coming paragraphs, I shall give an insight into the dynamics of these social groupings. The categorisations which I use to describe these social groupings are my own terms derived from a synthesis of both my own interpretation of the student world, as well the interpretation of the students themselves. The clusters encapsulate friendships as well as attitudes towards schools and the future. In some cases, there were divergences amongst friendship groups in terms of attitudes towards school and aspirations for the future and these are noted below where relevant. The groupings were termed the 'Adaptors', 'Internalisers', 'Perseverant' and 'Fringe'.

6.3.4.1 The Adaptor Students: The most popular students

My first priority as mentioned above was to establish who the popular members of the class were. The 'Adaptors' were Jack, Aidan, Lily, Marcus and Cayden. 'Adaptors' was a term evolved from my observations of these students success in making meaningful connections with many of their peers. I believed these connections to be a product of a competence these Adaptors had – whereby they were able to correctly identify points of common interest with fellow classmates – and ground their interactions in these. These connections were reflected in the

nominations these students received which came from a range of students across each of the social groups. Doing so required a sense of self-confidence and extroversion to take the lead in such interactions. Students in this group were also notable for the ease with which they negotiated the day-to-day requirements of the classroom. They were highly confident in their capabilities – and this lent itself to a sense of composure in the classroom when faced with new or challenging tasks – they felt that if they worked hard, they were capable of success, and these students modified their practices in the classroom accordingly – engaging in classroom tasks and co-operating with their teachers.

The first of the Adaptors is Jack, who is the most well liked member of the class overall – with twelve nominations as a best friend and is also considered by both teachers and most of the pupils to be the most capable student overall. Jack is from Morocco, and in his spare time, he enjoys playing football and video games. Regardless of the demands of study and homework Jack always tries to ensure time to play football – generally going home to get dinner immediately after school, and playing for about an hour and a half most evenings. His favourite football teams are *Manchester United,* and *Barcelona F.C.* Jack is certain that he will complete a Leaving Certificate, and hopes to be an engineer in future.

Lily is the most well liked girl with six nominations in total. She is especially interested in music, and her favourite artists are pop artists *Katy Perry* and *Lady Gaga*. She spends most of her day sitting next to her best friend Addison, who she also spends time with after school hanging around town. They talk about boys and music. She sees herself definitely finishing a Leaving Certificate but is unsure what the future holds beyond that. She also had a romantic involvement with another Adaptor – Aidan a number of months back, which she now views as somewhat regrettable.

Aidan is a German student, very outspoken, and frequently must be corrected by teachers for talking in class. He had many questions for me about my research and my life in Limerick at university. He wants to pursue engineering in third-level and is quite certain of completing the Leaving Certificate. Aidan's favourite pastime is football – frequently playing with Jack and Cayden after school at the local

AstroTurf pitches. Although living in Ireland, he maintains a keen interest in German football and has attended a number of matches on visits back home to Germany.

Aidan's best friend is a Polish student named Marcus. When Marcus arrived in Smithstown, it was after the start of the school year. He had completed a year of secondary education in Poland, but because the developmental outcomes between the Polish and Irish education systems differ slightly, he was placed with this cohort who were then in their first year. He is an avid computer gamer – and once he ascertained that I too shared this interest, he immediately sought me out for online play on both the *PlayStation Network* and *Xbox Live*. His favourite game is the popular title *Call of Duty*, where players assume virtual control of armed soldiers in combat situations. Marcus maintained he would quite easily 'destroy' me in a match, and as the weeks rolled on, he began to taunt me for avoiding his challenge. Most of our later interactions began with him quipping 'any time, any map' to serve as a reminder both that I hadn't answered his challenge yet, and of his confidence in beating me. Secretly, I never doubted him. Like Lily, he too wishes to go to third-level but is unsure of what course he will pursue.

The final student in this group is Cayden. Cayden is Nigerian, and he has ten best friend nominations from his peers in total. Cayden spends his free time playing AstroTurf football which he is very passionate about. He is part of a larger group of students (including Aidan and Jack) who play at the local AstroTurf pitches in the evenings. While Cayden's is close friends with the students in this group, he doesn't share all their aspirations for the future. While he rates himself as likely to finish school, he much prefers football to schoolwork – feeling the latter is onerous and takes from time that could be better spent playing sport. Unlike the other students in the group (whom all take subjects at higher level) Cayden takes a number of ordinary level subjects including Maths, English and French and Woodwork. is uncertain of what subjects he plans to take after Junior Certificate, and is similarly uncertain of what his longer term future holds, and finds schoolwork quite difficult overall.

As pointed out above – these popular students are recognised as the 'in-group' by their peers, and they draw upon a number of resources in the construction of their own identities. This 'in-group' share a number of common interests and aspirations. One important interest that is common to the three most popular boys in the

Smithstown group is football. For Jack, Aidan as well as Cayden, football forms an important social outlet for them during school break times, as well as after school. Connell (1996) notes that different constructions of masculinity do not sit side-by-side, rather that there is a hierarchical relationship between different forms of masculinity, in which some forms are more honoured than others. In the context of Smithstown, the data suggests that a passion for football is an important component of the dominant (or what Connell calls the 'hegemonic') masculinity. The salience of sporting prowess as a component of hegemonic masculinity in schools has been noted elsewhere also (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Hickey 2008, Carless 2012).

For Jack and Marcus, video gaming also forms an important aspect of their identities. Interestingly – both Jack and Marcus highlight the enjoyable camaraderie they experience through online video gaming. Both Jack and Marcus spoke of online friendships facilitated through the *Xbox Live*, and *PSN* platforms (online architecture facilitating owners of Xbox and Playstation consoles respectively to play games with each other remotely). While much of the academic focus on young people's online friendships has focused on the prevalence of negative experiences, such as cyber bullying (Levy *et al* 2012, Perren *et al* 2012), there is some emerging evidence that feeling part of an online community can have a positive impact on social competence, self-esteem and life satisfaction (Leung and McBride-Chang 2013) suggesting that gaming can have a positive effect on adolescent development in some contexts.

Lastly, it is noteworthy almost all of the Adaptors have internalised the goals of their school. As will be discussed in more detail below – Smithstown is marked by what Carr describes as a modernist-vocational educational ideology (1998) – whereby school personnel stress the meritocratic underpinnings of the education system, and that effort is required to be successful in second-level school, and accordingly obtain a place in a third-level and a fruitful career beyond. Lynch elsewhere dismisses this simplification of flow of social capital through the education systems as a 'social fallacy' (1985, p.88), as many positions from which high incomes accrue (such as land ownership, or control of industrial capital) cannot be realised through education alone. Lynch also criticises the assumption that such meritocratic understandings are desirable in the first instance – as these understandings leave uncontested the fact that opportunities to develop the talents that are to be judged in a meritocratic system

are not equally afforded to all groups. This value communicated by Smithtown has been internalised by all of the Adaptor students. Jack and Aidan have both identified that they wish to go to a university and study to become engineers. While Lilly and Marcus are not certain what job they aspire to in later life – they both identify a desire to go to University after completing second-level school. Cayden also has a strong desire to complete second-level school if possible. While Cayden has internalised the value of completing school, he has not modified his practice in the same way as the other students in this group. Cayden remarked on several occasions to me that both schoolwork and homework expectations were too high for him to realise – and that he much prefers playing football in the evening time, occasionally at the expense of completing homework. He reports disengaging from homework from frustration sometimes, and in this respect, Cayden is quite similar to the 'Perseverant' students I discuss in the next section. Each of these students also nominates Cayden as a best friend.

6.3.4.2 The Perseverant Students: The Hard workers

The next group of young people in Smithstown are the 'Perseverant' students. These are Elijah, Landon, and Addison. Students in this group frequently described school work as difficult, but a struggle which they believe is nonetheless a necessity (in the immediate term at least). Most of the students aspire towards completing school – and some would like to pursue post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC) afterwards. This struggle manifests itself in regular difficulty in meeting the teachers' expectations in the classroom in terms of homework assignments, or additional study. For most of the students of this group, their occasional resistance to teachers was borne from difficulty in meeting the expectations, rather than an outright dismissal of the importance of the messages. They recognise these messages but have difficulty translating them into successful practices.

The first of these students is Elijah who is Cayden's best friend. Elijah is quite downbeat about his chances of completing school (although the SCP staff of Smithstown do not share this pessimism). He finds that both homework and classwork are a struggle for him. Elijah takes ordinary level English, Irish, Maths, History and Geography, but Elijah really enjoys Art, where he excels. Elijah's favourite sports are football and rugby – and he supports *Manchester United* and

Munster. After school, he likes hanging around town with his friends and joining in football matches with Cayden. If he does complete school, Elijah believes he is likely to do something art-related afterwards.

The next student in this grouping is Landon. Unlike the other students in the class, Landon doesn't live in the immediate catchment area of Smithstown. Landon commutes about twenty minutes from a neighbouring village each day. Like the other students discussed so far, Landon also finds schoolwork difficult and takes the same ordinary level subjects as Elijah. Similarly to the other boys in the group – Landon is also interested in football, supporting both overseas as well as League of Ireland football clubs (*Barcelona*, *Celtic* and *Shamrock Rovers*) and also has a keen interest in GAA. He is also interested in rap music – citing *2Pac* as his favourite artist. He is quite confident of completing school but is unsure of what he will do afterwards.

Addison is the only girl in this group, and as mentioned above, is Lily's best friend. While she finds schoolwork difficult, she wishes to pursue the LCA and afterwards has identified a beautician's course (a PLC) that she would be interested in. While she also likes rap music, her favourite artist is in fact rockabilly icon, *Elvis Presley*. She is also very interested in fashion – and her opinions on the latest trends are the focus of much conversation with Lily. In her free time, she likes hanging around with friends in town.

The group identity which has been constructed by the Perseverant students is similar to that of the Adaptor students in some respects. Like the boys in the Adaptor group, an interest in sport – and in particular interest in football is of integral importance. It is noteworthy that a typology exists amongst the boys of the Adaptor and Perseverant groups discussed thus far. The boys who both *play* football, as well as *support/follow* football teams (the Adaptors) are viewed as more popular than the student who *supports mainly, and sometimes plays* (Elijah), who is, in turn, more popular than the student who *supports only* (Landon). This hierarchy is consistent with typologies noted across twenty years of literature in masculine identity and sporting prowess in school (Connell 1996, Hickey 2008, Carless 2012).

It is also similar that many students have also internalised the vocational ideology of Smithstown to varying degrees. Landon and Addison are certain that they will at

least complete school – and Addison has identified a PLC which she would like to pursue afterwards, consistent with the ideology of the school. Elijah does not dismiss the value of completing school, although he has a more measured assessment of his capabilities to do so than the SCP staff of Smithstown.

The Perseverant students do, however, present some differences from the Adaptors – particularly with respect to valuing music. For two of the three members of the group (Landon and Addison), rap music forms an important component of their identity. The use of music by adolescents as a badge with which to express their self-concepts has been of interest to researchers both in Music Education (North and Hargreaves 1999) and social identity theory (Shepherd and Sigg 2015). Other contemporary interest in young people's use of music in this way is also of interest to health researchers (Papinczak *et al* 2015).

Adolescents use music as a way of signalling both their social identity (Tarrant *et al* 2001) as well as their individual identity (Steele and Brown 1995). Social identity theory (Tajfel 1978) proposes that social identity arises from identifying with like-minded individuals (group identification) and that the feeling of belonging that arises from this group identification (ingroup membership) serves to strengthen and maintain self-esteem through positive evaluations from the ingroup. This ingroup membership has the potential to support students in building their resilience – offering ongoing opportunities for supportive interaction with peers (Gilligan 2000, Morrison *et al* 2006). It is also noted in the literature (Tarrant *et al* 2001), that individuals compare their ingroups with other groups (outgroups), and that the outcomes of these comparisons maintain self-esteem and positive social identity and that music preference is a salient dimension of this social identity for adolescents. While there is some research evidence that music preference is a dominant comparator in comparisons between ingroups and outgroups for adolescents (Zillman and Gan 1997), within the Smithstown cohort – the badge used by the most popular students (the Adaptors) was sporting, and particularly footballing prowess; however, both the Perseverant students, as well as the Internaliser students I will describe in the next section, drew on music resources heavily in the construction of their identities.

As noted, two of the three students are linked by an interest in rap music – more specifically the subgenre of *gangsta rap*. This rap genre is an aspect of hip-hop culture described as 'a musical form that makes use of rhyme, rhythmic speech, and street vernacular, which is recited or loosely chanted over a musical soundtrack' (Keyes 2002, p.1). The genre emerged from inner-city neighbourhoods in the United States, reflecting both the concerns and hopes of the urban black youth. Since its emergence in the early 1970s, one of the major transformations seen in the rap music genre has been the emergence of 'gangsta rap' in the early 1990s (Kubrin 2005), becoming infamous for its 'vivid sexist, misogynistic, and homophobic lyrics, as well as its violent depiction of urban ghetto life in America' (Abrams 2000, p.198). Considered the product of gang wars in South Central Los Angeles, Compton and Long Beach during this time, one of the early pioneers of the genre is *2-Pac Shakur*, Greyson and Landon's favourite artist.

Gangsta Rap offers an expression of resistance – or an oppositional identity. While early proponents of the genre encouraged political resistance, such as *Ice-T's* critiques of white racism, or *Public Enemy* encouraging listeners to 'fight the power', following the 'discovery' of rap by corporate America, its subsequent commodification rendered it disenfranchised as a form of political resistance (Farley 1999), leaving it to operate instead only on a 'meaning-making or social-identity level' (Boyd 2004, Jeffries 2013).

6.3.4.3 The Internalisers: Embodying values of the field

The next group of students were noteworthy for the extent to which they successfully internalised the values of the field. They comprised a group of highly motivated self-directed learners, showing high levels of independence in the classroom, and having high aspirations and generally keen to work hard to achieve their goals. The success of their embodiment of the values of respect and compliance meant that they required comparatively little by way of intervention from their teachers during the course of my observations. I, therefore, arrived at the term 'Internalisers' for this group of students. They are a large clique consisting of Logan, Noah, Liam, Chloe, Emilia, Oliver, Benjamin, Caleb and Isabella. The group is also an eclectic mix of nationalities, with two Polish students, two Lithuanians, an Iraqi, an American, a Moroccan and an Irish student. While all grouped broadly together, the Polish pupils – Logan and Noah – were particularly close, and, when together, they were more comfortable communicating in Polish than in English. They were also quite close

with Lithuanian student Liam. Their friendship with Marcus links these students to the Adaptors. Chloe (also from Lithuania) and Emilia (Morocco) were also particularly close – their friendship extending outside the school also, with both holidaying together in Morocco during the Easter break over the course of my time with the group. The final four students in this group are Oliver (American), Benjamin and Isabella (Irish) and finally Caleb (Iraqi).

The first Internaliser student is Logan. Logan moved to Ireland four years ago from his native Poland. His spoken English is quite reasonable and is much better than his written English. His struggles with writing mean that the SCP staff in Smithstown have a particular interest in his progress, and are concerned that he may not be able for the increased demands of senior cycle education. Logan, however, does not share this pessimistic view and instead has very high aspirations. He doesn't struggle with schoolwork during the period of my observations and wishes to pursue an engineering course in third-level after finishing in Smithstown. Outside of school, his interests include football and electronic dance music.

Noah moved to Ireland more recently and has been in the country for three years. He likes football but is a keener supporter than player – following *Manchester United* in particular. Like Logan, Noah also aspires to be an engineer and wishes to go to third-level after completing his Leaving Certificate in Smithstown. He is particularly interested in Science and Physics classes. I found it difficult to connect with Noah initially, because he is much more comfortable communicating in Polish than in English, and I rarely heard him speak English outside of communication with myself or his teachers.

The next Internaliser student is Liam. Liam is from Lithuania but has been living in Ireland for six years. Liam is a keen basketball player and admires many of the players on the Lithuanian national basketball team. He also likes electronic dance music – particularly the *dubstep* subgenre. His favourite subject is Technical Graphics, and he aspires to be an architect when he is finished in Smithstown – for which he will need to apply to third-level. Liam is also good friends with the next student I describe – Emilia, who is also from Lithuania.

Emilia is passionate about music. Her favourite artists are pop acts *Katy Perry, Pink* and *Michael Jackson*, and she also likes to sing herself. Emilia is viewed as a very

capable student – taking higher level options on all the subjects where the choice is available. She is very confident of completing school and has identified the Arts programme in the university in Galway as a potential course option after completing her Leaving Certificate. Her best friend in the group is a Moroccan girl named Chloe – who shares her passion for music.

Chloe also likes to sing, and she can also play the guitar. Like Emilia, she also likes *Katy Perry* and *Pink*. She likes to watch television after school and her favourite shows are *How I met your Mother*, *Desperate Housewives* and *Skins*. Her favourite subject in school is Science, and she wishes to pursue something related to Biology in third-level after she is finished her Leaving Certificate.

The next four students in this cohort all share a central passion for music. Oliver is an American national but has been living in Ireland since his early childhood. Like Marcus, he is a fan of the *Call of Duty* series. His other chief interest is music, and while he likes an eclectic range of artists – his central interest is in rock music. He names *Queens of the Stone Age*, *Kasabian*, *Rage Against the Machine* and the *White Stripes* amongst his favourites. While the SCP staff are uncertain about Oliver's prospects of completing school, he aspires to complete the Leaving Certificate.

Oliver's best friend is Benjamin. He is also a fan of rock music – similarly citing *Kasabian* as his favourite. His favourite subject is art – and he sees himself pursuing something related to art after school, but hasn't identified potential third-level courses to do so. With this said, he does see himself going to college. He too likes *Call of Duty* – which serves to connect him to Oliver, Marcus and the next student in this group – Caleb.

Caleb was born in Iraq (where his father is from), but he moved to Ireland (where his mother is from) early in his childhood. He has a diverse range of music interests – liking rap (*50 Cent and Eminem,* stage names adopted by the rap artists Curtis Jackson and Marshall Mathers respectively) as well as electronic dance music (*David Guetta* and *Swedish House Mafia*). Caleb's other big interest is in cars – and he looks forward to getting his driving licence when he is a little older. He also has high aspirations for the future – wanting to pursue physics in third-level and perhaps becoming and engineer.

The final student in this group is Isabella. Isabella's favourite music genre is pop, and her favourite artists are the Irish boyband *Westlife.* She had the most consistent attendance record of all the students, only missing one class during my observations. Isabella also had clearly defined aspirations, aiming to complete both the Established Leaving Certificate as well as third-level thereafter. She wishes to pursue a programme of study in the arts following the completion of her Leaving Certificate and has identified the arts programme in university in Galway as a potential avenue through which she can do this.

When comparing the identity constructed by the Internaliser students to that created by the Adaptors and the Perseverant students, a number of common resources are seen. Like the Adaptor students, the Internaliser students have internalised the vocational ideology of Smithstown – all of the members aspire towards at the very least completing the Leaving Certificate, and every member of the group with the exception of Oliver have already identified their next step, pointing to specific courses which they would like to pursue in third-level, and some have further already identified specific universities in which to pursue them. Logan, Noah and Benjamin would like to become engineers; Liam would like to pursue a career in architecture. Emilia and Isabella would both like to do a course in the Arts, while Emilia's best friend Chloe would like to study Biology at third-level – and obtain a career in a related field. These high aspirations, derived from internalising the values of success and achievement in Smithstown, are quite similar to those of the Adaptor students. The majority of the students aspire to high-status careers in science and engineering, and have internalised the messages delivered by their teachers that hard work and persistence in their studies is integral to accessing these high status positions, and these students have modified their practices in the field accordingly, by readily complying with their teachers' instructions (these students rarely had to be disciplined for breaching the code of conduct).

The Internalisers also draw on music resources in the creation of their group identity. Like the Perseverant students, the Internaliser students are passionate about certain sub-genres of music, and these passions are used as badges of identification, which serves to differentiate members of the group from each other. Half of the members of the group (Logan, Liam, Benjamin and Caleb) share an interest in Electronic Dance Music (EDM). Of the remaining students with interest in music, Emilia, Chloe and

Isabella share an interest in pop music – particular the artists *Katy Perry* and also *Pink*; while Oliver is passionate about rock music.

EDM is 'an umbrella term used to label…. a heterogeneous group of musics made with computers and electronic instruments – often for the purposes of dancing' (McLeod 2001, p.59). While this umbrella term encompasses very disparate music subgenres and sub-subgenres, Bourdieu's construction of fields of practice (1993) demonstrates how consumption, stratification and communicative processes are deeply interrelated; and because the consumers of the various subgenres of EDM oftentimes overlap with each other, as do the social and the economic systems which support these types of music – the various artists identified by the Internalisers can be compared side-by-side even though they occupy different niches within the EDM sphere. EDM has its origins in the downfall of disco from mainstream popularity in late 1970s, where, driven back to its core of urban and black audiences by a mixture of homophobia, racism and over-hype (Ward *et al* 1986, p.532), the 'House music' style evolved, named for the Chicago Warehouse Club (McLeod 2001, p.62). This space 'offered the disc jockey as a new species of pop artist. Through skill, timing and taste, the disc jockey used two turntables to segue between records with compatible beats' (Ward *et al* 1986, p.524). In time, some disc jockeys began to record these mixes, editing them, and playing them in clubs (Thornton 1996, p.59). While the initial consumers of this music were predominantly black, urban, working-class and often gay, by the time house music reached the UK in the late 1980's and was transformed into 'acid house' – the spectacular 'rave' subculture which surrounded it was distinctly white and middle-class. This rave subculture was categorised by all-night dance parties, partially fuelled by the drug ecstasy (Gilbert and Pearson 1999, pp. 138-139, Critcher 2000). Today, EDM events continue to be laden with this association with drug-taking, leading to social perceptions of a drug-fuelled 'youth-wonderland of escape from the daily grind' (Wagner 2014, p.1).

Malbon argues that by identifying with EDM culture and the scenes which surround it, these Internalisers engage in a particular kind of experiential consumption – in that, they consume an experience which they themselves help to create (through, for example, attendance at discos which cater for adolescents). Doing so is a showing of vitality:

> "the vitality expressed through dancing during clubbing is largely emotional in constitution, arises partly through the flux between the self and the dancing crowd and prioritizes atmosphere, the affectual, proximity and tactility, and the here and now"
>
> (Malbon 1999, p.164)

This scene offers 'an escape attempt, a temporary relief from other facets and identities of an individual… the everyday is disrupted, mundane is forgotten, and the ecstatic becomes possible' (p.164). Part of this disruption of the everyday is seen, for example, in the symbolisation of gender. While the rap music of the Perseverant students is marked by recurring themes of misogyny and male aggression, clubbing scenes which surround EDM are notable by the absence of male domination and aggression, allowing young women to express their sexuality comparatively free from the risk of unwanted male attention (Critcher 2000, p.159), giving rise to the spectacle of the 'rave girls in hot pants and bra tops' (McRobbie 1994, p.169) – a feature of early acid-house scenes. Interestingly, there is a conflict here amongst these students between internalising the values of Smithstown so successfully on the one hand, and the music which they value and identify with on the other, with its frequently recurring themes of escaping, and disrupting the everyday mundane. This juxtaposition indicates that music offers the Internalisers safe space in which to experiment with a counter-identity.

6.3.4.4 The Fringe Students: Unconvinced participants

The remaining students in the class had more condensed friendship groups (their friendship webs consisting of one or two ties). These students consist of three Irish students (Sofia, Charlotte and Greyson), and two further Hungarian students – one girl (Ava) and one boy (Mason). Broadly speaking, these showed high resistance to their teachers and rejected the values of the school. The three Irish students were frequently sanctioned by teachers for failing to have homework done, causing disruption in classes, as well as truancy. The SCP staff at Smithstown were very concerned about these students' chances of completing school, and the students showed very irregular attendance and frequently received disciplinary sanctions from teachers. While the recent school completion report data for Smithstown indicated that the issue of Irish working class early school leaving was largely resolved, it is

noteworthy that within this cohort two of the three Irish students (Sofia and Charlotte) who were perceived as likely to leave school were of non-Traveller origin.

Sofia and Charlotte are two close friends who spend all of their school time sitting beside each other whenever possible. They nominated each other as best friends only. It was quite difficult to establish a rapport with them due to their highly irregular attendance. Both students were suspended for smoking on three occasions during the period of my time with the group (marking the only direct interactions the school principal – the most powerful individual in the field – had with any students), and only attended approximately half of their school days. There is an interesting divergence in the perceptions of these students from the perspective of the SCP staff. While the unit noted serious concerns about Sofia, not confident in her chances of completing the LCA programme, they believed Charlotte was quite likely to succeed in it. Neither Charlotte nor Sofia had a concrete plan for after the Junior Certificate, and both were ambivalent towards their chances of completing the LCA. They both take ordinary level subjects mostly and are generally quite disengaged in class when present – frequently receiving sanctions for talking, or not having homework completed. However, his pattern of disengagement is not universal – both girls (Charlotte in particular) are very engaged in Religious Education – frequently joining in class discussions – where it is clear Charlotte has a very strong Catholic faith. Both girls like rap music – particularly *2Pac* and the *Notorious B.I.G.* – much like the Perseverant students mentioned earlier. Interestingly – as these girls struggle to internalise the values of Smithstown, so too have they gravitated towards music inspired by resistance and an oppositional identity. This love of rap music is shared by the next student in this group, Greyson.

Greyson is a member of the Travelling community. Like the Perseverant student Elijah, he also enjoys art and took great pride in the Junior Cert project which he completed during the period of my observations. Greyson believes his strengths lie in what he considers 'practical' subjects which allow him to use his hands, and other than Art and Woodwork, Greyson takes all subjects at ordinary level. He is quite disengaged with school generally and attended the third fewest number of school days during my observations. He feels that school doesn't play to his strengths generally and with this in mind, he doesn't see much point in school and is certain that he will leave school after the Junior Certificate. He is interested in rap music –

particularly the artist *2Pac*, and also likes football – supporting *Barcelona*. Greyson hopes to pursue more interesting activities through the local Youthreach service after the Junior Certificate.

Ava and Mason are two Hungarian Roma students. Both were frequently absent from school – missing approximately one third of their school days. The perspective of their classmates is that they skip class frequently, although neither confirmed this to me. Mason and Ava are hampered by having limited English - with Ava in particular withdrawn from all but the core subjects in order to free up more time for auxiliary English lessons through the school's resource teaching system. This made it difficult to ascertain their values and intentions during my limited time with them – and it took quite some time until I had built up a rapport with these students. Both intend to pursue the LCA programme in Smithstown following the Junior Certificate – but neither are certain what they will do afterwards, of if they will complete the LCA programme. When not withdrawn from lessons, Ava spent much of her time with Isabella the Internaliser student, who she also nominates as a best friend.

6.3.4.5 Section Review

This section served to introduce and define the case study of Smithstown and the research participants. After spending some time observing friendship groups, the students in the Smithstown cohort were given a document to complete asking them to name their three closest friends in the class. This document helped me to clarify friendship groups that I had hypothesised on paper based on my initial observations.

There are four major friendship groups in the class, three of which each have broadly similar aspirations and interests. The Adaptors are a group of particularly extroverted students who are able to navigate and engage comfortably with other social groups. For the boys in the group, football is central to their identity, consistent with observations elsewhere (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Hickey 2008, Carless 2012). They are all very confident of completing school and have identified possible avenues for third-level study afterwards. The Perseverant students are less confident in their abilities to succeed. While they broadly value school, they find it quite challenging, and many of them find the expectations of their teachers to be perhaps too high. An insight into their struggles is perhaps evident in the rap music they value, with themes of resistance and opposition common throughout the works of the rappers

they idolise. The Internalisers are similar to the Adaptors in that they have high aspirations – and many have already identified third-level universities and courses they would like to pursue – a product of internalising the values of Smithstown. Music is also central to their identity – with themes of escape, and disrupting the everyday mundane typical of their preferred genre, EDM. Finally, the Fringe students are the most disengaged group relatively speaking. These students show very irregular attendance mostly – and have been subject to several disciplinary sanctions by teachers some of which have been on the higher end of the disciplinary spectrum (both students suspended for smoking). These students broadly do not value school and don't see it as relevant to their future aspirations. The three Irish students in this group share an interest in the oppositional rap music valued by the Perseverant students. In the next section, I present the major findings from my observations of this group of students.

6.4 Translating Values into Practices

Over the course of my observations, I endeavoured to understand the processes that give rise to academic buoyancy in young people. I argue in this section that the key process taking place in Smithstown is a conflict between autonomy and conformity, as students struggle to translate the values of the field into practice. It is also evident that students' vocational identities, and how much they enjoy particular subjects, also impacted on this process and accordingly on their engagement in school. Through embodying the values of Smithstown, the Adaptors and Internalisers possessed high aspirations (in most cases PLC courses or third-level), and modified their practices accordingly – through engaging readily with assigned work and complying with their teachers' requirements. Accordingly, their teachers' recognised them as being of low risk of early school leaving relative to their peers in the Perseverant and Fringe groups. While buoyancy literature would understand the product of this internalisation (students having a sense of a place in the world, a desire to work independently of their teachers and an internal locus of control, and finally a sense of both individual and collective identity derived from having a clear vision for their futures) as a display of 'autonomy', this word derives from the Greek words '*autos*' meaning 'self', and 'nomos' meaning 'law'. *Autonomy,* then, as was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, means to have one's own laws, or that one derives laws from one's self. Success within the field of Smithstown however,

does not require students to derive their own laws; rather it requires practices of conformity to the desires of those in power – namely the (adult) staff of Smithstown. While the Perseverant students required more intervention/coercion from their teachers (and could, therefore, be understood as less autonomous), these students in the main have also internalised the values of Smithstown, and in doing so have a determination to succeed such that the majority of these students were also believed to be likely to complete school. Their difficulty is not misinterpreting the objective social value of completing school (unlike the Fringe students), rather they have difficulty in translating this value into the practices required in order to be successful in the field. One thing that surprised me over the course of the observations was that students in all of the groups, with the exception of the Internaliser Isabella, complained that the expectations placed on them by teachers were too high. Study and homework expectations left little room for them to enjoy themselves, and these feelings are discussed further below. I had expected I might have found evidence of students relishing the challenges – and feeling motivated to rise to these high expectations, but in reality, the majority of students found expectations too onerous, and, to avoid failure, chose not to engage with these onerous elements. During the course of illustrating this key conflict, I shall make reference to the academic resilience and adolescence literature – pointing out the areas where there is agreement as well as disagreement with what is already established.

6.4.1 Temporal conflict: Homework and Study Expectations

The key process taking place in Smithstown can be understood as a conflict over the ownership of the time. Do students dictate how this time is spent (autonomy) or is it dictated to them by others (conformity)? This conflict led to a tension between students and teachers concerning the feasibility of expectations surrounding homework and study – the bodywork was done onto students outside the school building. The role of the teacher in setting high expectations for students in class as means of supporting their resilience is well noted in the literature (see for example, Rutter *et al* 1979, Kidder 1990). In addition to such examples, resilient pupils are noted to be more likely to complete homework than their non-resilient peers and are more likely to have support at home to aid them in doing so (Winfield 1994, Morrison *et al* 2006). Almost all of the students expressed that these expectations were unreasonably high, particularly in relation to the time they should spend

studying. Teachers often cited that students should spend three hours per night studying in the run up to the Junior Certificate examination; however, (Isabella aside) this was viewed as unfeasible by all of the students, who claimed they studied for two hours or less over the course of focus groups and interviewing, as well as on occasion openly in class:

> "Miss, we can't be studying all the time, it's really important that we take breaks for football – they say [referencing a previous SPHE lesson] you have to keep getting exercise even through all this [Junior Cert]!"
>
> (Cayden, Adaptor, discussion in science class, 12/04/2010)

Cayden's thoughts above – referencing what he perceived as a conflict between study expectations and his personal wellbeing - are an exemplar of the feelings many expressed to me over the course of the observations. The importance of making sufficient time for exercise during exams is noted elsewhere in resources specifically targeting students his age (Mental Health Ireland 2011), but Cayden feels that such insights are not factored in sufficiently by teachers. It is worth pointing out, however, the sense of affirmation Cayden gets from football – which he excels at. Opportunities for affirmation may be more readily accessed for Cayden on the football field after school, rather than engaging in homework. Other students cited how they valued spending time with friends, engaging in sports and other pastimes, and playing computer game consoles as a means of escaping the stress they were under:

> Jason (J): How late do you stay up at night usually Marcus?
>
> Marcus (Adaptor): I'm up most nights until 2 or 3 [am] playing Call of Duty.
>
> J: Do you ever feel tired in the mornings staying up that late? I don't think I could do it every day.
>
> Marcus: Sometimes but I think I'm used to it – and I need to unwind. The PS [PlayStation Games Console] gives me that.
>
> J: So you feel you'd be up just as late even if you weren't gaming?
>
> Marcus: And probably feeling worse; stressed you know? I wouldn't be able to escape.
>
> (Unstructured Interview, 04/05/2010)

Much like the themes of escapism evident in the EDM favoured by the Internaliser students, Marcus also uses gaming as a means of escaping the stresses of schoolwork. These reservations about study were not limited to Adaptor students; there was also opposition to the amount of reading teachers assigned to students evident amongst the other cliques:

> "I definitely can't spend as much time studying as she wants me to – I'd crack up reading that stuff."
>
> (Addison, Perseverant, unstructured interview 09/03/2010)

> "The homework I can manage, but it takes me so long that I'm wrecked like – I can't get into study afterwards, you know. I won't remember anything – so what's the point. If I got less homework, I might have a chance."
>
> (Benjamin, Internaliser, unstructured interview 11/03/2010)

> "I like working with my hands – I prefer Art and Woodwork over things like History and Geography. It's what I'm better at doing."
>
> (Greyson, Fringe, unstructured interview 11/03/2010)

> "I just can't learn reading all the time – I prefer talking about things like we do in Religion."
>
> (Charlotte, Fringe, unstructured interview 11/03/2010)

There was, therefore, evidence that while the teachers in Smithstown were keen to emphasise that making time to study is important in the closing stages of the Junior Certificate year, this message is not completely internalised by all students. The students make their own meaning from this message – spending as much time as they can justify in the context of what they believe to be substantial amounts of their free time already given to their homework commitments, and their desires to ensure time for leisure activity. This resistance amounts to an effort to winning autonomy. While student engagement is regulated carefully *within* Smithstown and students are liable to be sanctioned for not engaging in assigned activities, *outside* of Smithstown this was no longer the case – and the students win autonomy by not engaging with the requirements that were not effectively monitored by teachers.

Also evident within the quotes above are feelings of powerlessness from Charlotte and Greyson in particular. It is evident that Charlotte prefers it when classroom activity is weighted towards discussions, rather than reading – and is frustrated that classroom routines value reading activities so highly. Greyson speaks in similarly negative terms concerning how his learning activities are structured; he feels it does not adequately address his preference for what he views as 'practical' subjects which allow him to work with his hands – what teachers would understand as bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner and Hatch 1989, Gardner 2000). These feelings of powerlessness, and hoping for a better situation than one's current predicament is also a recurring theme in the rap music that both of these students value (Kubrin 2005).

While there was an obvious and near universal dissonance between students' and teachers' expectations in relation to study (reading) in this regard, the students' feelings towards written homework were more mixed. While it was evident that subjects, where students were assigned relatively more homework, were viewed less favourably than subjects where students were assigned relatively less, it was important to note that some students rose to meet the high expectations. The perceptions of homework are illustrated in the excerpt from focus groups below:

J: Tell me about what you do after school?

Lily (Adaptor): after I get home?

J: Yes

Lily: Get something to eat – and then I start my homework.

J: How long does that usually take you?

Lily: About two and a half hours – maybe three. Sometimes more if we have papers to do. [sample questions from past exam papers]

J: Does everyone spend about two and a half to three hours on homework?

Elijah (Internaliser) Maybe one.

Cayden (Adaptor): Yeah one.

Addison (Perseverant): One and a half – maybe two. Depends on how much we are given.

J: What do you do when you've finished your homework?

Elijah: Might meet up with my friends, watch TV

> Lily: I try to study for a while – but I usually try to take a break for an hour or two first.
>
> Addison: By the time I'm finished all my homework I definitely need a break, like. Definitely need a break if I couldn't finish all the questions.
>
> Elijah: Sometimes homework is so boring I don't want to study, like Geography. I want to have time for football.
>
> Cayden: I think we get too much homework.
>
> Elijah: Definitely.
>
> Lily: Yeah.
>
> J: But do you think it helps you? Is it important?
>
> Lily: Yeah I can see why we need to do it – doing it helps us remember.
>
> Cayden: It can be good to practise maths because we'll see those questions again.
>
> J: So you think it helps practising what you'll see on the exam?
>
> Cayden: It helps me anyways – get better once you practice.
>
> Lily: Yeah.
>
> Elijah: I still prefer English classes where we don't get as much homework.
>
> Lily: [laughing] Yeah.
>
> Elijah: Yeah, more time for AstroTurf [football].
>
> (Focus Group 16/03/2010)

Cayden and Lily's make a point that they do value writing activities, once they perceive that it improves their learning. Set against this insight, however, is their desire to limit the imposition such activities have on their free time. There were significant differences in homework completion rates between the students identified by SCP personnel as likely to complete school and those identified as being potential school leavers. Both the Adaptors and the Internaliser students in the group were consistent in completing homework throughout the observations, and in the majority of these cases they had either successfully completed all of the tasks assigned to them, or had at least attempted all of these tasks. Perseverant students were less likely to attempt all homework tasks, and were notably less likely to complete their homework successfully, and, in tandem with this, they were more likely to speak in

negative terms about the amount of time they spent doing homework relative to the Adaptors or the Internaliser students. There were frequent incidents where the Fringe pupils either didn't attempt homework at all or only partially completed homework assigned to them by their teachers. They also spoke in negative terms about the imposition homework had on their free time:

> "It's [homework] a waste of time. I know I'm going [to the local Youthreach centre] as soon I'm finished in June, so it doesn't matter. What's the point? Couldn't be bothered."
>
> (Greyson, Fringe, 16/03/2010)

> "I'll do some of it – the stuff that's actually interesting. So much of it is boring. I don't see the point of it. Like if I didn't know what was going on in class, I'm not going to figure it out at home."
>
> (Sofia, Fringe, 16/03/2010)

Students who saw value in the purpose of homework, and could connect it with what they were learning in class were disposed to persist at homework tasks, such that they were perceived at low risk of early school leaving. Students, however, felt that the expectations surrounding homework and particularly study [extra reading] were onerous – and so students who were better able to manage their large workloads were advantaged at the expense of students less able to do so, and this emerged as a differentiator of the outcomes for the students.

In an effort to conduct carry out bodywork on the students outside of Smithstown through homework and particularly study expectations, the students were given explicit support in developing the organisational skills referred to above. In my classroom observation notes, I documented that in five of the lessons on the first day back following the Easter break, teachers made a point of reemphasising the message that hard work in the Junior Certificate would set up a positive Leaving Certificate experience and in turn greater successful employment prospects post-secondary school. That week, teachers supported students by guiding revision plans to this end – suggesting that this was a co-ordinated effort. This guidance consisted of mapping out the remaining time until the examinations, and populating a suggested revision schedule with key topics and milestones to guide their revision in the run up to the exams. While pupils were frequently given specific chapters from books/key topics to review for homework, it was more common for the revision to be *suggested*, rather than *assigned.* This distinction is important, as the typology impacts on

assessment. The *assigned* tasks, such as homework exercises, were *explicitly* assessed each day by teachers. However, the *suggested* revision was not assessed in this way. Instead, teachers *assumed* that the work was undertaken, and the assessment can be understood as *implicit*. Accordingly, the gulf between the study expectations of teachers, and the lived reality of the students' time after school never became clear to teachers. Because the effectiveness of the planning supports was never assessed, students who were better able to apply what they experienced in lessons independently were likely to be more successful than students less able to apply these planning skills. Students, therefore, were differentiated on the basis of their ability to translate these organisational skills to practice, without being monitored or supported by teachers any further than the initial input they received. The Adaptors and Internaliser students reported that they spent the most time studying (i.e. conformed most closely to these expectations, albeit still short of said expectations) and accordingly were placed at an advantage. The Perseverant students, as mentioned above, struggled to translate the values communicated to practice successfully. Each of the Perseverant students reported undertaking some study, but far short of the time suggested by teachers, and far less than the times reported by the Internaliser and Adaptor students. Perseverant students recognised that because homework would be assessed daily, it was necessary for them to complete it in order to avoid sanction and they also recognised that because study was not assessed, there was an opportunity to safely resist their teachers, and thereby reclaim some degree of autonomy, by engaging in their preferred leisure activities instead.

6.4.2 Engagement and Vocational Identity

The dissonance between students' and teachers' expectations of homework and revision, and the strong vocational emphasis that Smithstown places on the value of education, has served to create a competition for students' time, pitting individual subjects against each other in a battle of perceived relevance. The result of this conflict is that the students of Smithstown engage in a selection process where they highlight the subjects that they believe are of most relevance to their future career aspirations, apply their energies and resources most to these subjects, and marginalise those subjects that they perceive to be less relevant and useful for them in later life.

> “I want to be an engineer when I grow up. What use is say, the history of World War II, going to be to me in that?... Most of it doesn’t matter, so I don’t really try in History class. I’m not bothered with doing homework for her [history teacher].”
>
> (Aidan, unstructured interview 8/4/2010)

Aidan’s view expressed above articulates a position common to many of the students showing characteristics of buoyancy, as well as the likely early school leavers. Jack, Logan, Noah, Marcus, and in particular Lily, Elijah, Greyson, and Landon all spoke of their opinions of particular subjects being shaped by how useful they perceive them to be in later life, and identifying strongly with these relevant subjects. Greyson for example – only views woodwork and art as relevant to his future aspirations (where he sees himself in a trade as a carpenter and working with his hands), and his practices, were noticeably different in these classes, receiving far less intervention from teachers relative to other subjects. Using subjects as the grounding for the formation of an identity in this way has been noted elsewhere (Mac an Ghaill 1994), as has the perception of social mobility inherent in succeeding in them. Landon also cites the hands-on nature of Woodwork and Technical Graphics favourably, although he errs in understanding the nature of an architect’s work (concerned more with design than drawing), and Bourdieu argues that such understanding of the social world (where subjective perception is at odds with objective reality) can allow us to understand people’s actions:

> “I really see myself working in either a trade or maybe as an architect – drawing like. I try really hard in those classes. I do my Tech Graph homework first – I enjoy it.”
>
> (Landon unstructured interview 16/04/2010)

The Adaptors also articulated a similar strategy – identifying the subjects which they believed mapped most closely onto their Leaving Certificate and post-Leaving Certificate aspirations and focusing their efforts on these subjects. Following a woodwork class where I noticed Aidan was particularly engaged relative to other lessons that day, I questioned whether this was coincidental to which he responded: ‘I know I have to try hard in Woodwork because I want to be an engineer and do engineering in college’. Although the Adaptors were generally the most capable of

juggling the varying demands of schoolwork inside of Smithstown, with socialising outside of it, there were occasions where these students also took decisions not to engage in homework or study assignments in the subjects they felt were of least relevance to their plans post Junior Certificate. Interestingly, I observed these students on a number of occasions giving their teachers excuses such as 'leaving homework in the locker' or 'forgetting to take their homework down [from the whiteboard]' and later in focus groups with these students they would admit to deceiving their teachers and having deliberately not done the homework. While such (occasional) non-compliance was at times viewed as a necessary exercise – the Adaptors took care not to admit this to their teachers believing that doing so might damage their teachers' perceptions of them. These students recognise that to admit the truth would be costly in terms of social capital – damaging their relationships with those in power in the field, which would amount to misplaying the game in Bourdieu's terms.

The Perseverant students placed a very low priority on subjects which they perceived as irrelevant and reported that they did not study for such subjects more frequently. In addition to this, they used more dismissive language towards these subjects relative to the Adaptors – openly describing them as 'stupid' (Addison speaking in relation to History) and 'a waste of time' (Elijah speaking in relation to Geography). Elijah strongly felt that he shouldn't be compelled to take subjects that he won't need for Leaving Cert – and was not concerned at the possibility he could be left pigeon-holed by his decision to prioritise Art, which might leave him unable to change his mind at a later date.

The Internalisers were some of the most ambitious of the pupils, aiming for degree courses in university that would require a considerable number of points from the Leaving Cert, and accordingly higher grades across a wider range of subjects relative to the Adaptors, the Perseverants or the Fringe students. The Internaliser students expressed awareness that even though certain subjects might not be relevant in the long term for a future career, these subjects had a more immediate relevance, as they would need to secure points from them as a stepping stone to go to college to do the course that would allow them to pursue these careers. Much like the Perseverants and Adaptors, the Internalisers have a strategy that views subjects as means to a vocational end – however, because these students all have aspirations at third-level

that require very high points from their Leaving Certificate, they appreciate that they must apply themselves to a wide range of subjects to maximise their points chances. Doing so would allow them to access engineering programmes, computer science programmes, and medical programmes in university. In focus groups, most talked about the need to 'do well' in secondary school as a means to achieve this – but disagreed with their teachers regarding the amount of study needed to achieve the necessary results at Junior Cert.

> J: How important do you think school is for your futures?
>
> Benjamin: Well I need to go to university if I want to study medicine – I'll need over 550 points.
>
> Noah: I want to do engineering, so I'll need to go to university too.
>
> J: And you need to do well in school to achieve this?
>
> Caleb: Yeah school can help you be successful later on, but some of the most successful people in the world didn't finish school. School isn't the be all and end all. You can do very well without it.
>
> Liam: Maybe but that doesn't happen for everyone really.
>
> Caleb: But it can happen.
>
> Emilia: I'll need to go to university if I want to be a vet, so I need to well in school.
>
> (Interview, Internaliser students 14/4/10)

The above demonstrates the pupils' general feelings towards school, as well as including an acknowledgement (from Caleb) it is at least *possible* (although Liam believes it unlikely) to be successful in later life without being successful in school, Caleb, however, does intend to pursue engineering in university, and would need a successful Leaving Certificate to achieve this.

Isabella, as stated earlier, is somewhat of a divergent case amongst this group of students:

> "The Junior Cert is really important because it prepares you for the Leaving Cert, and I do study for 3 hours every day. I want to get a good job when I grow up."
>
> (Isabella, Internaliser, Casual Conversation 5/5/10)

Isabella had her homework completed almost without fail, and certainly significantly more than others in the cohort, and was generally able to answer any teacher's questions in class. She was perceived by teachers to be one of the 'most able' pupils. Her exchanges such as the one above and these observations suggest that she strongly identifies with the values of the staff of Smithstown, and conforms to the norms of the school in the hope that at the end of the process, a 'good job' will be her reward. She was the only student who did not appear to engage in the strategic prioritisation common to many other students. Her utilitarian viewpoint is likely due at least in part to how she has successfully internalised it from the co-ordinated efforts of staff at Smithstown to stress this importance of the Leaving Cert in determining her life chances.

The Fringe students present a different picture. Mason and Ava were believed likely to undertake the LCA, as limited spoken and written English would hinder their chances of success in the Established Leaving Cert. This language barrier presents a considerable hurdle for these students despite the fact that Mason and Ava, in particular, have considerable language support. Sofia and to a lesser extent Charlotte certainly acted in a manner that suggested that they reject Smithstown's expectations of them. Both spent more time absent from school during my observation than present, and aside from religion class and CSPE – neither were ever enthusiastic about participation. Finally, evidence of Greyson's detachment from the subjects he perceived as irrelevant is perhaps best demonstrated by his attitude to History, where he went on a *de facto* strike by choosing not to participate, rarely bringing books and homework to class and resisting his teacher's efforts to engage him in class.

While the overall values of success in Smithstown were not successfully internalised by this group, each of the students did hold to some degree an instrumental, and pragmatic view of the individual subjects which they value – students speaking about their usefulness in the future in terms of guiding Senior Cycle subject decisions, and potentially further programmes of study and potential careers. Such an orientation is consistent with a modernist-vocational educational ideology – where these students view the value of their educational experiences in terms of their usefulness in developing them into individuals who can contribute to society and gain employment (Carr 2009). Such an ideology is consistent with Hannan and

Boyle's description of vocational schools, of which Smithstown is an example (1987, p.66) – offering evidence that the Smithstown students are internalising the values of their school to some extent.

The vast majority drew on human capital values in equating success in school with enhancement of life prospects thereafter. Noah, for example, believes that such young people today need to strive harder than previous generations and require greater persistence and conscientiousness.

> "Employers are looking for more than just a Junior Cert now – even for jobs stacking shelves you need more than a Junior Cert- because everyone has a Junior Cert now. There are people with university degrees looking for those jobs. They [employers] also might think 'hey, if this guy didn't stick out school, it's not very likely that he'll stick out this job either' and they mightn't give you a job. You need to be seen to be able to commit to school if you want to get a job."
>
> (Noah, Internaliser, focus group 15/4/10)

The other Internaliser students agreed with this point in the focus group:

> Jack: I think it is harder it is getting you know? I see with my brothers you have to go to University now to get most jobs. This is harder than it used to be.
>
> Aidan: Yeah points for everything are going up because it's nearly expected that you'll go to University now.
>
> (Focus group, 15/4/10)

Amongst these two particular cliques, the consensus was that despite the enjoyable social aspects and interesting aspects of some of their subjects – schooling was onerous. Despite this perception, the game must be played, even if this conflicts with what they believe to be in their preferred interests – at least in the immediate term. All may indeed be making a virtue of necessity in persevering in second-level in this way (Bourdieu 1990b, p.54).

6.4.3 Engagement and Enjoyment

Not all the class group's decisions on where to direct their limited energies were bound by what they perceived as the vocational worth of the subject in question, however. It is perhaps not surprising that there is a strong relationship between how

much a pupil ‘likes’ and ‘enjoys’ a particular subject and how much they will apply themselves to both classroom lessons on that subject as well as homework assigned in it. In this context, ‘application’ refers to several observable events in the classroom – tendency to have homework completed, co-operation with the teacher in class, levels of focus on the task, as well as the ‘energy’ or enthusiasm I could detect around me in the classroom while lessons were in progress.

Pupils enjoyed, and accordingly tried harder in, subjects for several perhaps intuitive reasons. Finding the material for a particular subject ‘easy’ to understand was a reason common to most pupils, as was a perception, whether justified or otherwise, that some teachers didn’t assign as much homework as others. Several pupils also identified that getting on well with a particular teacher would be a reason in itself to like a subject and try harder in it. The converse of all of these points also holds true – subjects that are difficult for the students to understand, with a teacher who is difficult to get on with and where a lot of homework is assigned are disliked – and accordingly pupils apply themselves less in these subjects – unless these subjects were of material benefit to a student’s plans post Junior Certificate.

J: What is your favourite subject?

Marcus: Woodwork.

Aidan: Maths.

Jack: Science.

J: Why are these subjects your favourites?

Marcus: It’s easy.

Jack: The homework doesn’t take too long.

Aidan: I just understand it.

J: Do you find all subjects easy? Are there some subjects that are hard?
Marcus?

Marcus: I don’t like subjects that are too much effort – like History.

Jack: We get a lot of History homework.

Aidan: I don’t like History.

J: So you prefer subjects where you don’t get a lot of homework?

Marcus: Yeah it means I have more time for enjoying myself.

> J: Even if homework helps you to understand things better and helps you learn?
>
> Marcus: Sometimes homework helps, but a lot of the time it's boring just writing down what I know already. I like a challenge – something new.
>
> Aidan: It depends – like at this stage I know what I'm going to be doing next year – so I'm just focusing on them.

(Interview 23/04/2010)

There is evidence above of what is defined as 'failure avoidance' (Martin and Marsh 2003). Failure avoiding can be a positive strategy for some students – who are motivated and engaged by opportunities to avoid experiencing failure. It also has the potential to cause students to become anxious – which in turn has the potential to hinder the progress of students less capable of managing these feelings. In the exchange above – the students speak positively about the subjects that students perceive as 'easy', i.e. the ones in which they have many opportunities to experience success, and they avoid failure by distancing themselves from subjects they perceive as more difficult and challenging.

What is perhaps less intuitive is that some of the students - even the most at-risk – also enjoyed and applied themselves in some subjects that would be vocationally irrelevant to them. Greyson rarely had to be disciplined in Art, for example, but never participated in History, and Sofia and Charlotte always participated enthusiastically in Religious Studies but rarely engaged with classwork during Geography lessons. Focus groups with the students suggested that a positive pupil-teacher relationship played a significant role in how much students enjoyed subjects, even amongst the most at-risk:

> "In religion, I feel like she actually respects my opinion and wants to hear what I have to say – she's not just talking at me all the time."

(Charlotte, unstructured interview 27/04/2010)

The importance of a positive student-teacher relationship has also been found to be a significant predictor of school engagement elsewhere in the Irish context (Smyth *et al* 2006, O'Brien 2016). Exploring the nature and importance of student-teacher

relationships while no doubt valuable was also fraught with ethical dilemmas in the context of this research. It was clear from interviewing that some students had very negative feelings about a number of their teachers, and spoke about (at times) in quite insulting terms. Many of the Fringe students, in particular, disliked the authoritarian nature of the relationships with their teachers and spoke about feeling that on balance they had more negative interactions (being sanctioned) than positive interactions such as receiving praise. As part of the research agreement, I undertook to manage the focus groups and other interactions in such a way as not to allow them to become platforms for attacks on teacher's personal or professional integrity – because the teachers had no right of reply due to the research design (to allow this right of reply would require divulging the contents of discussions which could risk identifying the students). This was initially very difficult for students to accept, and I had to caution several students during focus groups and interviews (some repeatedly) not to directly name teachers while discussing perceptions of their negative experiences. Instead, students were permitted to speak in strictly hypothetical terms. In doing so, several cautioned that not getting on with a teacher is catastrophic to the enjoyment of the subject in question, and certainly negatively effects engagement in a subject:

> "We respect her because she respects us. She isn't always shouting at us all the time. Respect is important you know? It's much easier to learn when there is a good atmosphere in the room, and she isn't always like *'Why haven't you got this done? Why haven't you got that done?'* She's just able to have a laugh with us and sees us as equal."
>
> (Charlotte, Fringe student, 27/04/2010)

The Fringe and Perseverant students were more likely to report generally negative relationships with teachers, while the Internaliser and Adaptors were more likely to report positive relationships. Elsewhere it has been noted by Boldt (1994, 1995), that disengagement, mediated by poor student-teacher relationships, can be a contributing factor in decisions to leave school early (most at-risk students amongst those with the least positive relationships with teachers). It is reasonable to conclude an agreement with such findings here also, and indeed with similar and more recent observations in the Irish context (Byrne and Smyth 2010). Additionally, the role of warm relationships with supportive adults has been noted by Kauffman *et al* (1979)

as an important factor for facilitating resilience in young people. Findings from this group also suggest that such relationships mediate engagement amongst even the most at-risk students.

6.4.4 Autonomy or Conformity?

Another important finding which poses new questions for discourse on buoyancy and engagement in school concerns the construction and meaning of autonomy. Autonomy is understood in buoyancy literature to be a positive personal resource which young people can draw upon to navigate everyday stress they encounter in school (Martin and Marsh 2008a, 2009, Martin *et al* 2010, 2013, Martin 2013, 2014, Collie *et al* 2015). Schools provide contexts which serve to provide differentiated opportunities to support students in the development of their autonomy (Skinner and Pitzer 2012, p.29):

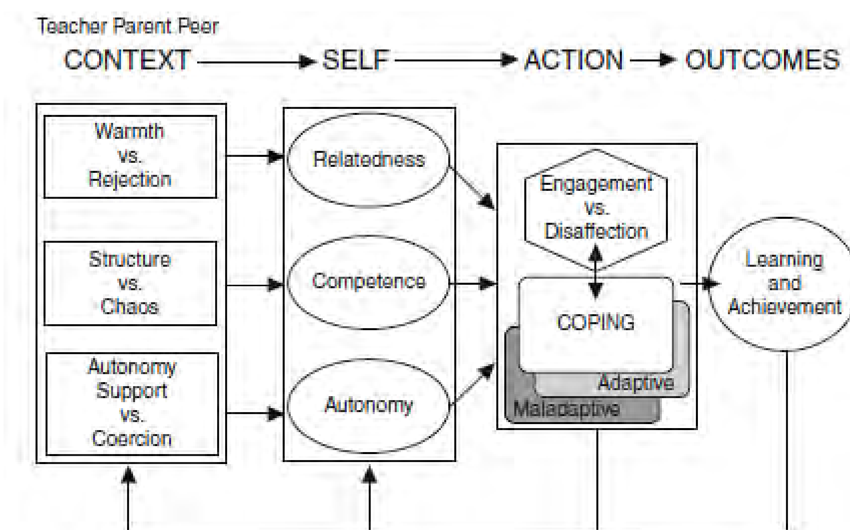

Figure 1: A dynamic model of motivational development organised around student engagement and disaffection (Skinner and Pitzer 2012, p.29)

Inherent and problematic within the framing above of 'autonomy support vs. coercion' in the Eriksonian language of crisis, are the power differentials between the young people on whom such labels are applied and the adults who apply the labels. Such language masks the fact that young people do not share in framing the goals that are to be pursued. Consequently, while their school experiences are often structured and routinized, students rarely learn the rationale for their experiences or

share in deciding what experiences are to be valued. It has been argued that such conversations tend to be muted even within the wider curriculum and political discourses in Ireland: 'the basic goals of the Irish education system have tended to be tacit rather than explicit' (Gleeson 2010, p. 134). Accordingly, the arising 'autonomy', which implies that the practices that are valued have been decided by the students themselves, might be better understood as *conformity,* reflecting that the practices to be valued have been decided by others in the field.

In Charlotte's case, when she feels she is an equal participant in the learning process (rather than being 'talked at'), the effect was transformative. Lily also highlighted this issue:

> "[Religion teacher] is probably my favourite actually; I like how she tries to hear what we have to say."
>
> (Lily, unstructured interview, 5/05/2010)

Charlotte contrasts the empowerment she feels at being part of the learning process – where the conversations with her teacher flow two-ways (from teacher to student and back again) rather than one-way (from teacher to student). From an ideological perspective, Charlotte is contrasting two views on curriculum. When she refers to teachers who talk at her, and are not interested in hearing her own views, she is alluding to what Habermas (1976) refers to as the 'technical interest' – a view of pedagogy underpinned by a classical-humanist curriculum ideology (Carr 1998), which has its traditions in the preparation of 'an intellectual elite' (p.327), and 'the academic pursuit of knowledge' (Gleeson 2010, p.34). It is marked, pedagogically speaking, by teachers assuming the role of 'authoritative masters of an academic discipline, teaching in a formal, instructional and didactic way' (Carr 1998, p.327), and the OECD TALIS report on Irish teachers found that they tend to heavily favour such 'direct transmission' pedagogical strategies, at the expense of allowing young people a place to co-construct their learning activities (Shiel *et al* 2009). The co-construction (which Charlotte enjoys about her religion classes) is typical of a learning experience underpinned by a liberal-progressive ideology (Carr 1998), which tends to encourage the teacher to act as a guide, who fosters a young person's curiosity, rather than assuming the role of an instructor (Rousseau 1762), and is underpinned by such values as citizenship, democracy and equality (Carr 1998). Such co-construction is aligned with Habermas' (1972) conception of the 'practical

interest' of knowledge, which focuses on understanding and meaning-making within a 'historical-hermeneutic' context. This interest is focused on understanding the environment based on a 'consensual interpretation of meaning' (Grundy 1987, p.14) through interaction. Participants engage in 'action oriented to mutual understanding' striving towards a consensus of meaning (Habermas 1972, pp.310-312). The practical interest of knowledge, therefore, recognises the role of the teacher and student in the learning process and promotes communication and a deliberate dialogue between participants (Habermas 1974; Gleeson 2010).

I would argue that the role of the learner in these competing ideologies is markedly different, and accordingly requires two very different dispositions in young people. Understanding a teacher as an authoritative master implies the teacher must facilitate a student's ability to conform, but if the role of the teacher is to facilitate a young person to develop *their own* curiosity – this can be more rightfully understood as developing that student's autonomy. Such ideological differences are a crucial (if unarticulated) aspect of the debate regarding how best to foster buoyancy in young people in schools. The ideologies which underpin curricula position young people either in spaces of empowerment, where fostering autonomy will bring about student success, or disempowerment; a space where the valuable disposition to be fostered to bring about success may, in fact, be conformity. Drawing on Bourdieu, Evans describes how abilities may be constructed (2004). It can be understood as how valued a person's habitus is in a specific field of reference and is a measure of the degree to which the characteristic attributes and dispositions which make up a habitus are valuable (Hay and Hunter 2006, Evans 2004). Hay and Hunter go on to argue that 'student's abilities and futures are largely proscribed by the inconsistency between the dispositions that characterize habitus and the values that define a field' (2006, p.295). Such proscription may be exacerbated in contexts where educators uncritically target student autonomy, in fields where success ultimately requires these students to practice conformity.

6.4.5 Resistance as Resilience

The significance of social identity work to subjective experience and agency (Hobson 2000) poses challenges for the conceptualisation of resilience and of developmental tasks. In developmental terms, two key tasks of adolescence include identity formation as well as school adjustment. Bottrell (2009) argues that:

> "Because understanding of self, relations to others and subjective understandings of the world are intertwined, identity making arguably impinges on all other tasks. Achievement of other developmental tasks may thus be contingent on and interpreted through identity work."
>
> (Bottrell 2009, p.330)

While identity construction is an ongoing process, Greyson has a strong emerging sense of who he is and his position in the field:

> "I'm not interested in school – I'd much rather get into a trade; you know work with my hands. I want to get to be my own person, get my own money; you know – grow up. Teacher's don't think much of me anyways, because I'm not great in class, [they're] only interested in the good ones. I'll definitely be gone after Junior Cert."
>
> (Greyson, Fringe Student, 6/05/2010)

His account presents a number of tensions. He contrasts his opportunities in school with those outside which would allow him to work with his hands, and gain a sense of independence (both personal as well as financial). School in effect contradicts what he views as worthy of aspiring to. He also suggests that teachers have low expectations of him, and favour students who are more 'able' than he is. School perhaps diverges from his sense of who he is – someone who will work with his hands – rather than the 'academic' students whom teachers value – and presents an example of adversity. As such, one could argue that the management strategies he employs, such as disengagement from the non-practical subjects, and his absences, serve to buffer from adversity; and may form an example of a socially defined undesirable outcome being subjectively definied as desirable (Kaplan 1999, p.31-32).

It could be that completing school, as a developmental outcome, may be unattainable for Greyson, as it contradicts his sense of himself. Because of the socially

constructed value placed on 'academic' intelligence, rather than the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence in Smithstown, Greyson feels alienated. His resistance in Smithstown could be understood (Ungar 2004) as a constructivist form of resilience – where Greyson adapts to and manages what he perceives to be adverse circumstances. Critical and emancipatory pedagogy (see Sleeter and Grant 1987, Ladson-Billings 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, Sleeter 2001) might address not only Greyson and the other Fringe students' achievement, but also help them to accept and affirm their cultural identity, as well as gain an understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality and ways in which these social problems might be eliminated' (Suzuki 1984, p.308)

6.5 Conclusion

The data reported on above suggest that the students who are perceived as likely to be successful are those who have internalised their teacher's expectations in the field, and have modified their practices accordingly to bring about success. They possess dispositions consistent with buoyancy. Buoyant students (who are viewed as the least likely to leave school early) display confidence in their abilities to succeed in second-level. They believe that they are in control of this success, which is achieved through persistent effort and effective planning to manage their significant workloads at school. It is noteworthy that this effort and planning is generally less than what teachers may aspire for these students, but the students none-the-less perceive theirs as an acceptable effort. The students gain autonomy by not complying with these unmonitored requirements.

It is also noteworthy that there appears to be evidence that many of the Adaptors, Internalisers and Perseverant students recognise the capacity for school (particularly for failure in school) to constrain future opportunity. In acknowledgement of this, these groups are characterised by an openness to adjusting their practice accordingly (enduring the short-term stress and onerous expectations of schooling as a necessity).

Not surprisingly considering the 'message' delivered by Smithstown's teachers to their students, there is a strong association amongst the students between success in school and success in securing employment opportunities in the future. Though many students aspire to third-level courses in either Institutes of Technology or Universities, many of the more at risk students do not, instead aspiring towards PLC

course or entering the employment directly, and this possibly explains the perceptions that teacher expectations are somewhat unrealistic for them and subsequently explains the resistance that some of the more at-risk students have towards these. It is not surprising that the students believed to be the most at-risk were also the least engaged in classroom activity showing less focus during class, irregular homework completion and reported less frequent study patterns relative to their buoyant and less at-risk peers. It is also important to note that students do not view early school leaving as some sort of failure or leak in the educational system that needs to be corrected in the way that European strategy (Government of Ireland 2011b), or indeed their teachers might imply it to be. Instead, these students simply view themselves as having different expectations that are no less valid – which indeed could itself be an example of what Bourdieu (1990b, p.54) calls the 'virtue made of necessary', where students adjust their expectations in accordance with their positions in the school environment. Perhaps there are two games at play here, one in which the Adaptors, Internalisers and the Perseverant students succeed according to rules set out by Smithstown (following varying degrees of intervention and management from their teachers), and one in which Fringe students succeed according to their own rules. The latter might also be understood as a constructivist form of resilience (Ungar 2004, Bottrell 2009). This distinction is important in the context of curriculum ideologies. Ireland is a country marked by distinctly classical-humanist pedagogical practices such as a reliance on transmission-activities, which position the teacher in the space of authority, and the student in a space where in order to be successful, they must conform. Reshaping this power distribution (a mark of liberal-progressive curriculum ideology), in a way that is more equitable, allows students and teachers to co-construct the learning which takes place. In this space, it may be more advantageous for students to be autonomous; however, in the absence of such progressive underpinnings, the data here suggest that students are more apt to conform to the values imposed on them. The next chapter forms a case study of Goodwin College, and the reports on the findings arising from a three month immersion spent with students in year one of the Leaving Certificate Applied, a strand of the Leaving Certificate for students not intending to pursue third-level education (NCCA 2001).

Chapter Seven: Findings: Case Study of Goodwin College

7.0 Introduction

> "They'll want to see that you've stuck out school. They want to see that you can commit to something and work hard. People won't want to take a chance on somebody who's only left school with a Junior Cert – not these days anyways."
>
> (Elaine, EDM Girl, 21/10/2011)

In Chapter Six, the results of fieldwork carried out in Smithstown Community College were reported. This data outlined three important processes which mediated the students' experiences – namely identity creation, internalisation of values and practices, and their perceived understanding the social world; i.e. how it works, and their place therein. The students created individual as well as group identities which drew upon resources from both 'inside' Smithstown (engagement with particular activities and subjects, understandings of the constraints which failure in school would place upon them), as well as 'outside' of Smithstown (drawing on music as a safe space to resist, and drawing on vocational identities). These identities then had a material impact on decisions surrounding their experiences and engagement in Smithstown – where students privileged particular subjects which they perceived (whether rightly or wrongly) to be of vocational relevance to them in future, at the expense of so-called less relevant subjects.

The second key process which emerged in the Smithstown case study was the internalisation of the values and practices of the field. The interactions between students and teachers in Smithstown can be understood as underpinned by a modernist-vocational ideology. Teachers articulated to students that the 'purpose' of school was to to obtain employment in later life ultimately, and that hard work during the Junior Cert would facilitate a more positive experience in senior cycle education and beyond. This 'hard work' can be understood as 'body work' (Holroyd 2002) in that it concerns 'work done to, by, or through' students' bodies, involving their engagement with both classroom as well as homework tasks. Through internalising the values of the field, as well as the dispositions to engage in this body work, students were recognised by SCP staff in Smithstown as being likely to

complete school, relative to students who did not internalise these values and practices as effectively.

The final key process which emerged in the Smithstown group concerns students' understandings of their social world. Bourdieu argues that 'human beings make meaningful the world which makes them' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.7); and that it is important to understand peoples' subjective interpretations of objective reality. The students' understandings of the social world had an impact on their decisions to either engage or disengage with particular activities. Some students, for example, identified that in order to pursue a desired career, they would need to go to University, and therefore would need to undertake a Leaving Certificate and obtain a certain number of points, and so they modified their practices by focusing on subjects which they perceived to be most relevant in Smithstown accordingly. In other instances, students articulated subjective interpretations that were at odds with objective reality – such as Landon's understanding of architecture as primarily about 'drawing', as opposed to design – which impacted on his decision to engage in Technical Graphics.

These findings query the current understanding of resilience and buoyancy in schools. Both of these constructs describe a student's ability to persevere and achieve goals and are differentiated by the context of adversity faced by the individual. They are both lauded as positive characteristics in psychological literature. As was argued in the previous chapter, normative models of resilience are likely to preclude non-conformist forms and to categorise them in psychopathological terms (Bottrell 2009). Accordingly, there is a need to understand the distribution of power, i.e. who is positioned to frame what 'normative' adaption is. The context of the body work taking place in Smithstown is one marked by the power differentials between adults and students. It is the adults (Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, the Vice Principal and Principal) who possess the power to frame what goals students must 'positively adapt' themselves towards. There was evidence of tension in the instances where students did not share a belief in the values and the goals that were to be met. This can be understood in terms of the 'autonomy' element of the 5C model (Martin and Marsh 2008a). Given that the Smithstown students (and students in Ireland more generally) experience a curriculum marked by classical-humanist underpinnings – where teachers act as authoritative figures and

employ pedagogical approaches which leave little space for co-construction of meaning, the findings from Smithstown suggest that students are more apt to be successful if they demonstrate conformity rather than autonomy. It may be that such ideological approaches to teaching also need to be considered in the debate about how best to foster student success.

This chapter now turns to examine the experiences of the students of Goodwin College, reporting on the findings arising from a three month immersion spent with students in year one of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The LCA is a strand of the Leaving Certificate for students not intending to pursue third-level education (NCCA 2001). The chapter opens with a description of Goodwin College and its catchment area. The chapter then moves to discuss some recent trends in Goodwin. The process of gaining access is then outlined, and the social groups that make up the class are described. The next section then discusses the principal findings of the observations, and finally, the chapter concludes by drawing together the insights of Phase One of the research.

7.1 Goodwin College and its catchment area

Goodwin is situated on the outskirts of a major urban city in Ireland. The surroundings are primarily residential which forms a large part of the catchment of the school. The most recent Census indicates that a low percentage of the residents of this catchment area have advanced to third-level (11%), and in ten of the eleven 'small areas' that make up much of the catchment for the purposes of the census, more families report themselves to be single-parent families than two-parent families (Central Statistics Office 2011). The catchment of Goodwin College has experienced high levels of outward migration over the past twenty five years. The 2011 Census reports that that there are 2,183 people living in the electoral districts surrounding Goodwin College, which is less than half the figure reported in the 1992 census (4,448), and more than a third less than that reported in the 2006 census (3,486) (Central Statistics Office 2011). The challenges that such an outward flow of people might pose for social cohesion and a sense of community in this surrounds of Goodwin College are compounded by high levels of socio-economic disadvantage in the area, where over 35% of people report themselves as being unemployed relative to the national figure of 19%. Further to this, the catchment has been identified by

the 'Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development' (RAPID) scheme as one of the most disadvantaged areas in the Irish state in 2001 (Pobal 2015).

As I approach the main entrance, I notice immediately how secluded Goodwin is relative to Smithstown. The school grounds are fenced off and surrounded by housing estates on three sides, and a sports pitch on the other, meaning the environs of the school are much quieter. Whereas heavy traffic flowed within 15 metres of classrooms of Smithstown, the front gate of Goodwin's grounds opens into an approach road, which flanks the school's rugby pitch and terminates in the car park – there is no through traffic here. The walk is approximately two hundred metres to the building door. By positioning the rugby pitch between the entrance and the building – ensuring that it gives the first impression, I infer that the school places great importance on sporting achievement – and on rugby in particular. The flagpoles immediately outside the main entrance, featuring the colours of the local rugby team alongside the Irish national flag lends weight to this impression. The building itself appears quite modern – the blue and white paint covering the walls seems to be quite recent, perhaps no more than a decade old.

The entrance of the building comprises two sets of double doors. The first of these doors opens freely, and I enter, noticing a small hatchway in the adjacent wall as I pass. The second set of doors is locked magnetically, however, preventing free access to the premises. I hadn't experienced this 'locked door' in any school I had previously visited before and was initially quite curious, wondering whether releasing this door could be easily achieved easily in the event of an emergency. I suspected that the hatchway I had ignored a moment ago accesses the main reception, and return to it to make myself known. An administrator asks me to wait momentarily while she verifies whether the principal is ready to see me, and returns after a short time to release the door. The school principal greets me on the other side, and after we reacquaint ourselves, he gives me a tour of the building.

In keeping with the sporting emphasis I had observed, the walls immediately inside the main entrance feature photos chronicling recent sporting achievements – with current and former students excelling in rugby and rowing in particular over the past ten years on both a national and international stage. The school's senior football team have also captured a number of regional titles over the past few years. Much

like Smithstown, the area immediately inside the main entrance is used for general assembly of students and has many rows of benches to facilitate this purpose. From this assembly area, I notice that while the school is a two-storey building, this assembly area is overlooked by the second floor from above. The footprint of the school is approximately rectangular, with the main entrance is positioned at the corner of the building closest to the car park. Long and wide corridors provide extensive lines of sight in both directions from the entrance, and the principal begins our tour. As we walk past a home economics room, and two art/design workshops which all feature large glass windows to enable examples of student work to be displayed outwards towards the corridors, I suspect that this building has been designed recently – and when I enquire about the history of Goodwin, I learn that while a school has existed on the site for many years, the current building is only a few years old. Like many of the newer rooms in Smithstown, the classroom doors all have windows allowing both a view of the inside of the classes, as well as allowing some additional light into the corridors. The school is also equipped with workshops for Engineering, Technology, as well as Construction Studies, a Home Economics Room, and three multimedia/computer labs. I note there is a number of vacant classrooms as we tour, indicating that the school is perhaps below its potential student capacity. The second floor of the school continues the earlier design theme: long, wide, open corridors, but much brighter with additional light streaming in from roof top windows with the white paint on the walls also adding to this sense of brightness. As we walk through this area, I note for the first time the abundance of lockers – the main thoroughfares of Smithstown were much too narrow and congested to facilitate the placement of lockers – but in Goodwin, the corridors were clearly designed with lockers in mind – there is ample space to both allow access to lockers, as well as provide a thoroughfare for moving students. Classroom doors ahead of us begin to open, and it is clear we are approaching a break in lessons.

As the various groups begin to file out of their classrooms, I notice that they are seemingly being escorted to their next lessons by their teachers. I was quite unaccustomed to seeing this level of monitoring of students, and I query it with the principal. He tells me that attendance is monitored closely to maintain accountability. Each class group has a designated assembly point where they report to in advance of lessons. Before each lesson, a roll call of students is taken at the

assembly point by the relevant subject teacher, who then escorts his/her group to the location of their upcoming lesson. The teacher then takes attendance again in the classroom before commencing the lesson. Following the lesson, the teacher escorts the class back to the assembly point, where they are picked up by their next teacher and the cycle repeats. This level of oversight was certainly more stringent than my previous experiences as both a student, and as a student-teacher where generally students would not be supervised in such a robust manner, and certainly not be monitored and audited while they transition between every lesson.

It is clear from the technology available in the classrooms of Goodwin that there has been a recent major investment in ICT. While multimedia projectors were uncommon in Smithstown (limited to a small number of practical classrooms), the vast majority of classrooms in Goodwin are equipped with both a projector and at least one PC (some rooms having up to four). A tangible transition from the old to the new was evident in Smithstown as one moved from classrooms in the original building to ones in its later extensions, giving a sense of diversity to the experience of the learning environment. However as a more recent development, Goodwin's classrooms appear visually more homogeneous – all painted white, all well-lit, all high ceilings. In many respects, but for the changing of some of the examples of student work on the walls (some rooms were more print-rich than others), one could have difficulty distinguishing one from another. Looking out of a rear facing window, I note that in addition to the full size rugby pitch in front of the building, additional sports facilities to the rear include a basketball court and a second full-size playing pitch as well as an indoor fitness studio and an indoor sports hall. With this sense of Goodwin College in mind, I shall now give an overview of Goodwin's recent history of school completion.

7.1.2 Recent Completion Trends in Goodwin

Prior to observations in Goodwin, I met with the SCP staff of the school to discuss my research and to learn about the recent trends in school completion amongst the students, to broaden my understanding of the context of the school. Over the past twenty years, there has been steady progress made in combatting early school leaving nationally, although school completion rates in disadvantaged areas tend to be generally lower than non-disadvantaged areas. In the city where Goodwin is located, there is a contrast between completion rates in the city, and in the rural

surrounds – with completion rates significantly lower in the urban area, and 3% lower than the national average (DES 2015). Prior to commencing placement, I interviewed the LCA co-ordinator and School Completion Officer to gain further insight into the target cohort. From this, I ascertained that early school leaving in Goodwin is concentrated in the LCA cohort, where 20-40% of a typical cohort leave early on average. This is sometimes via the work placements these students participate in as part of the LCA programme, but not every student who drops out does so due to secured employment. Some participate in youth schemes in the Goodwin area, for example, the local Youthreach.

> "The most at-risk students are the ones in the LCA cohort. Every year there are approximately five to eight students who do not complete the first term of the programme. Generally, we are reasonably confident that students who complete year one, will then go on to complete the programme entirely. Completion rates in the Leaving Cert [Established] group tends to be higher."
>
> (Goodwin School Completion Officer 2011)

While a feature of Smithstown was its diverse intake of students, which posed challenges for the school's language support services, Goodwin has a much more homogeneous intake of students – with over 85% of the students being Irish nationals, approximately 5% from the UK, 5% from other EU countries, and non-EU students accounting for less than 5%.

The school participates in the DEIS scheme, which means it is the target of additional state support, and its School Completion Programme has operated since 2004. These supports are indicative of a noteworthy history of early school leaving. Goodwin takes a whole school approach to combatting this, and their School Completion Programme provides a range of services including educational and emotional support, attendance monitoring, homework and after school study clubs, behavioural support, revision tuition as well as inter-agency support. With this background of Goodwin illustrated, the incoming LCA year one cohort was identified as the most suitable group for study – given that trends in Goodwin indicate that the majority of young people who exit the LCA programme early, do so during its initial months. The next section of this chapter will describe the structure of the field.

7.1.3 Key Structures of the school

Parallels can be drawn between Goodwin and Smithstown regarding many of the physical and temporal efforts to structure the student experience. Temporal structuring of the field includes compartmentalising the school day into blocks of time where learning takes place (lessons) and free time for students (breaks). These blocks of lessons were further differentiated according to the subjects which were taught at particular time-points. There was a double class of seventy minutes for example for Visual Art once per week on Thursday, and apart from Mondays, Maths was allocated a single class period every day. On a micro-level, there were also parallels to be drawn with Smithstown which lent towards giving a sense of continuity to the student experience. Individual lessons began with students' attendance being monitored (administrative task), followed by the lesson's learning activities, and followed by the assignment of homework (another administrative task). Physical regulation of the space was also apparent. Like Smithstown, certain rooms were designated for specific functions (often tied to the subjects taught therein) for example there was a science laboratory – in which Junior Certificate science lessons were held, as well and Leaving Certificate Chemistry classes. There were other specific rooms also for Art, Woodwork and a Gymnasium for in which Physical Education took place. There was also regulation of student bodies evident. Students were required to wear a prescribed uniform, and on occasion were sanctioned for failing to do so. While there was no specific seating plan evident in any of the classes – students would on occasion be required to move seats, if they were engaged in disruptive behaviour. Students wishing to exit during the school 'lesson time' were required to be signed-out by a parent/guardian. In addition to these ways in which students' physical space and bodies were regulated, two additional measures were evident in Goodwin. Firstly – there were separate access ways to the school for adults and adolescents. While this structure in itself serves to legitimate the authority of the adults in the field, there were additional controls placed even on adults wishing to enter the school. The main entrance for adults required insider knowledge of how to overcome the electronic lock to access the premises once teaching time had begun. Those not in possession this insider knowledge (i.e. the visitors) must ask permission from a school administrator to enter (the door is released from the office). This practice could have served to illustrate a hierarchy amongst adults to the students in which school staff are

positioned higher (possessing necessary capital to enter the door) than non-staff (who do not possess this capital). In addition to this, the attendance taking procedures in Goodwin (and accordingly the regulation of student bodies) was a much more robust and comprehensive exercise in Goodwin than Smithstown as highlighted above. In Smithstown, students were able to move through the corridors freely and unsupervised between lessons. In Goodwin, there was much greater control over the movement of students between lessons.

Other similarities that can be drawn between how the fields in both locations are structured concern the labels applied to various individuals and groups in the context. The most powerful individual in Goodwin is the School Principal, as was the case in Smithstown, who served a similar role within the field, as a final arbiter with parents in the event that there was a serious disciplinary breach. Immediately below the School Principal was also Vice Principal – whose role was similar to that described in relation to Smithstown. With this said, there are also some noteworthy differences within the field. While there were also Year Heads in Goodwin, the individual afforded responsibility of the LCA group was designated the LCA Co-ordinator. This re-designation provides students and teachers with evidence of the distinct nature of the LCA programme. Students engaged in the LCE pathway would have experienced a relative continuity of experience as they witnessed the labels for the individuals with responsibility for their year group change, to reflecting the students' increasing seniority in the field. Their year head in first year was labelled the 'First Year Year Head', in second year the label was 'Second Year Year Head' and so on. The label 'LCA1 Co-Ordinator' for students in year one of the LCA, as opposed to Fifth Year Year Head for the students in year one of the LCE, offers evidence that the LCA students are distinct. The students themselves perceive their distinction in terms of their academic ability and their ability to conform to the school's code of conduct, and accordingly position themselves as less capable, relative to the LCE students:

> "It's not like we're getting homework all the time in every subject like the other [LCE] fifth years do."
>
> (Elaine, 21/10/2011)

> "It's definitely easier than the Leaving Cert anyway. I can't learn stuff off like – it's not for me. I wouldn't last in the Leaving Cert [Established]."
>
> (Zach, 09/11/2011)

> "I'm enjoying LCA so far. We get to have a laugh. They [teachers] treat LCA students differently like – they aren't so hard on us. They're much sounder."
>
> (Denise, 21/10/2011)

> Gabriel: well look we're not good at staying quiet long, do you know what I mean
>
> Corbin: (laughing) that's why half of us are here! [LCA]
>
> (Unstructured interview 15/11/2011)

Bourdieu uses the term *doxa* to describe people's sense of place in a field (1977). This sense is inscribed into the subconscious of actors through socialisation resulting in the social world appears to be self-evident. This sense of a taken for granted is evident in relation to how the students perceive their place in Goodwin. Zach speaks of the LCA being a place for students who are less capable. The more capable students are on the LCE track, and because Zach perceives himself as less capable, he accepts that his place is in the LCA. Denise's quote suggests that teachers too act according to the doxa – 'going easy' on the 'less capable' LCA students. Bourdieu however also challenges us to interpret the objective nature of the field also – while students perceive their 'lower' status in terms of their ability and interpret their experiences accordingly; it can also be argued that schools advantage those whose value systems map closely onto those of the school. Through misinterpreting the objective reality in this way, and seeing themselves as being inevitably 'selected' (in this case on the basis of their ability), McElwee *et al* argue that young people can subconsciously collude in their own disempowerment (2002, p.202).

7.2 The Classroom Context

As was noted in the previous chapter, both domestically in Ireland, as well as internationally, the organisational decisions and the decisions relating to in-school processes serve to impact on student development and outcomes (Smyth *et al*

2007b). Schools can exercise considerable discretion with respect to these decisions, such as decisions related to subject offerings, allocating students to academic tracks, and the schools discipline policy (Smyth *et al* 2007, p.4), and while teachers may be able to influence such decisions in partnership with other stakeholders, teachers have considerably more autonomy over their own classroom contexts. As in the previous chapter, the framework of Smyth *et al* (2007, p. 5) which highlights that a teacher's teaching approaches, their modes of assessment, their interactions with their students serve to mediate the student experience collectively, and that these three factors, along with the interactions between students themselves will form lenses through which the classroom context of Goodwin will now be overviewed.

7.2.1Teaching Approaches

As was discussed in Chapter Six, the OECD TALIS report on teaching and learning in Ireland highlighted a number of features of the Irish second-level teaching experience. (Shiel *et al* 2009). Drawing together data from Ireland, Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Poland and Norway, the report investigated teacher's beliefs about teaching and pedagogical practices. A key finding from this report was that teachers in each country favoured constructivist beliefs about teaching relative to transmission beliefs (Shiel *et al* 2009 p.6), however Irish teachers held the constructivist beliefs to a lesser extent, and transmission beliefs to a stronger extent than their peers in Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Poland and Norway. Irish teachers also indicated that they favoured the use of structuring practices, over the use of student-oriented or enhanced practices, to a greater extent than their colleagues in these other countries.

The students of Goodwin pursued a particular senior cycle academic pathway – namely the Leaving Certificate Applied. This two year program has a modular structure and has a specific emphasis on active teaching and learning experiences, features of which are the community-orientated dimension, embracing out-of-school learning, and work experience opportunities. The program has its roots in two 'transition from school to work' programmes, namely the 'Senior Certificate', and 'Vocational Training and Preparation' (Gleeson *et al* 2002, p.22). The program is built around three key elements (Gleeson and Granville 1995 , p.119):

- Vocational Preparation: inclusive of guidance, work experience, English and Communication, enterprise and preparation for work;
- Vocational Education: including two specialist areas of vocational occupation, together with mathematical applications and information technology;
- General Education: including arts education, social education, languages and leisure education modules.

The LCA Program has ‘a conscious integrative, cross-curricular dimension’ (Gleeson and Granville 1995, p.119), with the cross-curricular integration most readily visible in the ‘student tasks’, nine of which are undertaken over the duration of the course. The LCA is assessed at a common level where students earn credits for satisfactory completion of the modules, the tasks, as well as an external examination process. Students are awarded either a ‘pass’ (for accumulating 60 credits), ‘merit’ (accumulating 70 credits) or ‘distinction’ (85 credits).

The distinct nature of the LCA program gave rise to a different on the teaching approaches used by teachers. As was the case in Smithstown, structuring-type practices were evident but were not the prevailing pedagogical approach observed in Goodwin. For example, in most lessons, Goodwin teachers orally stated the learning goals for the upcoming lesson in advance, to serve to demarcate the students’ learning experience. While the assigning of homework Goodwin was atypical, generally confined to either Maths or Art classes, it remained the case that the correction of any homework assigned was a priority activity, and was completed early in lessons. It also remained the case that the correction of homework was a teacher-led activity, with teachers regularly calling upon individual students to share their homework responses with the wider group in Maths lessons. Student-inclusive approaches to this activity, such as affording responsibility for students to assessing either their own homework or each-others homework were absent. Teachers also made use of oral and written questions to ascertain their students’ understanding of the material, with teachers both calling on volunteers, as well as directing questions to individual students.

The students of Goodwin experienced a relatively higher degree of interaction with their teacher in both individual as well as a small group settings relative to the

students in Smithstown and accordingly experienced greater student-oriented practices. This was most clearly evident in Art classes, which was linked to an ongoing 'Student Task' element - where the majority of interaction with the teacher was with small groups or differentiated on a one-to one basis. Student input was also frequently sought in order to plan classroom activity, and the task could be understood as an enhanced activity, as it continued over a number of weeks of my observations. In this way, the pedagogical approach is in keeping with the findings of (Banks *et al* 2010).

7.2.2 Modes of assessment and Teacher Interactions

In this subsection, I present an overview of the modes of assessment evident in Goodwin. The cross-curricular and integrated nature of the LCA program in Goodwin was quite unlike the Junior Certificate program in Smithstown, and the modes of assessment were also quite divergent. In Goodwin, a significant amount of project work was assigned to students, such as in Art, and Social education which took many weeks to complete. Students produced artefacts, such as the identity maps which took the form of a poster and engaged in frequent classroom discussions in their English and Communication lessons. There was a noteworthy contrast between the largely written forms of expression which were valued in Smithstown (responses to examination questions) and the largely visual or aural forms of expression which were typically engaged in to assess students in Goodwin. While I did not observe the Goodwin students while they were in their Junior Cycle, the students did identify in interviewing that there was a significant change in their day-to-day classwork from Junior Certificate to LCA:

> "It's definitely more of a doss in LCA – like we don't get as much [written] homework or writing to do as we used to last year."
>
> (Leighanne, 18/10/2011)

> "We definitely aren't expected to write as much now, we do projects like [in Art class], and I much prefer that."
>
> (Zach 18/10/2011)

> "I like that we get to talk about things before we do them – like [English teacher] really wants to hear what we have to say. We get to have a say in things."
>
> (Philipa 18/10/2011)

The modes of assessment, as well as the emphasis on classroom discussion, is consistent with Habermas' (1972) conception of the 'practical interest' of knowledge, which focuses on understanding and meaning-making within a 'historical-hermeneutic' context. This interest is focused on understanding the environment based on a 'consensual interpretation of meaning' (Grundy 1987, p.14) through interaction. Participants engage in 'action oriented to mutual understanding' striving towards a consensus of meaning (Habermas 1972, pp.310-312). Communication is, therefore, crucial to derive an understanding of meaning (Bullough and Goldstein 1984, Hoffman 1987). The practical interest of knowledge recognises the role of the teacher and student in the learning process and promotes communication and a deliberate dialogue between participants (Habermas 1974; Gleeson 2010). The roles of students in both Goodwin and Smithstown could, therefore, be considered distinct. Within the technical approach, as was evident in Smithstown, the teacher was the 'knower' and students were largely treated as objects to be acted upon. The practical approach evident in Goodwin gave rise to a relationship of more of equal partners in communication. Usher (1996) argues that the focus shifts from a positivist view of prediction and control, to an interpretivist view of interactions and meaning making. This interpretivist approach is concerned with 'intersubjective meaning based on consensual norms and expectations' (Ewert 1987, p.351).

Habermas' conception of the practical interest of knowledge can also be understood as being aligned with the constructivist perspective. Constructivism recognises that learning is a search for individual meaning-making which is the guiding pedagogic practice (Hein 1999). Furthermore, meaning is intimately connected with experience; both prior experiences that students bring to the classroom and the active, experiential learning which takes place in the classroom (Caprio 1994).

Given the coherence with a practical interest of knowledge, as well the constructivist perspective, interactions between teachers and students were different from the interactions observed in Smithstown. Students interjected freely in lessons in Goodwin; whereas, in Smithstown, students required permission from their teachers (sought by raising their hand) in order to give their input. Students spoke positively about the greater freedom they had over their learning relative to their time in Junior Cycle:

> "I like that we get to discuss things before we do them. We get to decide a little about what we're going to do. Like we might get a project to do, but we get to do it how we want to go about it. It's not like last year, where it was *'do this, do that.'*"
>
> (Corbyn, 25/11/2011)

7.2.3 Establishing Rapport in Goodwin

Prior to observations, I had been supported in gaining consent for participation by the school's principal, who oversaw the distribution and recovery of the necessary documentation. The students were recruited while they were in their Junior Certificate year, once the places for the following year's LCA programme were decided upon. Once consent was secured from 11 of the students (a simple majority), the observations began. One further month was spent attempting to secure the consent of the remaining students, by which time consent was secured from one further student (for a total of 12). At that point, students who had failed to return the necessary completed documentation were deemed to have *de facto* refused consent. To respect their decision not to participate, observational data pertinent to these students that had been gathered was destroyed and is not reported upon below. These students also did not participate in interviews or focus groups. The consenting thirteen students consisted of eight girls and five boys, all of whom are Irish. None of the most at-risk students consented to participation despite repeated efforts to afford them an opportunity to do so. Accordingly, it is necessary to note that the findings reported below are not reflective of the voices of those considered at most risk of early school leaving. As will be reported over the coming sections, the 'at high-risk' students who have participated are characterised by holding negative perceptions of the value of the LCA programme. Drawing on human capital understandings of the purpose of their education, these students believed that the 'purpose' of school is to secure employment. Several stated in interviewing that they intended to drop-out of the programme on receipt of any job offer. While it is reasonable to suggest that the students at most risk may also hold similar perceptions, further investigation would be required to establish this conclusively.

Initial observations sought to ascertain the popular members of the social group. Again I sought to identify the social groupings present within the class – combining my own observations with self-reported data from the students for this purpose. The social structure of the class (Appendix G) shows that there were three distinct

friendship groups within the cohort. Unlike Smithstown, where a number of popular students had friendship links that crossed a number of cliques, in Goodwin, the friendships tended to remain within cliques for the most part. Over the coming paragraphs, these friendship groups will be described. The groupings will encapsulate friendships and interests as well as attitudes toward school and the future, and examples of divergence between amongst friendship groups were relevant are noted. It became clear over the course of the observations that most of the class share a passion for music. As noted above young people's use of music in the creation of both social identity (Tarrant *et al* 2001) as well as individual identity (Steele and Brown 1995) is well documented. Indeed there is research evidence that music taste forms the dominant social comparator amongst young people (Zillman and Gan 1997). It was the focus of the vast majority of discussions during free time particularly amongst the girls – critiquing current releases, comparing artists and looking forward to upcoming gigs. This interest is graphically illustrated in the classes' work in Visual Art – where they created a poster to describe themselves – with most students' posters featuring some contemporary music reference, and several of the girl's posters being largely populated by musicians. The boys too had a strong interest in music – particularly rap, and it was noticeable that the few students for whom rap wasn't a major interest tended to occupy the fringes of the social structure. With this said, there were some other interests – sports (particularly motorsport, rugby and football) as well as horses. As the group so strongly identified with music, and as it was central to so many interactions, I have adopted their preferred genres to classify the friendship groups in the discussion below.

7.2.4 The R&B/Hip-Hop Girls

The first group of four girls are Leighanne, Georgina, Denise and Philipa. This group of girls are very close in school, generally choosing to sit near to each other where possible, and are also very close outside of school, reporting that they spend much of their free time together. They share a love for contemporary R&B/Hip-Hop music – and particularly for female solo artists. *Rihanna* and *Nicki Minaj* are the favourites, amongst a group which also includes *Nicole Scherzinger, Kelly Rowland*, and *Beyoncé Knowles*. The girls also enjoy the music of the group *NDubz*:

> Jason: What is it you like about Rihanna and Nicki?
>
> Georgina: Rihanna is someone I can look up to, you know. She's a successful woman – famous, rich, popular.
>
> Jason: Is that not true of loads of bands? What is it about Rihanna?
>
> Leighanne: It's about her style too; the way she dresses – she looks unreal like. You'd want to be like her.
>
> (Unstructured Interview, 11/10/12)

Rihanna, in particular, became the focus of much discussion both during class time and break time in the days prior to her concert in Dublin amongst the girls, during the initial weeks of my observation, and her show remained the focus of much conversation on the Wednesday that the girls returned to school following the event. It was clear that the girls looked to musicians such as *Rihanna* or *Beyoncé* as role models – as these women encapsulate success (through material wealth, fame and possessing a desirable image) albeit a kind of success not obtained through the conventional means of educational credentials. Evidence elsewhere suggests that girls are more likely than boys to cite musicians like this as significant role models in this way (Biskup and Pfister 1999). Indeed Leighanne admits above that she greatly admires the image that *Rihanna* presents in her videos. Such admiration can be at times pose developmental difficulties for adolescent girls and has been problematized elsewhere as part of a wider critique of the effects of music videos on adolescent girls body-dissatisfaction (Bell *et al* 2007). With this said, there remains an interesting conflict between the embodiment of values of empowerment, and the freedom of sexual self-expression through the artistry of *Rihanna*, *Nicki Minaj* and *Beyoncé,* and the values of conformity and modesty which are physically inscribed onto the bodies of these R&B/Hip-Hop girls through Goodwin's regulation of the clothing to be worn at school through their uniform policy, which I will discuss in greater detail once I introduce the members of this group.

The first member of the group is Leighanne, who is deeply passionate about hip-hop. As well as admiring the music of *Nicki Minaj* and *Rihanna*, Leighanne has also participated in workshops run by '*Hip-Hop for Health*' – an organisation that promotes mental health in young people through the medium of hip-hop music and dance. She also loves animals – particularly dogs and horses, and her sports interests

include playing basketball and supporting *Liverpool Football Club*. She likes *Chanel* perfume and *Ed Hardy* fashion and is reasonably confident that she will complete the LCA programme in Goodwin. She is also quite certain that her education will stop at that point. Leighanne intends to attempt to gain employment after finishing in Goodwin.

The second student in this group is Georgina. Her favourite artists are *Rihanna* and *Nicole Scherzinger*. Her mobile phone illustrates her two favourite cartoons – the background wallpaper features the 1920s flapper-inspired character *Betty Boop*, and the cover of the phone has a picture of Disney's reinterpretation of the donkey *Eeyore* from the *Winnie the Pooh* series of books. Georgina idolises the glamour and freedom encapsulated in the *Betty Boop* character – and also owns a branded pencil case and a number of stickers which adorn her copybooks. Outside of the school uniform, she likes *Baby phat* and *Chanel* fashion. Georgina rates herself as more likely to complete the LCA than not and intends to seek employment directly after graduating from Goodwin.

The next R&B/Hip-Hop girl is Denise, who is Georgina's best friend. They sit beside each other in most lessons and share a number of common interests. Her favourite artists are *Nicki Minaj* and *Rihanna*. Like Georgina, Denise also identifies with *Betty Boop* and owns a branded phone cover, and like both other girls in this group – she likes *Chanel* fashion – owning a number of bracelets, and well as perfumes. Denise is quite certain that she will complete the LCA programme, and believes she will then seek employment directly afterwards.

The final girl in this group of students is Philipa. Philipa also cites female R&B/Hip-Hop artists as her favourites, but unlike the other girls in this group, Philipa also enjoys rap music – particularly the male solo artists *Lil Wayne, Drake and Eminem*, as well as the group *NDubz*. Music is central to Philipa's life, with twenty-two of the twenty-four pictures on her 'Who am I' themed poster for Visual Art featuring musicians. Like Georgina, Philipa also remembers the cartoon *Winnie the Pooh* fondly and owns a branded phone cover featuring characters from the show. In her spare time, she enjoys watching reality television – and particularly likes the popular show *Jersey Shore*. Philipa is confident that she will complete the LCA programme and has identified a Post-Leaving Cert course in early childcare studies in a local

college of further education as a possible avenue after leaving Goodwin. Philipa's interest in rap music offers her a common point of interest with the group of boys I discuss next, affording her greater opportunities to connect with these boys relative to her peers described above.

This group of students draw heavily on what are categorised as contemporary R&B/Hip-Hop resources in creating their social identities. As a category of music, its label has a complex history underpinned by institutional racism as exemplified in the following quote from the online version of *Village Magazine*:

> "One perennial problem has been what to call this music that's primarily recorded by, and aimed at, African-Americans."
>
> (Molanphy 2012)

This cohort is an 'ecosystem of urban radio listeners and core R&B music-buyers' (Molanphy 2012). They trace their origins back to World War Two, to the cities of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Detroit – which became focal points of blue-collar manufacture to support the war efforts of the United States. As a result of the growth of this manufacturing industry, the social dynamics of these cities were altered, positioning a sizable black working class with some disposable income which they used to support the proliferation of artists and independent record labels which emerged as the invention of magnetic tape drastically reduced the production costs of music (Richards 2000). The 'perennial problem' of labelling the tastes of this black urban demographic arises from the historical practice in the white dominated music industry of separating artists by race, rather than by musical genre, legitimising the provision of greater support to white artists than black artists through increased promotion and greater studio perks (Garofalo 1995, Squires 2009). In terms of origins, Hip-Hop and R&B are separated by some thirty years of musical history (Forman 2004) and were initially quite distinct. Hip-Hop traces its genesis to the same post-disco landscape that gave rise to both the Rap and EDM genres favoured by the students of Smithstown, while R&B rose to prominence in the 1940s – as an 'urbane, rocking, jazz based music with a heavy and inconsistent beat' (Palmer 1981, p.146). The Hip-Hop scene is recognised as exemplifying resistance; which can be both visual through graffiti (Castleman 2004), as well as aurally

through DJing and orally through Rap (Neal 2004). This resistance is also physically embodied, through the clothing styles and the distinctive, acrobatic, and flamboyant displays of break-dancing by 'B-Boys' and 'B-Girls' (Banes 2004). This physical embodiment is also seen through the repurposing physical displays of alienation and defeat into displays of assurance in spite of seemingly unbeatable odds: such as holding arms crossed high on the chest as a display of strength and readiness for competition rather than as a display of insecurity (Hazzard-Donald 2004). Hip-Hop, then, is a broad counter-culture, of which the Rap music favoured by the Perseverant student in Smithstown is a component part; or as put by prominent artist *KRS-ONE* (the stage name of the New York rapper Lawrence Parker) in his song *'9 Elements'*:

> "Rap is something you do; Hip-Hop is something you live."
>
> (KRS-ONE 2003)

A consequence of decisions to market R&B and Hip-Hop in particular, as well as other genres popular amongst urban black youth side-by-side, has been a fusing of the styles and a gradual fading of initial distinctions. Literature documents instances of Hip-Hop producers adopting melodic elements, through instrumental and vocal sampling from R&B (Seabrook 2015) as well as R&B artists adopting rhythmic elements through the Hip-Hop technique of 'looping' whereby the rhythm of a track is developed by continuously repeating a short vocal or instrumental sample (Weheliye 2002). A further shift in the genre during the period of my observations was the adoption of many of the up-tempo EDM elements, as well as collaboration with EDM artists, such that in the year 2012, each of the artists identified by the girls also topped the *Billboard* Dance-Club charts: *Nicki Minaj* (3 weeks) *Rihanna* (3) *Katy Perry* (2) *Beyoncé* (1) (Billboard 2012) This consolidation of style, and the significant continuity seen in the production, marketing and consumption of this genre means that it can be considered a coherent field in Bourdieu's terms (1993) and the artists identified by the girls may be legitimately compared side by side.

7.2.4.1 Sexual identity: Expression vs. Conformity

As stated above – the girls in this group are particularly drawn to the artists *Rihanna* and *Nicki Minaj.* While the nineties were marked by female artists critiquing the status quo: 'in dialogue with one another, black men, black women and dominant

American culture as they struggle to define themselves against a confining and treacherous social environment' (Rose 1994, p.148), their contemporary peers are subject to criticism for conveying messages of empowerment though the re-appropriation of:

> "sexist and misogynist tropes that present women as hyper-sexual beings who are contained and controlled, in this case, by other women."
>
> (Oware 2007, p.797)

It has been noted in the literature that both *Rihanna* (Zelinka 2012, Jones 2013), as well as *Nicki Minaj* (Zelinka 2012), are both presented in hyper-sexualised ways in their music videos, and both draw heavily on sexual iconography:

> "Long, thin, hairless, female legs/ Breasts, mouths and buttocks. Bare, hairless male chests. Women suggestively caressing parts of their bodies. Women pouting and looking unhappy. Flowing hair. Leather, vinyl, chains, lingerie, high heels, stockings, mini skirts and dresses. Bikinis"
>
> (Hurley 1994, p.330)

While it is noted in the literature that as Hip-Hop became appropriated by the mainstream, women seemed to take on more gender inferior, sexually demeaning, and provocative roles (White 2013), there is a striking juxtaposition between the images and hyper-sexuality embodied by artists such as *Rihanna* and *Nicki Minaj* and the body work evident in the field of Goodwin. When Leighanne speaks of *Rihanna*, her discussion is not limited to her lyrics, but 'It's about her style too; the way she dresses – she looks unreal like. You'd want to be like her' (Unstructured interview, 11/10/11). All of the girls attended the *Rihanna* concert in Dublin during the course of my observations, and *Rihanna*'s costume changes were also the subject of discussion when the girls returned to class. In an example of how adolescent girls' perceptions of their bodies can be shaped by the musicians they admire, Georgina and Denise lamented that they would not be able to wear the clothing worn by *Rihanna* following one of these costume changes as neither believed they possessed the correct body type: Denise said she 'could never pull off' wearing the skirt as she 'didn't have the legs for it'. A further example of this sexual identity is seen in Georgina and Denise's interest in the *Betty Boop* character which features on both

girls' phone covers. *Betty Boop* is a flapper-inspired caricature of a culture in which young women resisted the traditional morals and manners of their parents. The flapper was:

> "Young – whether in fact or fancy – assertive, and independent, she experimented with intimate dancing, permissive favours, and casual courtships or affairs. She joined men as comrades, and the differences in behaviour of the sexes were narrowed"
>
> (McGovern 1968, p.322)

In opposition to these images of sexuality, is the body work evident in Goodwin, achieved through regulation and monitoring of school uniforms: shoes, skirts, shirts, jumpers, and restricting the types of piercings the girls can wear (facial jewellery beyond earrings were limited only to very small pieces). Through this Goodwin ensures that any form of *individual* expression, be it an expression of fashion choice or of sexuality, is muted. There is a conflict evident between the femininity which the R&B/Hip-Hop girls identify with as embodied by artists such as *Rihanna* and *Nicki Minaj*, and the values inscribed in the Goodwin uniform of demureness, modesty and neatness. The result of the regulation of uniforms is that R&B/Hip-Hop girls are visually homogenised; their common uniform ensures that they look largely the same as each other and largely the same as every other student in the school also, and schools often adopt such regulatory approaches without questioning the impact it has on students' human rights (Watkinson 1996, Lynch and Lodge 2002). While the girls broadly conform to these rules, they do offer some resistance. I noted several instances where Leighanne, in particular, was asked to remove her jacket by teachers to ensure she conformed to the uniform code:

> "I don't see why we can't just leave our jackets on – like, I have the rest of the uniform on, so what does it matter?"
>
> (Leighanne, R&B/Hip-Hop Girl, Unstructured Interview 16/10/2011)

> "Wearing the right uniform is a big thing here."
>
> (Georgina, R&B/Hip-Hop Girl, Unstructured Interview16/10/2011)

Evidence of how they might prefer to manifest their identities are seen in their Visual Art pieces, which are replete with *individual* tastes, drawn from brands such as *Ed Hardy*, *Chanel* and *Baby Phat*. The artefacts along with the quotes above serve as criticism of the regulations of the field – which constrain the expression of both their individual as well as social identity, and offers further evidence of the broader conflict between conformity and choice in school settings, that queries whether schools offer young people a supportive space in which to develop their autonomy.

While on the one hand, the above artefacts and practices may appear to be an emancipatory attempt to win power, define identity and simultaneously critique their school, McRobbie cautions the displays above may not be informed by a logic of critique, but rather by an oppressive form of sexism. It could perhaps be the case that rather than challenging values of modesty and conformity conveyed by their school, these girls have instead uncritically internalised that their place in society is to be sexualised (1978).

7.2.5 Rap Boys

The second group of students I now outline are a group of five boys - Corbin, Ronny, Zach, Gabriel and Darnell. Together they share a common interest in rap music. They admire *50 Cent* and *Eminem* in particular. The exchange below between Darnell, Zach and I, serves to illustrate this admiration:

> Jason: You both had similar rappers on your posters for Visual Art – what is it you like about 50 Cent?
>
> Zach: Well he made it like – raps about getting to the top. He's a success like – fame, women and loads of money.
>
> Darnell: Yeah he can do what he wants – doesn't let anyone stop him.
>
> Jason: What about Eminem?
>
> Zach: similar like – he worked his way up, you know.
>
> (Unstructured Interview 13/10/2011)

Zach and Darnell above point out an admiration for the graft, or what buoyancy literature may recognise as persistence, displayed by these two artists above in their respective fields. Both artists had to work hard for their success, were determined, and didn't let obstacles get in their way, and this has resonated with the boys above.

The boys are drawn to this material form of success also (money, fame, image), and, in this way, are quite similar to the girls outlined earlier. It is not surprising that in experimenting with different identities, these adolescents would feel drawn to ideas of financial independence, validation and freedom offered by the music artists above. Like the R&B/Hip-Hop girls discussed above, the boys here are also drawn towards validation without accepting mainstream norms – a central theme in the early deviance literature discussed earlier (Park 1925, Thrasher 1927, Whyte 1947). The coming sections introduce these students.

Zach, quoted above, has three major interests in his life of which rap music is central. His favourite rapper is *50 Cent*, and Zach owns all of *50 Cent*s releases. Outside of this interest in rap music, Zach is also passionate about cars and was able to speak to me at length about Volkswagen Golfs and Audi R8s amongst others, and is also interested in attending rallying events where he can. Zach's final major interest is in sport – particularly the local rugby team, and he regularly attends matches. Zach is not convinced he will complete the LCA programme, and he believes his mind will be made up during the three months I intend to observe his class. He would like to secure employment after leaving Goodwin but is not convinced he needs to complete the LCA to do this. Zach's best friend is Darnell, whom I introduce next.

Darnell shares many interests with Zach. Similarly fervent about rap, Darnell's favourite artist is named *The Game*, and like his friend Zach, Darnell owns all of his idol's releases. Darnell also likes electronic dance music – particularly the artist *Deadmaus*. Darnell is also has a big interest in motorsport, attending rally events all around the province, and also keeps up to date with both the World Rally Championships, as well as the MotoGP World Championship (motorcycle racing). While more confident in his chances of completing the LCA than his friend Zach (Darnell rates himself as slightly more likely to finish than not), Darnell is also sceptical about whether completing the LCA programme is the most efficient way of securing employment – believing that he would have to consider any employment offer that he gets prior to completion very seriously, as there may not be many offers in the present economic climate irrespective of whether or not he completes the LCA.

The next student in this group is Corbin whose favourite rap artist is *50 Cent*. Like the clique members illustrated above, Corbin also has an interest in cars. However, his interest doesn't extend into motor racing like his two peers. Corbin doesn't attend rallying events or follow either national or international championships too closely. Corbin does, however, have a keen interest in rugby, attending both the local team's matches and also monitoring international matches. His favourite national side is the New Zealand rugby team. Finally, Corbin is also interested in horses. Like a number of other families in the locality of Goodwin, Corbin's family own and care for a horse of their own. Corbin rates his chances of completing LCA as quite poor – believing he is likely to leave early.

Ronny is the final member of this clique of students. He names a number of rap artists as his favourites; namely *50 Cent*, *Eminem* and *2Pac*. Like the other clique members, he also has a keen interest in sport, although Ronny prefers football to motorsport or rugby – following the fortunes of English club sides *Manchester United* and *Tottenham Hotspur* as well as the Scottish team *Celtic*. This interest also carries over to the Irish national side – and Ronny frequently attends home international matches. Ronny is upbeat about his chances of completing the LCA programme – rating himself as more likely to complete than leave early. His passion for football serves to connect Ronny with another clique of three students in the class, only one of whom consented to participate in the study – a boy named Gabriel whom I discuss next.

Gabriel is the final male student in the cohort that consented to participate. Gabriel differs from the rest of the students discussed so far in that music isn't central to his identity. Instead, Gabriel finds sport much more absorbing – particularly football and rugby. Gabriel plays both sports himself, and regularly attends local rugby matches. He also supports both *Liverpool* and *Barcelona* football clubs. The centrality of football in Gabriel's identity is a point of common interest with two other students who did not consent to participate in this study, but the attendance of both of these boys was erratic over the course of my observations (attending only about half of their school days) and so much of Gabriel's social interaction tended to be with Ronny (who also likes football as discussed earlier). Gabriel also enjoys fishing – utilising local waterways for this purpose. Gabriel is very confident that he will complete the LCA and intends to pursue employment thereafter.

7.2.3.1 Embodying Success: 'Keeping it real' vs. 'stark reality.'

In examining the individual and group identity constructed by these students, it is evident that the students draw on many similar resources as the Perseverant students in Smithstown. Both music (particularly Rap) and sports (Football, Rugby as well as motorsport) feature prominently in the students' identity maps and are frequent topics of conversation between students. The artists *50 Cent,* and *Eminem* are contemporary examples of the same *Gangsta Rap* genre discussed previously. A central theme in the lyrics of both artists is a tension between successes against the odds as identified by Zach earlier while remaining true to the one's own values and the values of their community; between 'makin' it' and 'keeping it real' (Sköld and Rehn 2007). Rather than be understood as separate, together these themes form a dialectic whole. This theme of success against the odds maps closely to the constructions of buoyancy, and resilience more generally, but it also cross-cuts with the important ideal of doing so on one's own terms.

It has been pointed out that over the past decade, themes of showboating, bragging and conspicuous consumption have become central to Rap, and Hop-Hop culture more widely (Rehn and Sköld 2003, 2005). These themes have resonated with Zach and Darnell who speak in admiration of *50 Cent's* lifestyle: 'He's a success like – fame, women and loads of money', and much of this success is driven by entrepreneurial skillsets and acumen that extend beyond simply making records, into record-label management and fashion interests amongst others (Sköld and Rehn 2007). Artists such as *50 Cent, Eminem* and others of this genre stress in their music that just because their material success sets them apart from those in their communities, that this success hasn't changed who they are, or what it is that they value – a theme broadly called 'keeping it real' (Rose 2008). *50 Cent* for example raps about how he would be comfortable returning to criminal activity to maintain an income should his Rap career fail:

> "The bottom line is I'ma crook with a deal
> If my record don't sell I'ma rob and steal…
> So watch your backs, watch your pocket book, watch your pockets
> Watch everybody on the train, watch everybody on the bus
> Cause we gonna get you whether you like it or not"
>
> (50 Cent 1999)

Eminem also explores similar themes:

> "But I ain't set to flee the scene of the crime just yet,
> 'Cause I got a daughter to feed,
> And two hundred dollars ain't enough to water the seed."

(Eminem 1997)

Part of 'keeping it real' also includes a rejection of school which has resonated with Corbin and Darnell. While not entirely rejecting the usefulness of the LCA programme in Goodwin, these students point to their idols as proof that success through non-conventional means is possible:

> Corbin: 'School isn't the only way to be successful like, Eminem didn't finish school and he's made it. [He] found 50 Cent too – and he didn't finish school either.'
> Darnell: 'and Kanye [another R&B artist] dropped out of college.'
> Corbin: 'Yeah, so school isn't everything.'

(Unstructured interview 24/11/2012)

Eminem addresses this rejection directly in his song *White America*:

> "look at my sales, let's do the math, if I was black, I would've sold half,
> I ain't have to graduate from Lincoln high school to know that,
> but I could rap, so fuck school, I'm too cool to go back,
> gimme the mic, show me where the fuckin' studio's at"

(Eminem 2002)

Rose argues that 'keeping it real' as a form of storytelling, giving a window into the black or white working class inner city life narrative of prostitution, forgery, drug-dealing, theft, murder and assault, has become a genre convention. This convention means that while not all artists speak strictly to personal experience, their experiences are never the less likely to be 'socially real' accurately depicting the experiences of others (Rose 2008, p.136). Some of the Rap boys have certainly drawn on the positive experiences of *Eminem* and *50 Cent* in dropping out of school in evaluating the importance of their own school experiences in Goodwin. Rose argues that this understanding of the social world can be understood as problematic on a number of fronts. Firstly this narrative is maintained by artists and record

industry representatives (p.138), and there is an on-going corporate interest in its continuance. This narrative refers only to a narrow aspect of ghetto life, it also lends to a conflation between these aspects and black culture more generally (p.138). Some of the Rap Boys may be over estimating the chances one has of being successful as an early school leaver, through misplacing trust in this narrative and misreading the success of the few as indicative of the wider socially reality of the many. Certainly, recent Irish insights into the economic reality facing Irish early school leavers is 'stark' – with early school leavers more than twice as likely to be unemployed as those who have completed a Leaving Certificate (McCoy *et al* 2014b, p.30). This stark reality is further compounded by findings that students who leave the LCA pathway early compare much less favourably in term of employment prospects post drop-out, than those who leave from other Leaving Cert pathways (p.36). These difficulties are mirrored across the European Union, where approximately 60% of the 4.4 million early school-leavers are unemployed (Council of the European Union 2015), which points towards a need for more meaningful school experiences for young people – which praxis has the potential to offer (Grundy 1987).

7.2.4 EDM Girls

The final group of students I now introduce have a somewhat more diversified taste in music than the cliques mentioned earlier. While electronic dance music is the preferred genre of these girls, particularly *Calvin Harris* (the stage name of Scottish DJ Adam Wiles), *Swedish House Mafia*, and *David Guetta*, the girls reported a more varied array of genre interests to me, including pop music (particularly the boy band *One Direction* and female singer *Adele*) and R&B/Hip-Hop artist *Beyoncé*. The members of this group are Adalyn, Erica, Elaine and Chantel

> Jason: What is your favourite kind of music?
>
> Erica: Definitely Calvin Harris. *'Bounce'* is class [a song that featured in the quite high in the charts during the year of my observation]
>
> Adalyn: Yeah anything you can dance to – *'Save the World'* [a song by *Swedish House Mafia*] or *'We Found Love'* [a collaboration between *Rihanna* and *Calvin Harris*]
>
> Jason: What about you, Chantel?
>
> Chantel: *[David] Guetta* I think – *'Titanium.'*
>
> Jason: And what is it you like about this kind of music?

> Chantel: It's good to dance to – I like the beat like, there's energy in it.
>
> Erica: Yeah, it's about having fun, you know – anything you can go mental to!
>
> (Unstructured interview 13/10/2011)

The first of the students in the group is Adalyn. Adalyn's favourite artist is the DJ *Calvin Harris*, but she also likes R&B/Hip-Hop singer *Kelly Rowland*, and boy band *One Direction*. Adalyn is also a keen sportswoman – playing basketball regularly. She also likes *Chanel* perfume and fashion. After school, she likes hanging around with her best friend Elaine, and she rates herself as more likely to complete the LCA programme in Goodwin than not.

Elaine is one of the most popular participants – considered a friend by people in each of three cliques outlined. She has a broad range of musical knowledge and a diverse taste – which may in part explain why she finds it easy to relate to members of the other cliques. While she doesn't readily identify a favourite music genre (liking some rap, some R&B/Hip-Hop, Dance as well as pop music artists) her social ties mean she spends a lot of her time during school socialising with the other EDM Girls in particular. Both inside and outside of school, Elaine spends a lot of time with Adalyn. While she doesn't share Adalyn's love of basketball, the two chat a lot about music. Elaine also spends time in the local youth centre and is an avid computer gamer also – particularly enjoying the *'Call of Duty'* and *'Grand Theft Auto'* franchises. She is very confident she will complete the LCA programme.

Erica is the third student in this cohort. In her contribution above, she points towards the themes of escapism and breaking from the mundane evident in EDM as discussed previously in Chapter Six. Her favourite artist is the dance act *Swedish House Mafia*. Like two of the R&B/Hip-Hop Girls, she also owns a *Betty Boop* branded phone cover – similarly identifying the glamour that the character encapsulates. She likes *Baby Phat* clothes and owns a number of *Baby Phat* accessories also – bracelets and a necklace. Erica is not certain that she will complete the LCA programme – she intends keeping an open mind if an employment opportunity arises.

The final student in this cohort is Chantel. Her favourite artists are David Guetta and Calvin Harris, but she also likes *Beyoncé* and *Rihanna*, She likes *Chanel* perfume and *Ed Hardy* clothes. Outside of school, her pastimes are hanging out with her friends in town, and camogie. She is reasonably confident that she will complete the LCA programme in Goodwin and has no further interest in continuing education at that point, intending instead to gain employment.

7.2.4.1 'Bouncing' as symbolic resistance in Goodwin

> "I can't believe that every day and every night
> It's getting better with you out of my life
> It's like I flicked a switch and now I'm feeling good
> No way to stop it, now you wish that you could
> When the weekend comes I know I'll feel alive
> You will be the last thing on my mind
> *'No regrets'*, do you know what that means?
>
> It's hot; it's loud, it's wild
> We bounce to this track
> And I don't care what anybody thinks about that
> Hands to the sky, and throw your hair back."
>
> (Calvin Harris 2011)

Over the course of my observations, I noted several incidents where all of the students (not limited to just the EDM Girls) would disrupt the teaching and learning activities *en masse* through an act of symbolic resistance which I've come to term *'bouncing'* in my field notes. *Bounce* is a song by EDM artist *Calvin Harris* for which the vocals are provided by the R&B/Hip-Hop artist *Kelis,* and was released during the summer of 2011, a few months prior to me beginning my observations. It spent a total of 17 weeks in the Irish charts, dropping out of the 'Top 50' on the week ending the Oct 13th (Chart-Track 2011). The song forms a message, delivered by the song's protagonist towards a supposed adversary. An examination of the lyrics of this song reveals that they draw on the themes of escape oftentimes evident in EDM music, as highlighted in Chapter Six: 'an escape attempt, a temporary relief from other facets and identities of an individual… the everyday is disrupted, mundane is forgotten, and the ecstatic becomes possible' (Malbon 1999, p.164).

This is particularly evident in the closing lines of the verse quoted above, where the song's protagonist looks forward to the weekend, and escape from the source of their adversity:

> 'When the weekend comes I know I'll feel alive
> You will be the last thing on my mind
> 'No regrets', do you know what that means?'

The chorus of the song then references a club scene – where 'the atmosphere, the affectual, proximity and tactility, and the here and now' is apparent (Malbon 1999 p.164):

> 'It's hot; it's loud, it's wild
> We bounce to this track
> And I don't care what anybody thinks about that
> Hands to the sky, and throw your hair back.'

'Bounce' in the context of the lyrics refers to the act of dancing; however, an examination of the video for the song reveals a double meaning. The video begins with a shot of a man and a woman engaged in a heated argument. During the course of this argument, the woman tells the man to 'bounce' (meaning leave), which he does, and the rest of the video chronicles his escape from this altercation into music and dance. In this context, the verb also indicates an opposition to an unwanted situation or standoff.

Between the third and fourth verses, the song's hook (played by a synthesiser) is repeated four times interspersed with *Kelis* saying the word 'bounce' between each repetition. It is this section of the song that the students re-purpose as a means of symbolic resistance. This practice of resistance is characterised by one or more students humming the synthesiser hook from the song, which is then taken up by any students who have heard the humming, who join in the resistance by loudly shouting 'bounce' once the hook is finished – just like the song. Collectively the noise of this shout and the laughter which ensues serves to entirely disrupt whatever teaching and learning activities had been taking place, and I noted that such disruptions took place at least once every other day, and sometimes more often. When sung during school,

the practice serves to disrupt the everyday mundane directly, and the students rationalise their practice as follows:

> Jason: So, tell me what's the story with *'Bounce'*?
> Erica: (laughing) it's fun – we do it when we're bored
> Adayln: Yeah we started doing at the start of the year – and it kinda stuck!
> Erica: (laughing again) in some classes more than others!
> Jason: Which ones?
> Erica: The ones where we're bored often – like Maths!

(Unstructured Interview: 16/11/2011)

> Jason: So how do you decide who starts *'Bounce'*?
> Gabriel: It's not always something that's decided [as a group]. If you hear someone starting, you join in.
> Corbin: Yeah it's usually whoever's the most bored, or whoever wants to start a laugh. It's not always planned like.
> Gabriel: Yeah sometimes it's just about having a laugh and breaking it up like.
> Jason: Breaking what up exactly?
> Gabriel: well look we're not good at staying quiet long, do you know what I mean
> Corbin: (laughing) that's why half of us are here! [LCA]
> Jason: So it's sometimes because you can't concentrate?
> Corbin: Or that we've something more of a laugh to concentrate on

(Unstructured interview 15/11/2011)

The student insights above reveal a number of aspects to the practice. It is partially motivated by boredom/not finding the teaching and learning activities motivating. Gabriel also points out that the practice sometimes arises if the students have been concentrating for too long, and engaging in it helps generate cohesion within the group, while it may start with one individual once it begins, others will join in. Corbin adds that there is a thrill or satisfaction to be gained from engaging in the activity – forming a rejection of authority similar to that engaged in by Willis' 'lads' (1977). Because the practice frequently climaxes with the vast majority of the class shouting – the teachers are relatively disempowered to act as they are unable to identify all of the individuals with any certainty.

Giroux argues that Bourdieu's sociology of education does not adequately account for such practices of resistance against the dominant arbitrary (Giroux 1983). Giroux argues that 'resistance becomes the outcome of a conflict between two formalistic structures, one situated in the realm of the unconscious and the other situated in the social practices that make up institutions such as schools', and is accordingly 'relegated to a minor theoretical detail' (1983, p.271). Giroux calls for a more nuanced account of the ways in which people interpret the intersection of their lived experience and the structures of domination in the context of the field of school. Such an account would not err in understating that while some students successfully internalise the dominant values with relative ease (due to the compatibility such values have with their own habitus), the dominant values must be *imposed* on some students, who do not readily recognise them as legitimate and openly rebel against their imposition (evidence of which is seen through *'Bouncing'*), or who only conform when under pressure to do so (evidence for which was noted earlier in relation to Smithstown; where students broadly did not meet their teachers' study expectations, once they learned that their engagement was not actively monitored). *'Bouncing'* can then be interpreted as an open rebellion against a learning experience which is not stimulating the students concerned – they speak above of 'boredom', and needing to 'break up' their experience, and of a sense of ingroup belonging as a result of their resistance. Such collective counter-cultural identities are also identified by Willis (1979).

While the rebellions briefly usurp control, it is merely a symbolic victory. The teachers of Goodwin all reacted to *'Bounce'* by not reacting to *'Bounce'*, which is to say that they all simply moved on with their lessons as intended once the initial energy brought about by these disruptions had dissipated. Accordingly *'Bouncing'* did not change the structure of lessons or the direction of learning, and as such served merely as a momentary disruption of the everyday mundane. While it may briefly disrupt ownership of the teaching time, ultimately the teacher's position remained intact. Giroux extends the role of schools in Bourdieu's sociology (1983, p.272), by arguing that in order for schools to transmit cultural values, they must also work to suppress counter-ideologies which emerge as a result of resistance to transmission. In this instance, teachers' supress the counter-ideology by not acquiescing to the students' resistance; and by continuing with their teaching as

intended. The practice of 'bouncing' could, therefore, be understood as an unheeded critique on teaching methodology – a rejection of what is perceived to be unstimulating.

7.3 'Playing the game.'

During my time in Goodwin, I set about developing my understanding of what distinguishes students likely to successfully complete school from those who seem unlikely to. This section presents further findings from this undertaking. The students of Goodwin were following a different academic pathway to those of Smithstown as stated above – distinguishing both cases. The Goodwin group were in the main aspiring to completing the LCA programme and then seeking employment directly afterwards, while the majority of the Smithstown students intended to pursue further education (mostly in third-level) following completion of the LCE pathway. While both cohorts therefore broadly aspire to at least complete second-level; several of the Goodwin group vocalised that they would seriously consider dropping out early if an appropriate employment opportunity arose during the programme. Additionally, the students of Smithstown and Goodwin aspired to different kinds of employment. Many of the students in Smithstown aspired to the types of employment positions which would require further study in tertiary education – be it in Institutes of Technology or Universities – i.e. the types of positions which would require at a minimum a Level Six qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ 2016), while the students of Goodwin (as a function of participation in the LCA programme) were aspiring to positions which did not require such qualifications. In fact, by not participating in the LCE, the students in Goodwin were locked out of transitioning directly into such pathways altogether. The account below will discuss how the students interpreted their experiences and how their goals and teachers' expectations mediated their engagement.

7.3.1 Expectations in Goodwin

As the learning experience of the LCA programme is quite distinct from other learning experiences in second-level, I sought to establish how students interpret this experience. In my early interactions with students, it became clear that the LCA group have a distinct identity, and view themselves as different from other students in the school. They reported that teacher expectations of students in the LCA are

very different from those of either the LCE or Junior Certificate. There is grounding for teachers in setting high expectations for their students; its role in supporting student academic resilience is well noted (see, for example, Rutter *et al* 1979, Kidder 1990), however it is important that these expectations are feasible in the eyes of the students in question, or the teacher risks disengaging his/her students and lowering student well-being (Boudrenghien *et al* 2012). In order to compare how the students of Goodwin perceive the expectations their teachers have of them, I conducted semi-structured interviews with students during their break times.

While the students perceived that their teachers viewed them as less capable than their peers in the LCE, there was nonetheless variability reported, even in these generally lower expectations. This variability can be partially attributed to the 'Student Tasks' element of the LCA program. These elements are often cross-curricular and always mandatory components of the final LCA award, requiring students to both complete as well as document a unit of work consisting of no less than ten hours (DES 2010):

> "Well we've more work to do in Visual Art, because of the [Student] task – we have to make our poster and write about it. Just doing the poster isn't enough, d'ya know what I mean, for the credits, like – you've to write about it too after."
>
> (Corbin, Rap Boys, 15/11/2011)

> "Coming into Visual Art - we've got to work in that one – she puts us under pressure and expects us to get our work done quickly."
>
> (Darnell, Rap Boys, 16/11/2011)

Over the course of observations, the students were completing one of these task elements – which required the students to produce an artefact to describe themselves in Visual Art class. In addition to producing the artefact, there was an associated report to be completed, documenting the work undertaken. The task required some work from students outside of class time – sourcing cuttings from magazines and other print media to use on the poster (many student posters featured favoured musicians, hobbies, and other interests, and a sample of these form Appendix H). Time constraints meant that students only had a short number of weeks before the

task had to be completed – therefore it is perhaps to be anticipated that the students would perceive that the expectations were higher in this class than elsewhere. There was still work associated with all other subjects – but due to the mandatory requirement for the 'Student Task' to be completed within a limited timeframe; this may have fed into a perception that Visual Art was a more 'intensive' class. Many of the students in Goodwin felt that the expectations in LCA were quite reasonable. The R&B/Hip-Hop girls and EDM Girls broadly felt in comfortable with the work assigned to them:

> "I don't think we get that much work to do. We could probably manage if we focused on it – but a lot of the time we just want to have a laugh like. It's not like we're getting homework all the time in every subject like the other fifth years do [referencing friends in the schools Established Leaving Certificate]."
>
> (Elaine, EDM Girl, 21/10/2011)

> "Some subjects are hard – Maths do you know what I mean? I don't get what's going on a lot of the time but [the teacher] gets around to everyone who wants help like. Other than that we don't really get that much to do."
>
> (Chantel, EDM Girl, 21/10/2011)

> "I'm enjoying LCA so far. We get to have a laugh. They [teachers] treat LCA students differently like – they aren't so hard on us. They're much sounder."
>
> (Denise, R&B/Hip-Hop Girl, 21/10/2011)

However, there was more variability in the responses of the Rap Boys group – who felt expectations were sometimes too high:

> "We've a lot of writing to do to keep up with the portfolio, and I'm no good at writing, d'ya know like? It's not enough that you do the work, but you've to write it up too like."
>
> (Zach, Rap Boys, 08/11/2011)

> "I'm not sure that we need everything that we're doing in the LCA for getting a job – I've no real interest in Art like, I'm not going to be using it to get a job, so I don't see the point."
>
> (Corbin, Rap Boys 08/11/2011)

The above students also had a negative outlook towards their chances of completing the LCA programme generally. It is noted in the literature (Winfield 1994, Morrison *et al* 2006) that resilient students are more likely to complete schoolwork and homework assigned to them, and similar results were observed here amongst these students in this regard. Outside of the 'Student Task' however, across the entirety of the LCA experience, even the Rap Boys felt that expectations were quite reasonable:

> Jason: Do you think the LCA is easy? Generally?
>
> Darnell: I guess we have it easy enough overall yeah. Some of the stuff will definitely help us to get a job. You'd have definitely been better off doing the LCA than just leaving [referring to the dropping out after Junior Certificate]. It's not too bad.
>
> Zach: It's definitely easier than the Leaving Cert anyway. I can't learn stuff off like – it's not for me. I wouldn't last in the Leaving Cert [Established].
>
> (Unstructured Interview with Rap Boys, 09/11/2011)

The divergence in the opinions of students in Goodwin relative to the students of Smithstown with regards to work rate expectation is marked. The students of Goodwin feel broadly positive about their teachers' expectations of them, while the students of Smithstown felt broadly negative. Interestingly, however, despite these broad perceptions that teacher expectations were reasonable in Goodwin, there was also evidence of students not aspiring to meet these expectations, as I will discuss in the next section. There is also evidence here of a similar utilitarian focus on curriculum. Darnell sees value in completing the LCA programme, as it will enhance his employment opportunities in the future. Interestingly, Darnell is only focusing on one aspect of the LCA programme. Part of the purpose of the LCA is certainly to prepare students for working life – and Darnell's quote certainly offers evidence of him internalising this. However, he does not readily acknowledge the other aim of the LCA – namely to prepare students for *adult* life – through providing students with opportunities for 'developing personal responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge, and help students apply what they learn to the real world' (NCCA 2001).

7.3.2 Successful strategies:

As I pointed out above, the students of Goodwin felt broadly positive about their teachers' expectations of them, comparing them favourably with those of teachers in either the LCE or Junior Cert pathways. Having gathered evidence that the students of Goodwin viewed their day-to-day experience of their teachers' expectations more favourably – one might have believed it likely that LCA groups would be enthusiastic about striving to meet these expectations, and would employ strategies that allow them to do so effectively. It became clear, however, that this was not the case, and there were considerable differences between the strategies desired by teachers to meet these expectations and those executed by some of the students.

The R&B/Hip-Hop girls all rated themselves as more likely to complete the LCA programme than not. They broadly reported strategies that would be consistent with these assertions and indicating that they had internalised the values of success and achievement delivered by Goodwin and that they value the learning activities of the LCA programme. All these students had a good attendance record – missing only seven school days over the course of the observations between them. Relative to the other cliques, the R&B/Hip-Hop girls were also the most likely to attempt and complete homework where this was assigned and were more positive when they spoke about homework:

> "I think teachers understand that we aren't up for hours and hours of homework [relative to LCE students] and they don't bother trying to make us into something that we aren't. We get enough."
>
> (Leighanne, 24/11/2011)
>
> "I don't mind doing work [at home] for projects – that's good like; interesting."
>
> (Philipa, 25/11/2011)

Additionally, the R&B/Hip-Hop girls were more effective at persisting on task than other groups – and didn't require as much intervention to do so as other groups (they were corrected less frequently by teachers), although Leighanne and Georgina were much more frequently corrected for disruptive behaviour in class than Philipa and Denise. There is evidence in these insights and observations of the students successfully internalising the values of the field - these students complete homework

mainly, and do not require intervention as frequently as peers to do so. The modified expectations LCA teachers have in relation to homework may also suggest that teachers acknowledge that LCA students may require support in developing their persistence and time management skills also, although Leighanne's point that she feels teachers are not trying to 'make them' into something that they aren't, also suggests evidence of doxa (Bourdieu 1977b); both she and her teachers may be subscribing to what are termed 'fixed' mind-sets (Dweck and Leggett 1988, Molden and Dweck 2006); believing their ability to be structurally limited. Such taken for granted assumptions concerning mind-sets have been demonstrated in the above studies to result in individuals experiencing higher anxiety when faced with difficult tasks, in turn impacting the individual's perceived likelihood of success.

The four girls also reported broadly valuing the outcomes of the LCA programme – and believing it was useful for their future life aspirations:

> "I think it [LCA] is good like – it's going to be useful for getting work after because it's getting more difficult to get jobs, and being prepared is better."
>
> (Philipa, 01/12/2011)

> "You need to finish school, and I would never be able to finish a Leaving Cert [Established]"
>
> (Leighanne, 02/12/11)

> "I'm never going to be going to university like – so I don't need to be doing a Leaving Certificate – that doesn't prepare you at all [for the workplace]"
>
> (Denise, 02/12/2011)

Leighanne's choice of pronoun in constructing her input to the discussion above is informative and indicative of internalisation of externally constructed values (Bourdieu 1977a). Rather than saying '*I want* to finish school' – which would imply that the source of her motivation was intrinsic, Leighanne instead says '*you need* to finish school' (pointing perhaps to an extrinsic source of motivation). Leighanne's input echoes similar articulations by teachers directed both to Leighanne herself and to her classmates frequently throughout the LCA programme– where teachers linked success in school as integral to improved life outcomes thereafter. Leighanne's construction above offers evidence of her internalising these messages, and such evidence was also seen in the Perseverant students in Smithstown

In Denise's insights above, it is also clear that her misinterpretation of the social world affects her decision making and behaviour. She sees the LCE programme as preparation for university, while the LCA programme is perceived as preparation for work. Because she perceives herself as incapable of meeting the demands of university, she sees no value in pursuing the LCE pathway. While she believes that the LCE doesn't prepare one for the day-to-day reality of working life, data from the Irish context would suggest otherwise, indicating a clear link between high achievement in LCE, and employment chances in the Irish context thereafter, suggesting that cultural capital achieved through educational credentialisation can be readily exchanged for employment opportunity (Smyth and McCoy 2009).

In examining the experiences of the Rap boys, and their response to the LCA programme and their teachers' expectations, it is clear that they have mixed feelings. Only two of the five students – Ronny and Gabriel rated themselves as more likely to finish than not, with Corbin, Zach and Darnell rating themselves as uncertain or more likely to leave. Corbin had irregular attendance – missing at least a day of school every other week on average. Zach and Darnell attended more days – missing four and three days respectively over the course of the observations. Ronny and Gabriel missed just three days between them. These observations correlate with the students' self-reported likelihood of completing the programme quite closely – with the students confident of completion showing the higher attendance, and Corbin (the least confident of completion) showing the lowest.

In terms of homework completion, Gabriel completed homework each day and usually was able to complete his assigned tasks in class without intervention from his teachers, suggesting that he had successfully internalised the values of the schooling field. Ronny and Darnell also regularly attempted homework – and occasionally required assistance from teachers with assignments in classes; however, Zach completed homework much less consistently and required quite regular intervention from teachers in class (receiving reminders to focus on his work most days). In the case of homework also, there is evidence of a relationship between students confidence in completing the programme and their engagement with classroom activity. Gabriel, who was confident of completing the program, also required the least intervention from teachers in completing tasks relative to the other clique members. Ronny was also reasonably confident in his prospects for success in the

LCA and required only occasional intervention from teachers to complete his school work. Darnell required similar from his teachers, and also rated his chances of completing the programme quite highly. Zach who was less confident also required greater intervention to focus on tasks than either of the previous students, and Corbin (who was the least confident) required the most intervention to maintain focus on tasks as well as assistance with completing work. Zach's observation below is similar to that of Georgina earlier – expectations are different in the LCA group relative to other programs in Goodwin – but while Georgina and the R&B/Hip-Hop girls strived to meet these different expectations, in Zach's case this was not always true:

> "It's a bit of a doss like – you know you don't get into as much trouble not having homework done in LCA as you would have last year [Junior Cert]. Teachers aren't giving out as much. Sometimes you'd get away with just catching up."
>
> (Zach, 02/12/2011)

Zach's observation above suggests that the different expectations in LCA can be taken advantage of, allowing him to 'get away with' deferring assignments. While clearly calculated, this strategy is perhaps not as effective in relation to his long term success in the programme as others in the class, who persist with completing assignments on time to maximise their chances of success. Zach perhaps shows evidence of favouring the course of action bringing about gratification immediately, rather than that bringing about gratification in the longer term.

Turning now to examine the value the students place on their participation in the LCA program, there is again divergence evident:

> "[LCA] will definitely help me to get a job - employers want you to be responsible and think for yourself you just don't learn that doing a Leaving Cert."
>
> (Gabriel 14/11/2011)

> "We get to do our own thing in LCA – if we're interested in something we can do it."
>
> (Ronny 14/11/2011)

> "I'm not sure if I would turn down a job if I got an offer. I think LCA will help, but I think if someone would give me a job without it, I'd have to think about it. I don't think I'd be offered a job if I didn't complete the program."
>
> (Darnell 14/11/2011)

> "I'm not sure this is for me. I want to see if it will be any good. See if it will help me get a job like or will it be just the same as always [Junior Cycle]"
>
> (Zach 14/11/11)

> "If someone said 'here's a job if you want it' I'd be gone like – definitely. The point of school is to get a job."
>
> (Corbin, 15/11/11)

It is worth stressing again in examining the insights above, the differences in the types of jobs aspired to by the students of Goodwin, relative to the students of Smithstown. Many of the male students in particular in Goodwin aspired towards gaining social capital – through employment in semi-skilled or manual skilled work – identifying production lines in factories, and positions as machinists, powered by their awareness of others employed in such settings (personal friends and acquaintances, etc.) Some also identified apprenticeships. The students of Smithstown, on the other hand, aspired towards what might be understood as 'professional' roles such as engineering. The students who were reasonably confident of completing the programme highlighted the personal development opportunities the programme offers (which will later improve their chances of employment). Gabriel points to developing responsibility, Ronny to exploring areas of personal interest. Darnell, Zach and Corbin, however, view the programme in a more utilitarian way – believing that the purpose of the programme is to power an opportunity for employment, and accordingly, once the programme provides this, it has served its purpose. Darnell believes he would seriously consider a job offer if it came during the programme (although he doubts it will). Corbin is certain he wouldn't need to consider that decision at all – adamant he would seize such an opportunity immediately if it arose. Although most of the Goodwin students, coherent with the work of Banks *et al* (2010), identify that successful completion of the LCA will likely improve their chances of entering the workplace, these students do not strictly believe that this goal cannot be achieved without completing the programme. Corbin's interpretation of his position sits in stark contrast to recent data

in relation to the long-term prospects of early leavers from the LCA programme in particular – who have been found to disproportionately experience frustration in meeting their goals on direct entry to the labour market, particularly during the recent economic recession (McCoy *et al* 2014b). This different assessment of the social world again emerges as having a significant impact on decision making. Zach, on the other hand, is somewhat more circumspect – believing that there is potential value to the programme for him provided the learning experiences differ from those he previously felt negatively about in Junior Cycle. It is the case then that there were differences between the students confident in completing the programme and those who were less confident. This theme was also evident in the EDM Girls whom I discuss next.

In examining how the EDM Girls interpret their experiences, it becomes clear that there are also diverging understandings of the role of the LCA. To recap, Elaine was very confident that she would complete the programme successfully. Both Adalyn and Chantel were slightly less confident, but both rated themselves more likely to complete the programme than not. Erica was uncertain whether she will complete the program. There was little variance amongst the EDM Girls in terms of attendance. Elaine missed one day during observations, and Adalyn, Chantel and Erica each missed two days. Unlike other members of the class who were uncertain of completing the LCA program, Erica had a very good attendance record:

> Erica: I'm still not sure that I'll complete the program
>
> Jason: Are you leaning one way or the other? Do you think you are more likely to stay or go?
>
> Erica: I'm still trying to figure it out. I'll stick it out for a while longer.
>
> (Unstructured Interview, 16/11/2011)

Unlike the other students who were uncertain of completing the programme- Erica above speaks about 'sticking it out' – and persisting with the programme while she makes up her mind. She identifies that it is better to continue to engage with the programme while she is making her mind up, and she is also likely to be increasing her overall chances of success in the program, relative to others in the class, whose uncertainty about completion is marked by frequent absence from the program.

Moving to examine engagement with homework and assigned classroom activities, there was a relationship between engagement and confidence in completing the programme amongst the EDM Girls (much like the other cliques reported). Elaine completed homework every day and required a little assistance from teachers in completing assigned work in class. Adalyn had homework completed most days (three occasions over the course of observations where she hadn't) but did require regular intervention from her teachers (particularly in Maths) to keep her focused on tasks (her maths teacher worked with her individually most days). Chantel also had homework completed on most days (failing to do so on five occasions) but showed greater ability to work independently on assigned classroom activity than Adalyn, who rarely required support from teachers. Erica mostly completed homework also (failing to do so on three occasions), but, like Adalyn, required regular intervention from teachers to keep her focused on tasks (teachers reminded her to focus on tasks on average three times per day). There is evidence then of a trend across each of the groups. The students likely to be confident in their chances of completing school were also those likely to complete assigned tasks independently (suggesting that they more successfully internalised the values of the schooling field), while those less certain of completing the programme were also more likely to require greater encouragement from teachers in order to keep them focused on classroom assignments (suggesting that they had not internalised the values of Goodwin as successfully).

The EDM Girls spoke positively about the LCA when queried as to how much they value the programme. Like other groups, the girls drew on the human capital values –speaking about how completion of the programme would make them more desirable as potential employees, and about how their learning needs are catered for in the LCA in a way that wouldn't be possible pursing an LCE pathway. They spoke favourably about the dynamic in class – believing that teachers were more inclined to 'have a laugh' in LCA and this astute use of humour in the classroom this greatly enhanced the learning experience:

> "I like it [LCA] – the teachers are laid back now, able to have a laugh. It's good to be able to joke around in class; not all pressure all the time. I think some of the vocation stuff [vocational education tasks] will be good – we'll learn the right way to talk in an interview."
>
> (Adalyn, 20/10/2011)

> "The work experience is good like – how d'ya know if you're going to enjoy a job you've never tried before? I'm looking forward to that the most."
>
> (Chantel, 21/10/2011)

> "I don't know whether the LCA is the best way to find a job. It would probably be better than just a junior cert, but when we go on work experience, they don't care whether I do my maths homework like – they wanna know if I'm a good worker and you have to prove that [by] actually doing the job. Once you show you're a good worker people probably won't care whether you finished school."
>
> (Erica, 20/10/2011)

> "I think for an interview they'll want to see that you've stuck out school. They want to see that you can commit to something and work hard. People won't want to take a chance on somebody who's only left school with a Junior Cert – not these days anyways. You'll probably be asked why you left school, and for most people, the answer is you couldn't get on with teachers – didn't want to be told what to do. Nobody wants to hear that in an interview – 'I can't stand being told what to do."
>
> (Elaine, 21/10/2011)

There is overlap above between Adalyn's insights and those of the students of Smithstown in relation to the importance of a positive pupil-teacher relationship in maintaining student engagement, agreeing with earlier findings in the Irish context (Boldt 1994, 1995, Smyth *et al* 2006). Chantel highlights the importance she places on the experiential learning component of the LCA programme – which she would not have experienced on the LCE strand – such an experiential focus being underpinned by liberal-progressivist ideology (Dewey 1893). Erica and Elaine offer interesting viewpoints: both highlighting the social desirability of completing school – pointing out that it is better to leave school with a Leaving Certificate than a Junior Certificate. Both clearly believe that a school is a place where you impress potential employers by demonstrating conscientiousness. Erica believes that the potential to demonstrate conscientiousness in the workplace may prove more impressive to employers than demonstrating it in the classroom – a claim which Irish data simply

does not support, but Elaine believes that as well as conscientiousness it is necessary to demonstrate a type of conformity, in order to both succeed in school as well as the workplace when she says that not being able to 'stand being told what to do' is an undesirable trait. This insight stands in contrast to those of Willis' 'lads' (1979), who created a clear demarcation between conformity in the mental arena (school) and physical arena (the workplace) in which the former was rejected, and the latter embraced.

7.3.3 Section Review:

To summarise the findings above, it is clear that there are a number of different social practices occurring within the school field of Goodwin, arising from the objective relations between the school staff in Goodwin (the dominant) and the students (the dominated). The students who have successfully internalised both the values of the field in Goodwin, as well as the practices expected in it, show a number of common dispositions. They see legitimacy in the values of the LCA programme and its intended outcomes, and have confidence in their chances of success and are engaged with school work. These students also attended frequently, offering further opportunities to reinforce these perceptions. Confidence (self-efficacy) is central to the buoyancy construct of Martin and Marsh, and the findings above are in agreement with the earlier work of these authors (2006, 2008a) – who also found that buoyancy correlates positively with participation (as well as enjoyment). Students confident of completion were also those who required the least amount of encouragement/reminders from their teachers to remain on task during lessons – achieved by successfully internalising the values of the field. The ability to manage performance, and cope with difficult tasks has also been noted to correlate positively with buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2008a).

All of the students aspire towards gaining employment, and all believe their participation in the LCA programme aids them in doing this to a greater or lesser extent. While most students believe completing the LCA programme positions them effectively to secure employment, some are open to the idea of leaving the LCA programme early for a job opportunity if one arose. For these students, their sense of what is and what is not feasible within the field may be flawed. Irish data suggests that they are likely to be over-estimating their long-term chances of success (McCoy *et al* 2014b), and in making such decisions these young people would quite likely

become complicit in their own continuing domination – through denying themselves opportunities to amass cultural capital through education. These students who were open to the idea of leaving the LCA programme early if it meant securing employment, were less engaged with tasks and were more likely to be absent from the programme than students who believed that successful completion was the more effective way of securing employment. These students were also dubious as to the value of some of the elements of the LCA programme, suggesting that buoyancy alone is not the only factor impacting on student engagement and motivation – and that teachers have a role in highlighting the values of the field (valuable elements of the programme) to scaffold student understanding of the rationale for classroom activities, as well as in scaffolding appropriate student goals arising from this rationale.

7.4 Drawing insights together: Academic 'Success' in Smithstown and Goodwin.

In this section, I will review the key dispositions that emerged common to both the Smithstown and Goodwin students whose practices suggested that they had internalised the values of these respective fields, and accordingly appeared likely to succeed in school. In examining both cohorts, it is clear that such students were in the majority. These students shared a number of common dispositions which endowed them with a habitus compatible with the fields concerned that are associated with academic buoyancy. This habitus gave rise to practices which positively mediated their engagement with, and success in, school.

7.4.3 Pedagogy to encourage autonomy?

While there is an established body of work in the field of academic buoyancy which points to the importance of 'autonomy' (having a high internal locus of control) in young people as a mediator of their ability to cope with everyday stressors, in my discussion of Smithstown, I challenged the appropriateness of this term, and queried whether the practices of successful students (and the disposition giving rise to these practices) might be better understood as 'conformity' – especially in a context where students' have little ownership decisions relating to their curriculum and school experiences. In Smithstown in particular, the dominant ideology, underpinned by Habermas' 'technical interest' was that of classical humanism. Students followed

tightly prescribed learning activities that left little space for co-construction of learning through dialogue (as would be typical of constructivist pedagogy), or indeed opportunities for democratic classroom practices in which might students might have learned about have challenging social inequality (Grundy 1987). Students spoke positively about occasions when they did feel their input was welcomed – leading to warmer relationships with teachers who adopted such pedagogical strategies. Further evidence of conformity is evident in Goodwin. Through conforming to the expectations of the field, and internalising the values espoused by teachers, students modified their practices to experience success. These students completed homework and classroom tasks when assigned, with relatively little intervention from their teachers. These almost subconscious dispositions that certain students had to act in these particular ways created a perception amongst the SCP staff in both Smithstown and Goodwin that these students were likely to successfully complete school. Additionally, these students also rated themselves as being much more likely to complete school than the students who inconsistently completed homework, and who frequently required the support of their teachers to remain focused on classroom tasks. This conformity emerged as an important characteristic of the Internaliser students in Smithstown in particular – who were all highly driven students, aspiring to reach third-level institutions following the completion of their second-level experience. These students, in particular, rose to meet most of the expectations their teachers had of them (notwithstanding their teachers' study recommendations), and they were able to maintain the necessary motivation to drive their learning in the classroom without much intervention from their teachers. While the Adaptors engaged in these practices of conformity in the classroom generally, they did require more intervention from teachers to maintain focus on tasks.

In Goodwin, where the workloads were not perceived by the students as being as challenging generally, it remained the case that the students who were the more likely to complete school were those whose practices were such that they required less intervention from their teachers. With this said, the students of Goodwin did require more support both in completing classwork and homework assignments, as well as maintaining engagement with same, than the students of Smithstown. The R&B/Hip-Hop girls, in particular, required the least intervention of the groups observed, but still required this intervention from teachers, particularly to maintain

engagement during lessons. Some of the EDM Girls also showed evidence of this but required more intervention than their R&B/Hip-Hop counterparts in relation to both classroom tasks as well as homework.

On the other hand, the students who frequently required intervention were in the main pessimistic about their chances of completing school. The Fringe students of Smithstown and the Rap Boys of Goodwin (Gabriel and Ronny aside) both required regular intervention from their teachers to encourage them to complete classroom tasks as well as homework and oftentimes were subject to teachers interventions a number of times per day in order to remain on task during lessons. Aside from these general themes amongst groups, Erica (EDM, Goodwin) and Greyson (Fringe, Smithstown) also required frequent intervention from teachers in order to remain focused on tasks during lessons.

In Goodwin as well as Smithstown, some students resist their teachers' efforts. Giroux (1983) argues that an examination of reproduction and transmission of values and practices must also account for the reality that not all students will recognise these values and practices as legitimate and will conform only under pressure, or rebel openly against the imposition. Examples of both of these practices of resistance were evident in this research. In Smithstown, students disengaged with revision activities that were not actively monitored by teachers (conforming under pressure), and in Goodwin students engaged in a practice of symbolic resistance through *'Bouncing'* (open rebellion). The students in Goodwin speak of a sense of collective identity through breaking up their monotonous experiences, a theme evident in the song they chose for their practice of resistance, as well as the wider genre of music it belongs to. However their resistance is only symbolic – as teachers did not acquiesce to their students' displays of autonomous resistance, despite the critique it may offer.

The motivation for this resistance may be feelings of disempowerment in the teaching and learning process. Students speak positively in both contexts when they feel empowered – where their inputs are valued and acted upon by teachers, however, this practice was atypical in both contexts. Through encouraging young people's conformity to prescribed values rather than encouraging their autonomy by co-constructing what is to be valued, students' opportunities for 'identity achievement' are limited. This should be of concern; identity achievement has been

demonstrated to be positively associated with an individual's perceived locus of control; potentially supporting their buoyancy (Lillevoll *et al* 2013b), while identity foreclosure is positively associated with higher anxiety; potentially undermining buoyancy (Lillevoll *et al* 2013a).

7.4.4 Identity Construction

Another important aspect of the autonomy/conformity debate in this context is, therefore, the exploration of and construction of an identity. Structurally, the school fields of both Goodwin and Smithstown regulate the conditions in which young people can explore their identity. In the case of both Smithstown and Goodwin, there was evidence of students utilising resources both from inside and outside of schools to create both individual as well as group identities. Students drew on their perceptions of vocations in the creation of these identities, which mediated their engagement in school. In Smithstown for example, the Internaliser and Adaptor students, in particular, aspired to professions which would require further study following the completion of senior cycle education in third-level, such as engineering and science courses. Other students, such as Greyson, believed that second-level education did not serve his needs as a 'hands-on' learner, and was convinced that he would be better suited in a trade outside the school system. In Goodwin, students in the LCA programme were less certain of exactly what jobs they would obtain after leaving. Some students were confident of pursuing a Post Leaving Certificate course, others that they would enter the employment market directly after completing the LCA, and others felt they would drop out of the LCA programme if they were offered a job prior to completion. There was evidence of students evaluating their contexts of opportunity in making their decisions. Students in both Smithstown and Goodwin believed that their employment prospects following an early exit from the respective programmes were positive, indeed perhaps more so than empirical data on post-school pathways following such decisions would suggest. These vocational identities mediated engagement with particular subjects in Smithstown in particular, where several students prioritised engaging in subjects that they perceived as vocationally relevant to them – which was also on occasion was also characterised by questionable understanding the social world – such as Landon's perception that architects are primarily concerned with drawing.

Additional to this, students drew on resources external to the school in the construction of their identities. For a number of the male students, sport was a key component of their identities, with a distinct typology present in Smithstown where by those who play football regularly being considered more popular than those who play occasionally, and these students were, in turn, more popular than students who did not play at all. Such findings are consistent with earlier work on hegemonic masculinity in schools (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Hickey 2008, Carless 2012). Music was also used as a resource with which to construct identity in both Smithstown and particularly Goodwin. In both schools, students used music as a safe space in which to explore resistance. In Smithstown, some of the Perseverant and Fringe students identified with *gangsta rap* music – characterised by themes of resistance and opposition. Others identified with *EDM*, which in turn is characterised by themes of escapism and disrupting the everyday mundane. In Goodwin, music was the primary resource students used in the creation of identities, with friendship groups forming around common interests in R&B/hip-hop, rap and EDM music respectively. *'Bouncing'* also served to reinforce a collective identity as a communal practice of open rebellion. Constructivist perspectives on resilience in school point to such displays of resistance as containing important critiques of adversity. Although their teachers' may not have responded to the practice, 'bouncing' none the less is a manifestation of frustration towards the prevailing experience the students have of school. Such critiques, as will be elaborated on below, may offer teachers cause for reflection on what type of pedagogy is most appropriate to employ in classrooms to empower students.

7.4.1 Self-Efficacy

High levels of self-efficacy were evident in the Adaptors and Internaliser students of Smithstown, as well as R&B/Hip-Hop girls and most of the EDM Girls of Goodwin. Gabriel of the Rap Boys was also highly confident in his abilities. This confidence is positively reinforced by the experience of success and validation in classroom tasks and homework – students complete tasks successfully, raising their confidence and maintaining their motivation to remain engaged with subsequent tasks. It is also reinforced by teachers through transmitting messages of belief and encouragement to students as they comply with the expected practices of engagement.

Conversely, students who were less confident in their ability to succeed had lower levels of self-efficacy in classroom tasks and also saw less value in their programmes of learning. The Fringe students of Smithstown and the many of the remaining Rap Boys of Goodwin were less likely to engage in tasks than their peers and were less likely to be successful when they did attempt to do so. Compounding this was their less frequent attendance relative to the other more confident students, meaning that the Fringe and Rap Boys had fewer opportunities to engage with learning experiences that might raise their self-efficacy.

7.4.2 Persistence

Persistence has emerged as an important disposition of successful students across both study groups. Many of the Smithtown students felt that teacher expectations of them were onerous, particularly with regard to study expectations. For the Persistent students of Smithstown in particular, meeting classwork and homework expectations was especially challenging. These students, however, showed a noteworthy persistence in striving to meet their teachers' expectations – working diligently despite the fact that they found schoolwork very challenging. Part of this persistence arose from internalising messages concerning the value and necessity of hard-work in school which came from teachers. While they do not particularly 'enjoy' trying to meet the high expectations teachers have of them, they endure, because (in part) they see the worsening economic conditions surrounding them and believe that employers now have higher expectations of young people relative to even a generation ago when it was feasible to gain employment with a Junior Certificate or less.

While teacher expectations are different, and perceived by students as less academically focused in the LCA programme in Goodwin, there is also evidence of persistence amongst the students here also. Indeed even amongst the students who rate themselves their chances of completion as 50-50 or worse, there is a broad acceptance that while they may not believe that all elements of the LCA programme will be equally useful for them in gaining employment in future, employers would still favour young people seen to have completed school programmes such as the LCA than not, and so students must be persistent - engaging even with the elements that they not may see as being of immediate value.

Conversely, the students most at-risk of early school leaving in the Smithstown cohort, and the students who were more likely to leave school early in Goodwin were less persistent than their less at-risk peers. In practice, this disposition translated to readily disengaging from classwork and homework, and from subjects that they believed were vocationally irrelevant (such as Greyson who disengaged completely from History classes in Smithstown), and in Goodwin several of the Rap Boys who were openly sceptical of the value of the LCA programme also disengaged from schoolwork and homework tasks more readily than their more persistent peers. Valuing school has been demonstrated by Martin (2007) to be an important booster for motivation and engagement in school, and the findings of the observations in Goodwin and Smithstown concur with that work. Decisions to persist or not in school were mediated by their understandings of the social world. Decisions to disengage for a number of students in Smithstown, and more so in Goodwin were reconciled in the context of these understandings.

7.4.4 Planning

The ability to create effective learning strategies also emerged as important disposition possessed by the students likely to remain in school. This was especially apparent in the Smithstown cohort, where the timing of the observations – during the final months before their major state examination – meant that the students were under pressure to manage a large workload effectively. As reported earlier, the students were given support to plan their revision schedule – in the form of class time dedicated to the creation these schedules. In addition, students in Smithstown (the Internaliser and the Adaptor students in particular) reported adhering to these plans more closely and scheduled longer time in the evenings for the purposes of completing homework and revision (albeit short of expectations).

Similar findings emerged based on the observations of the Goodwin cohort. The R&B/Hip-Hop and EDM Girls broadly reported themselves as more likely to complete school than leave it, and they all reported setting aside longer periods of time for completing the work they were assigned for projects in the evening time relative to the students unlikely to complete school. While the students of Goodwin as a collective point out that their learning experience is much less intense in terms of work expected than either the Junior Certificate year, or the LCE year one, it none

the less remained that there was a relationship between time reported spent engaged in preparing for project work, and the likelihood of completing said project.

As before, the converse findings were also evident – the students who reported relatively less time set aside for homework were amongst those most likely to leave. The least amount time reported across both cohorts were amongst the Rap Boys cohort in Goodwin, but the Fringe and Persistent students in Smithstown also reported dedicating less time to homework and study than either the Autonomous or Adaptor students of Smithstown, or indeed the R&B/Hip-Hop Girls in Goodwin.

7.4.5 Composure through *doxa*

The final notable disposition of the students likely to complete school was their sense of composure (low anxiety) concerning their chances of success in the field. Their ability to persist, to plan effectively, coupled with the conformity to the expectations of those in power in the field, lent to a sense that success was deserved and would be forthcoming. This relates to Bourdieu's construction of *doxa* (1977) – the students believe that through a combination of their ability, and by 'playing the game' in Smithstown and in Goodwin, social mobility (in the case of Smithstown) and employment (in the case of Goodwin) would be their reward. While Lynch (1985) dismisses that education alone allows for any possible social position to be obtained as a social fallacy, the perception amongst the students is that because they are in control of how hard they work, they are in control of their success – and they derive a sense of composure from this. In Smithstown, this was most clearly seen with the Internaliser students. This group were particularly conscientious and driven to succeed – adamant that they, their hard work would make them deserving of success. It was also apparent in the insights from Adaptor students as reported in the previous chapter.

However, this sense of composure did not appear manifest as obviously in other groups regarded as likely to remain in school. The Persistent and Fringe students in Smithstown generally felt that their sense of control was somewhat limited; that there were occasions in school where no matter how hard they tried; their efforts were not good enough to complete some tasks, and they accordingly disengaged as a means of failure avoidance. They perceived themselves as less capable, leading to feelings of anxiety in some of the students, which is consistent with the potential

setback of failure avoidance strategies outlined by Martin and Marsh (2003). The Goodwin students all felt that they would be incapable of succeeding in an LCE program, regardless of how much effort they put into it. These insights offer evidence of what has been termed 'fixed' mind-sets (Dweck and Leggett 1988, Molden and Dweck 2006). As some of the quotes above point to the opinions of teachers reinforcing this perceived lack of ability (feeling that teachers go 'easier' on them) students may also recognise by *doxa* that the LCE is inappropriate for their position. Findings here suggest that such mind-sets lead to higher anxiety when faced with difficult tasks, impacting on perceived likelihood of success.

7.5 Conclusion

To summarise the findings above, it was evident that the identity construction and the internalisation of both values and practices were the key processes which mediated how students interpreted their experiences in both Smithstown as well as Goodwin. Students who successfully internalised the values of the respective school fields, and who modified their practices accordingly, perceived themselves as likely to complete school. Others, who didn't internalise the values and practices as successfully were marginalised as a result, and accordingly viewed themselves as more likely to leave school early. In parallel to these processes, students created individual and group identities, drawing on resources both from inside and outside of school, as well as their understanding of the social world. These identities also mediated their engagement in school.

These processes gave rise to key dispositions in students. Firstly, it emerged that there is a relationship between confidence in success in school and engagement with school work amongst the students likely to complete school in both Goodwin as well as Smithstown. The students confident in completing the LCA programme in Goodwin were broadly the ones whose practices were compatible with the expectations of the schooling field. These students had the fewest number of absences and showed the highest engagement with homework, and this was also true of the students most confident of completing their second-level education in Smithstown also. Confidence (self-efficacy) is central to the buoyancy construct of Martin and Marsh, and the findings above are in agreement with the earlier work of these authors (2006, 2008a) – who also found that buoyancy correlates positively

with participation (as well as the enjoyment of school). This confidence arose through repeated experiences of success in homework and classroom activities, and students confident of completion were also who those who most successfully conformed to their teachers' requirements in keeping 'on task' during lessons. The ability to manage performance, and cope with difficult tasks has also been noted to correlate positively with buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2008a). The data gathered over the course of observations in Smithstown and Goodwin suggests that there are three further inter-related characteristics of successful students in addition to high levels of confidence. Successful students are effective planners – able to allocate suitable amounts of time specifically towards homework tasks when these are assigned. With this said, there was some resistance to what were viewed as onerous expectations, from the students in Smithstown and Goodwin. While these students broadly complied with homework requirements (because these were monitored closely, and sanctions followed non-compliance), they did not engage in the prescribed amount of revision as this was not so stringently regulated. Further to this, and particularly clear in the case of the Persistent students of Smithstown, it is apparent that successful students are those who do not allow setback to derail their confidence and engagement, and instead are capable of displaying the necessary persistence to see their goals through to completion. There is also an almost taken for granted assumption that success is the inevitability from sustained effort plus ability. Students in Smithstown drew a sense of composure from this assumption, even though it has been argued elsewhere that it is an assumption that amounts to a social fallacy (Lynch 1985). In Goodwin, there was also a sense that some students felt *destined* for the LCA programme on the basis of what they perceived as their inability to conform to the expected practices concerning behaviour in class, and their inability to match their peers' performance in classroom assignments and assessments. I could not gather any evidence that the students were anxious about this perceived inability, only a sense of resignation – that they were assuming a position they were destined for.

With the above noted, the findings also pose some questions concerning the understanding of student autonomy (locus of control); the final correlate of academic buoyancy. The data suggests that some students feel in control of their success, there are wider ideological considerations concerning who 'owns' the success criteria to

be debated. The successful students were the ones who internalise the criteria of the teachers and staff in power. It may be the case then, that while this sense of control over success might indeed correlate with student success, too great a sense of autonomy may impede students' chances of success, as teaching and learning activities in Ireland are underpinned by classical-humanist ideology in which the role of the teacher is as an authoritative master, and the role of the student is to conform. Such conformity limits young people's ability to reach identity achievement which may impact on academic buoyancy through by lowering students' sense of composure and internal locus of control. In Goodwin in particular – when student's claimed 'autonomy' through their symbolic resistance practice of *'bouncing'* their resistance did not serve the needs of their teachers – as their efforts to teach were temporarily disrupted. In Smithstown, the resistance was less obvious. Students broadly complied with homework expectations and classroom activities, but because study activities were not subject to stringent monitoring, the students won autonomy through not engaging in these practices.

The students of both Goodwin, as well as Smithstown, have aspirations towards gaining employment (professional positions in the case of Smithstown, and semi-skilled and unskilled manual work in the case of Goodwin), and most believe that completing school offers them the best opportunity to do so. These aspirations formed part of their individual identities. Some (largely the Rap Boys) are open to the idea of leaving the LCA programme early in Goodwin for a job opportunity if one arose, and this is also true of the Fringe students of Smithstown. In both schools, students who were open to the idea of leaving early if it meant securing employment were less engaged with tasks and were more likely to be absent from their respective programmes than students who believed that successful completion was the more effective way of securing employment. The students who believed themselves to be unlikely to complete school also indicated that they do not believe aspects of their educational experience are valuable. This suggests that what we understand as resilience and buoyancy are not the only factors impacting on student engagement and motivation – teachers (at the very least) have a role in making the value of the elements of programmes explicit, to scaffold their students' understanding of the rationale for classroom activities, as well as in scaffolding appropriate student goals arising from this rationale. Perhaps a more effective means of allowing students to

'see' the value in their curriculum would be to allow them an opportunity to co-construct what values are to be included, which lies at the heart of democratic approaches to teaching (Freire 1970, Grundy 1987, Ladson-Billings 1995, Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, Beane and Apple 2007). This latter space would allow students to develop their autonomy and explore identity more effectively than the former, as well as open avenues through which inequality in society might be challenged. Such efforts towards *praxis* are crucial to empowering students to participate as citizens in democratic society. The importance of a positive classroom environment and positive student-teacher relationships was also highlighted by both cohorts.

With the above in mind, the findings above demonstrate some support for the earlier work in academic buoyancy of (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, Martin *et al* 2010, Martin 2014). It is encouraging for teachers that these are eminently teachable characteristics – and some guidance on how this can be done is offered by Martin *et al* (2010). Such suggestions include maximising opportunities for student success (Schunk and Miller 2002), challenging negative self-beliefs (Bandura 1997, 2006), developing effective goal setting skills (Locke and Latham 2002), and maintaining effective and persistent strategies to pursue these (Zimmerman 2002). Students' sense of control (autonomy) can be improved by demonstrating to them how such strategies can bring improvement, through effective feedback (Martin *et al* 2001, 2003), notwithstanding the wider query as to whether this sense of control could be further fostered by allowing students to co-construct what is to be valued in the first instance. While the buoyancy construct may offer teachers and students an opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning, and may look to increasing student buoyancy as a goal for supporting student success, it is important to note that in the data above, students who do not share in the valuing the goals of the schooling fields are less likely to engage with striving to obtain them. This poses a difficulty for teachers. Efforts to support students in being more successful in school will likely meet resistance from students who see no value in being successful in school. While an examination of student buoyancy offers some possibilities, it also has limitations. Resilience and buoyancy prepare students to endure adversity, but when applied in schools, part of the 'adversity' which students face is not seeing legitimacy in the values of the school. Preparing students to endure this adversity, assumes that the goals and values to be pursued are objective and unchangeable when they are in fact

political and arbitrary. Successful students were those who internalised the goals and values of those in power in each field, while holding onto whatever individuality was left for them as a result of this process, and resilience and buoyancy would seek to apply lessons from such success to all. Freire argued however that 'no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors.' (Freire 1970, p.54). Resilience and buoyancy are inherently 'emulation models' which should not be uncritically presented to teachers as ways to 'fix' deficient students. Instead, these constructs and the discourse which surround them should challenge teachers to consider the wider socio-economic and political inequalities which disadvantage students in the first instance. Students in Goodwin view themselves as 'less than' their peers in the LCE on the basis of their academic ability, but wider socio-economic inequality in also significantly mediates students' ability to succeed in school. It may be that to answer Freire's challenge that education should serve to liberate, schools should become a place to teach young people to critically and creatively challenge this reality (Freire 1970, p.34)

The upcoming chapter details the development and deployment of a questionnaire instrument, which was deployed as an opportunity for teachers and their students to engage in conversations about resilience in society. The intention of the instrument is to serve as a means to reflect on what types of abilities schools should focus on, and who should decide on these. Part of this usefulness may be to challenge the discourse used in schools. Rather than conceptualising some students as being 'at-risk', it may prove more empowering to instead conceptualise all students as being potentially 'resilient' or 'buoyant' while remaining mindful of such wider social and political inequality which requires them to be resilient in the first instance.

Chapter Eight: Development of the Student Buoyancy Instrument

8.0 Introduction

> "Schools have an important role to play in raising healthy children by fostering not only their cognitive development but also their social and emotional development."
>
> (Durlak et al 2011, p.406)

The findings from the fieldwork reported in Chapters Six and Seven demonstrated that students had constructed identities, and noted that in constructing these identities, students drew on resources both from inside and outside of school. These identities were demonstrated to have a material impact on decisions these young people made in school, including decisions in relation to completing it or leaving school early. The findings from these chapters also showed that students' understandings of the social world also impacted on these decisions. Lastly, these chapters also documented that some students had internalised values and adapted practices which enabled them to conform to the expectations of those in power in both fields. These students were perceived by teachers and school staff as those who were likely to complete school successfully, and these students rated their own chances of success quite highly. Others, who had not internalised these practices and values as successfully, both perceived themselves, and were perceived by others, as likely to leave school early.

These chapters also called into question how we conceptualise autonomy in school, and how we afford it to our students. The students in Smithstown experienced predominantly 'transmission-type' learning activities, which treated them as passive recipients of information. Such pedagogical approaches form part of the prevailing culture of teaching in Ireland (Gleeson 2010), and the students who perceived themselves to be most at risk of early school leaving also spoke most negatively about the authoritarian relationships this approach fosters in the classroom. Charlotte points out that 'Respect is important… It's much easier to learn when there is a good atmosphere in the room … she sees us as equal' (27/04/2010) when describing her favourite teacher. Such respectful approaches, in which learners are valued and

treated as equal partners, were more common in the pedagogy experienced by the LCA students in Goodwin. Such pedagogy has an 'emancipatory interest' (Habermas 1976), where teachers engage in reflection with emancipatory intent (Kincheloe 1991), and their teaching is underpinned by a liberal-progressive ideology. These approaches aspire towards *praxis* (Grundy 1987) – where classrooms are constructed as democratic spaces where learner participation is welcomed (Freire 1970, Dewey and Boydston 1981). These classrooms seek to empower students to ask critical questions of society and inequality (Sleeter and Grant 1987, Ladson-Billings 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, Sleeter 2001).

The fieldwork reported questions how we conceptualise resilience in schools. Neoliberal policy on resilience places emphasis on individual responsibility for coping, competence and success, and is defined principally in terms of enterprise and contribution to economic rather than to social well-being (Rose 1996). The arising individualised evidence base may be readily appropriated as justification for 'responsibilisation' (Kelly 2001):

> "Messages to the poor that it is their responsibility or that they are lacking in effort, taken out of context of social support and protection – or their absences – blame those who are less successful or healthy or able to negotiate their way in conventional ways following conventional routes."
>
> (Garmezy cited in Rolf 1999, p.13)

In scenarios such as the above, emancipation is reframed in terms which tend towards erasing social justice and look instead towards disadvantaged individuals self-inventing for success, giving little consideration to the adverse conditions which serve to constrain opportunities for marginalised individuals to experience success. Resilience building, Bottrell argues (2009, p.334), may then shift under a neoliberal framework from positive adaptation *despite* adversity, to positive adaption *to* adversity, and this should be of concern for teachers.

Identity work underpins subjective experiences of constraints and opportunities. Greyson in Smithstown, as well as the Rap Boys in Goodwin, contrast their opportunities in school with those outside, which would allow them to gain a sense of financial independence, drawing on human-capital understandings of the purpose

of education. The day-to-day experiences of school in effect contradict what these students view as worthy of aspiring towards, and instead is experienced as an adversity; something to be endured until more the more favourable arena of the workplace is available. As such, one could argue that the management strategies these students employ, such as disengagement from learning, and non-cooperation with teachers, as well as absences from their respective programmes, serve to buffer these students from adversity; and serve to redefine a socially undesirable outcome as subjectively acceptable (Kaplan 1999, p.31-32)

Some of the dispositions which gave rise to the practices of students who perceived themselves as likely to stay in school have been demonstrated to correlate with young people's academic buoyancy: such as self-efficacy, persistence, planning and composure. With this said, while literature points towards 'autonomy' (a high internal locus of control) manifesting in academically buoyant students, the points raised above query whether the limited ownership students have over their curricular experiences in Smithstown, in particular, provides an environment for young people to develop an *internal* locus of control. Rather, it appeared that the students who appeared the most likely to succeed and complete school were the students who were the most influenced by the expectations of those in power in the school fields. These students internalised values and practices that were largely generated *externally* to them, by those in power in both fields.

Arising from this fieldwork, there is cause for developing a greater understanding of these dispositions and how they relate to young people's decisions to stay in or leave school. There is also as cause for teachers to reflect on academic buoyancy and resilience and the affordances of these concepts to student empowerment. Bourdieu made extensive use of quantitative analysis (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu *et al* 1963, Bourdieu and Passeron 1964), which is viewed as useful once situated in context, and once it acknowledges, as Lebaron argues (2009, p.12), that social causality 'amounts to the global effects of a complex structure of interrelations, which is not reducible to the combination of the multiple "pure effects" of independent variables'.

This chapter reports on the development and validation of the *'Student Buoyancy Instrument'* (SBI). The SBI was developed with a view that it might provide teachers with a starting point for dialogue with their students with respect to inequality in

society and how, as democratic citizens, we should respond to same. It acknowledges, as per Bourdieu (1984, p.22), the need for sociological calculation of the effects expressed in statistical relationships. The observations reported earlier suggest that with appropriate support, young people can develop their buoyancy and enhance their chances of success, but to do so requires an examination of teacher methodology. Freire cautions against uncritically presenting the success of those who succeed in spite of adversity for others to emulate (1970, p.34). Instead, the discourse surrounding resilience should challenge teachers to consider the wider socio-economic and political inequalities which disadvantage their students in the first instance in their teaching. Young people in schools are poorly positioned to challenge these inequalities. However, school can (and should) be a place where young people analyse what kinds of adversity exist, and which kinds would be useful to face and develop resilience against. It should also be a place where young people and teachers critique and learn to creatively challenge the kinds of adversity which need not be faced in a democratic and just society. The self-knowledge generated as a result of this process, allows the potential for agency, Bourdieu argues (1998, p.ix); i.e. in order to obtain freedom from the social determinisms which shape practice, one must first become aware of social determinisms which shape practice. While the SBI reported on in this chapter, therefore, offers possibilities for teachers and students to reflect on buoyancy, as a 'self-report' instrument, it also has some limitations which will be discussed below.

The SBI is a 'self-report' inventory (Paulhus and Vazire 2007) drawn from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg *et al* 2006), focused on the dispositions identified earlier, and reasonably consistent with those identified in literature elsewhere (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, 2009). Nash argues (2003, p.55) that when socialization theories are used to explain why students engage in practices, such as either remaining in, or dropping out of school, the explanations generated are likely to be unsatisfactory unless they are contextualised with an account of:

- the social structures in which effective actions are located,
- the techniques of socialization,
- the dispositions generated, and

- the practices adopted as a result

Nash continues to point out (p.55) that while the experience of a certain social group produces a culture that disposes those brought up within that culture to develop particular characteristic preferences, the actions which follow are explained only to the extent that those preferences can be demonstrated to be responsible for their engagement in a practice. For teachers and researchers then, there is an important caveat to stress with respect to the explanatory power of this SBI instrument. To argue that a student left school because of a disposition to leave, that reflects the objective chances of students in the group into which he or she was socialized, is to unsatisfactorily assume a type of 'global' habitus (Nash 2003, p.55). Socialisation theory must account for context. With this said, the tool may prove useful in schools to the extent that it can serve to inform young people's social and emotional development (Durlak et al 2011, p.406). Two further limitations bear mentioning. Firstly, teachers, as well as researchers, must be aware that responders may not be capable of reporting on their mental processes accurately (Nisbett and Wilson 1977, Whitebread *et al* 2008, p.66). However, teachers wishing to mitigate the effects of inaccurate self-reporting from their students may do so through systematic observation and understanding of the social processes and contexts (Zimmerman and Schunk 2001) which give rise to these meta-cognitive abilities in their students (Whitebread *et al* 2008, p66). A second limitation is that it was not possible to obtain the cooperation of a representative sample of participants, despite every effort to do so. There are considerable constraints on the time of school principals, teachers as well as students to participate in research – a difficulty further exacerbated by the recent declining economic circumstances, and so the results discussed in this chapter should be viewed as indicative, rather than conclusive.

The selected scales used to construct the SBI were the 'Self-Efficacy', 'Planfullness', 'Locus of Control', 'Anxiety', and 'Persistence' scales from the IPIP database (as highlighted in the Chapter Five). To maximise the reliability of the adopted scales, they were altered as little as possible, save only for instances where questions may be ethically unsuitable for young people. Two pairs of opposing items were removed from the Anxiety subscale for this reason: *'I often/seldom feel blue',* and *'I get upset easily/rarely get irritated by things'.* Self-report measures such as these scales have both advantages and disadvantages. While the SBI as a self-report

tool is easily administered to second-level cohort, and can quickly provide data for teachers and students alike, self-report measures are limited by the ability of the responders to report on their mental processes accurately. With these considerations in mind, this chapter also reports on the reliability and validity of the scales comprising the SBI. This reliability can be defined as an indication of how likely the scales are to contain random error (Pallant 2007, p.6). This chapter also reports on the validity of the SBI, which is described as the degree to which a scale effectively measures what it purports to measure. This can be established by analysing the construct validity – assessing the scales in terms of 'theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the nature of the underlying variable or construct' (Pallant 2007, p.7). This is achieved by investigating the degree to which the targeted construct is both related to similar constructs (convergent validity), as well as distinct from unrelated constructs (discriminant validity). Finally, this chapter outlines the main findings from the deployment of the SBI. These findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between students' self-reported likelihood of staying in school, and four of the five scales, however; as will be reported below, the relationship between the fifth scale – which was termed 'Autonomy' (as will be discussed later) and staying in schools diverges from this pattern, and correlates negatively with students' self-reported likelihood of completing school. The positive correlations between the 'Confidence', 'Persistence' and 'Planning' scales were all statistically significant and increasing the sample size, and refining the instrument further may reveal significant statistical relationships with the other measures. This divergence on the 'Autonomy' scale *may* suggest that students who possess a high internal locus of control (as a disposition) may, in fact, be less suited to conforming to the requirements of the schooling. As noted earlier, the individuals most likely to be successful in the school fields of Goodwin and Smithstown were those who had been most successfully influenced by the expectations of those in power in the field, and had modified their practices and values according to these *externally* constructed expectations (i.e. they conformed to the expectations of others). The results of the SBI analysis suggests qualified support for this finding also.

8.1 Sampling

In the table overleaf, the seventeen schools in the sample are compared to the complete population (2013) of Irish post-primary schools by gender intake and

school type. As noted above, the sampling cannot be considered nationally representative in the Irish context.

	Number in Sample	**% of Sample**	*% of all Schools*
Intake			
Boys Only	5	**29.4**	*14.9*
Girls Only	5	**29.4**	*19.9*
Co-Educational	7	**41.2**	*65.2*
Total	17	**100**	*100*
School Type			
Secondary School	13	**76.4**	*54.3*
Vocational School	2	**11.8**	*33.3*
Community/Comprehensive School	2	**11.8**	*12.4*
Total	17	**100**	*100*
DEIS Status			
DEIS School	2	**11.8**	*26.1*
Non DEIS	15	**88.2**	*73.9*
Total	17	**100**	*100*

Table 1: School intake and type to national population (Ireland 2013)

As can be seen above, single-sex boys' and girls' schools are over-represented in this sample and co-educational schools under-represented relative to their frequencies nationally. Additionally, secondary schools are over-represented, and vocational schools are under-represented. The number of community or comprehensive schools is very close to being representative. Finally, DEIS schools are under-represented relative to their frequency nationally, and Non-DEIS schools are over represented (DES 2013). The under-representation of DEIS schools, in particular, arose because many of the schools which were contacted were already engaged in other research projects. In addition to the under-representation of some of the groups above, it is also worth bearing in mind that there are a number of very small samples, and so the results discussed should be taken as indicative rather than representative. In order to understand the self-reported data generated by the students, the data was stratified into several different categories and is reported on over the course of this chapter. In total, these seventeen schools gave rise to responses from a total of 581 students, and

these responses were analysed to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instrument.

8.2 Scale Construction and Reliability:

As introduced in the methodology, the SBI instrument consists of five scales drawn from the IPIP repository examining Self-Efficacy, Planfullness, Locus of Control, Anxiety and Persistence – coherent with the dispositions and practices of successful students identified during Phase One of this research. Even though the original scales were edited slightly (to ensure ethical suitability and readability for the target group), it was expected that the five distinct factors would emerge. This was explored using a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) in SPSS version 21 – a statistical manipulation to transform the items from each inventory into a smaller, linear, set of combinations while maintaining their variance (Pallant 2007). A copy of the output data is included as Appendix I. PCA is preferable to the alternative manipulation: a factor analysis, because it is a mathematically less complex procedure, is more psychometrically sound and avoids potential 'factor indeterminacy' issues (Stevens 2002, p.386). A conservative cut off value of 0.30 was used (Stevens 1992), and items that loaded on more than one factor were also excluded for the purposes of analysis. When these criteria were applied, a total of eight items were removed. To determine the number of factors to retain, Kaiser's rule was used (1960). Kaiser's rule calls for the retention of factors which have eigenvalues of one or greater. A factor's eigenvalue represents the amount of variance explained by that factor. Kaiser's rule indicated that five factors should be retained. This was verified using a Scree Test (Catell 1966) which calls for a visual inspection of a graph of all the reported eigenvalues, and the retention of all factors above the break point in the graph; the point after which the graph becomes horizontal. The Scree Test also indicated a five factor solution. These five factors accounted for 44.71% of the variance. A direct oblimin rotation was then used to achieve the components reported on below. This process groups related items together into correlated factors. The five components were classified 'Confidence', 'Composure', 'Planning', 'Autonomy' and 'Persistence'.

As indicated in the introduction, the reliability of a scale can be determined by using a test-retest analysis, or an analysis of the scale's internal consistency. A test-retest

analysis involves giving the same inventory to one or more respondents on two occasions and analysing the consistency between the two sets of responses. Pallant argues that personality inventories such as those used in the SBI should prove to be stable over time, however, due to the limitations of teachers' and students' time in schools a test-retest analysis was not performed in this research. Instead, a second measure of reliability was used – an internal consistency analysis. The internal consistency of a scale measures the degree to which the items which make up the scale are measuring the same attribute (Pallant 2007, p.6). A common test for internal consistency is a Cronbach's alpha analysis – which is a measure of the average correlation of all the items making up a scale. Nunnally argues that a Cronbach's alpha score of (at least 0.7) is acceptable (1994), and this position is echoed by George and Mallery (2003, p.231), who add that scores between .60 and .69 suggest that the reliability is perhaps questionable, but not unacceptable.

The main factor which emerged from the direct oblimin rotation was 'Confidence' (n=517). Confidence accounts for 18.63% of the variance and includes eight items from the questionnaire:

Q13: *'I am quick to understand things'* was the highest loading question (.741)

Q18: *'I can think quickly'* (.736).

Q13: *'I have excellent ideas'* (.697)

Q2: *'I can think of ideas clearly'* (.653)

Q5: *'I can handle difficult problems'* (.588)

Q31: *'I pay attention to details'* (.558)

Q17: *'I like getting my work exactly right'* (.504)

Q3: *'Success depends on how good you are, not on luck'* (.400)

A Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted to examine the extent to which items in this factor are related to each other. The Cronbach's Alpha score was .802. While the removal of Q3: *'Success depends on how good you are, not on luck'* would increase the Alpha score to .808, this was not a significant increase, and the item was

retained. The lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval were .775 and .827 respectively

'Composure' (n= 557) was the second highest loading factor and accounts for 9.42% of the variance. It includes four items:

rQ10: *'I get stressed out easily'* (.750)*

Q26: *'I don't get bothered by things easily'* (.725)

Q24: *'I am usually relaxed'* (.672)

Q14: *'I am not usually annoyed'* (.658)

> *here and elsewhere an 'r' before a question indicates that response was reverse coded for coherence with the other items in the factor

The Cronbach's Alpha score for the Composure scale was .708, and the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval were .666 and .746 respectively. There were no items removed from this factor.

'Planning' (n=551) was the third factor and explained 7.115% of the total variance. It consisted initially of five items:

rQ37: *'I jump into things without thinking'* (.704)

rQ20: *'I like to make snap decisions'* (.703)

rQ19: *'I make lots of last minute plans'* (.677)

rQ39: *'I make careless decisions'* (.621)

Q1: *'I like to plan ahead'* (.427)

Initial analysis grouped rQ36: *'I do few things on my own'* with this factor, and the initial analysis yielded an alpha score of .683, however when rQ36 when was removed, this score increased to .734, with lower and upper bounds of .698 and .768 respectively.

'Autonomy' (n=539) accounted for 5.144%. of the variance. This factor consisted of five items:

rQ27: *'I let others decide things for me'* (.778)

rQ9: *'I let others make choices for me'* (.766).

rQ6: *'Bad things happen because of bad luck'* (.442)

rQ32: *'Some people are born lucky'* (.414)

rQ38: *'I never challenge things'* (.388)

Initial analysis yielded an alpha score of .643, however when rQ16: *'I don't have a good imagination'* was removed, this score increased to .671, with lower and upper bounds of .625 and .713 respectively. As highlighted in the introduction, George and Mallery (2003) suggest that this alpha score suggests that the reliability of this scale is perhaps questionable, but close to acceptable. While future work could refine this scale to improve this scale, its current alpha score should be borne in mind in the upcoming discussion.

'Persistence' (n=546) accounted for 4.397% of the variance. It consists of seven items:

rQ11: *'I don't usually finish what I planned to do'* (-.686)

Q28: *'I finish things I start, even if there are problems'* (-.657).

rQ4: *'I don't finish what I start'* (-.652)

Q12: *'I don't quit a task until I'm finished it'* (-.603)

Q21: *'I make plans and stick to them'* (-.603)

rQ7: *'I give up easily'* (-.521)

Q22: *'I am a hard worker'* (-.516)

The alpha score of this scale was .794, with lower and upper bounds of .766 and .819 respectively. No items were removed from this measure.

Accordingly, five scales were constructed using the responses to each of these factors above in order to understand the differences between the students who participated in the research. In order to examine the responses of the students, it was

necessary to determine whether their responses were normally distributed, or non-normally distributed. A normal distribution could be investigated effectively using parametric tests however non-normal distribution would be more appropriately investigated using non-parametric tests. A test for normality was conducted using SPSS 21. Because the number of students in the dataset totals less than 2000, a Shapiro-Wilk test was used (Shapiro and Wilk 1965). This analysis suggested that none of the five scales constructed showed normal distribution, indicating it would be more robust to utilise non-parametric methods to analyse the data. A comprehensive breakdown of each of the 29 retained items, and how each loaded onto the respective factors (Pattern Matrix) follows on the next page:

Question	Confidence	Composure	Planning	Autonomy	Persistence
33.Quick Understand	.741				
18.Think Quickly	.736				
13.Excellent Ideas	.697				
2.Think Clearly	.653				
5.Handle Problems	.588				
31.Attention to Details	.558				
17.Like exactly Right	.504				
3.Success How Good	.400				
r10.Stressed Easily		.750			
26.NotBothered		.725			
24.Usually Relaxed		.672			
14.Not Easy Annoyed		.658			
r37.Jump before think			.704		
r20.Snap decisions			.703		
r19.Last min plans			.677		
r39.Careless decisions			.621		
1.Plan ahead			.427		
r27.Let Others Decide				.778	
r9.Let Others Choose				.776	
r6.Bad Things Luck				.442	
r32.People Born Lucky				.414	
r38.Never Challenge				.388	
r11.Don't finish Planned					-.686
28.Finish Despite Problems					-.657
r4.Don't finish					-.652
12.Don't quit until finish					-.603
21.Stick to Plans					-.603
r7.Give Up Easily					-.521
22.Hard Worker					-.516

Table 1: Pattern Matrix of final retained items

8.3 Construct Validity

Construct validity can be described as the extent to which the variables used in research adequately assess the conceptual variables they were designed to measure (Stangor 2006), and is achieved by assessing the scales in terms of 'theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the nature of the underlying variable or construct' (Pallant 2007, p.7). In assessing the validity of the scales, discriminant validity was assessed. Discriminant validity entails demonstrating that constructs which should theoretically not be related to each other; do not share a significant statistical relationship (Stangor 2006). The correlation matrix of the retained items (Appendix J) indicates the discriminant validity of the factors, i.e. the 'Composure' items are more strongly correlated with each other than they are to the other items.

While statistical software such as SPSS can group items that share a statistical relationship to each other (such as the 'Composure' items), the researcher must also ensure that grouped items also share a logical conceptual relationship; i.e. that a 'Composure' items are in fact conceptually linked to each other (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Without this conceptual relationship, observed correlations should be dismissed as spurious. In order to assess the robustness of the logical relationship between the items in each scale, an expert group was convened (Hardesty and Bearden 2004), made up of five members of teacher-educators from the Department of Education and Professional Studies at the University of Limerick.

Each member of the expert group received a copy of the five groups of items. They were instructed to read through the items and appraise the logical relationship between the items in each factor. Following from this appraisal, the expert group agreed that each of the five factors shared a conceptual relationship, and appropriate names for each of the factors were agreed with the expert group, taking this relationship between the items into account. These are the names reported in the discussion throughout the chapter.

8.4 Analysis: School Data

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, as a result of the characteristics of the sample used in this analysis, it would be speculative to generalise from the data reported below. The participating schools reported on in this chapter responded favourably to an invitation to participate, and all 'opt-in' research lead to what is termed 'response

bias' (Junghans and Jones 2007) which occurs when consenting participants do not accurately represent all of the potential participants, and accordingly cannot be described as random *per se*. It can also prove difficult to untangle the interaction of student and pupil effects in such research. It is, however, reasonable to consider the results indicative of patterns which may warrant further investigation in future. The first hypothesis tests that were performed investigated the relationship between the kinds of schools that students' attended, and their self-reported scores on the five measures. The data were stratified according to *school type* (Vocational, Secondary and Community/Comprehensive), *feeder population* (boys-only, girls-only, and co-educational), *DEIS status* (DEIS, non-DEIS, and Fee-Paying) and finally *school location* (City and Non-City). This information was publically available at the time (Skills 2012) Mann-Whitney U tests were used to analyse for differences between these groups. A Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric measure of the difference between two groups on a continuous measure (Pallant 2007). This approach was appropriate given that the distribution of results on the scales was non-normal, and parametric alternatives to the Mann-Whitney U test (such as an independent samples t-test) are less effective at treating non-normal data. The results of these tests are reported below. For brevity, only statistically significant results will be elaborated upon below

8.4.1 Indicative relationships between students' self-reported scores and school type

The hypotheses tests examined whether school type had a significant impact on student responses. The series of Mann-Whitney U tests indicated that there were no significant effects due to school type on the responses to any of the scales, which is to say that the differences observed between the different types of school were statistically insignificant, and may have occurred due to chance.

8.4.2 Indicative relationships between students' self-reported scores and school feeder population

The second set of hypotheses test examined the relationship between self-reported scores and the intake of the school and is reported in the tables below. To investigate these hypotheses, another series of Mann-Whitney U tests were used. There were no significant differences found in the self-reported scores on the Confidence scale between any of the combinations of school intake (boys-only and girls-only, boys-

only and co-educational, and finally girls-only and co-educational). The data suggests a significantly higher self-reported composure levels in students in boys-only schools (*Md* = 6.00, *n* = 173) and girls-only schools (*Md* = 4.50, *n* = 155) *U* = 11034, *z* = -5.527, *p* <.001, *r* = 0.305. The data also indicates significantly lower self-reported composure levels in students girls-only schools (as above) relative to co-educational schools (*Md* = 5.75, *n* = 229) *U* = 12957.5, *z* = - 4.493, *p* <.001, *r* = 0.229. Allgood-Merten *et al* (1990) have also found that girls are more likely to experience anxiety, and Ohannessian *et al.* have also linked this lower perceived level of self-competence with these higher levels of anxiety (2001). The higher anxiety reported by girls is also consistent with five-factor-model personality research reported by McCrae and Terracciano (2005). Thus, the results above are as expected.

On the Autonomy scale, there were also significant differences observed. Students in girls-only schools reported significantly higher autonomy (*Md* = 4.00, *n* = 151) than students in boys-only schools (*Md* = 3.40, *n* =171) *U* = 10189, *z* = -3.267, *p* = 0.01, *r* = 0.182. Students in girls-only schools also reported significantly higher autonomy (*Md* = 4.00, *n* = 151) than students in co-educational schools (*Md* = 3.60 *n* = 220) *U* = 13644, *z* = -2.925, *p* = .003, *r* = 0.151. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) also suggest that girls tend to score higher than boys on measures of autonomy right through early adolescence and up to age 15.

On the Planning scale, students in boys-only schools reported significantly higher scores (*Md* = 6.40, *n* = 174) than students in girls-only schools (*Md* = 5.60, *n* = 152) *U* = 11406, *z* = -2.143, *p* = .032, *r* = 0.118. No other analysis on this scale demonstrated significant differences. Finally there were also differences on the Persistence scale, where students in boys-only schools reported higher scores (*Md* = 7.143 *n* = 170) than students in girls-only schools (*Md* = 6.714 *n* = 153) *U* = 11090.5 *z* = -2.166 *p* =.030 *r* = 0.121. In both of these instances, the median score reported by students from boys-only schools was higher than that reported by the students in the girls-only schools. In the tables below, significant differences are highlighted in bold text.

Scale	**Feeder Population**	**N**	**Median**	**p (2-tailed)**
Confidence	Boys Only	163	6.75	.275
	Co Educational	210	6.625	
	Girls Only	144	6.625	.925
	Co Educational	210	6.625	
	Boys Only	163	6.75	.366
	Girls Only	144	6.625	

Table 2: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Confidence scale between school types

Scale	**Feeder Population**	**N**	**Median**	**p (2-tailed)**
Composure	Boys Only	173	6.00	.068
	Co Educational	229	5.75	
	Girls Only	**155**	**4.50**	**.000**
	Co Educational	**229**	**5.75**	
	Boys Only	**173**	**6.00**	**.000**
	Girls Only	**155**	**4.50**	

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Composure scale between school types

Scale	**Feeder Population**	**N**	**Median**	**p (2-tailed)**
Planning	Boys Only	174	6.00	.115
	Co Educational	226	5.90	
	Girls Only	152	4.50	.327
	Co Educational	226	5.90	
	Boys Only	**174**	**6.50**	**.032**
	Girls Only	**152**	**4.50**	

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Planning scale between school types

Scale	Feeder Population	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Autonomy	Boys Only	171	3.40	.552
	Co Educational	220	3.60	
	Girls Only	**151**	**4.00**	**.003**
	Co Educational	**220**	**3.60**	
	Boys Only	**171**	**3.40**	**.001**
	Girls Only	**151**	**4.00**	

Table 5: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Autonomy scale between school types

Scale	Feeder Population	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Persistence	Boys Only	170	7.14	.109
	Co Educational	223	6.85	
	Girls Only	153	6.71	.400
	Co Educational	223	6.85	
	Boys Only	**170**	**7.14**	**.030**
	Girls Only	**153**	**6.71**	

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Persistence scale between school types

8.4.2 Indicative relationships between students' self-reported scores and DEIS status of school

To investigate the presence of a relationship between the students' self-reported scores and how relatively advantaged/disadvantaged their school was, the schools were stratified into three groups: *DEIS school, Non-DEIS,* and *Fee-Paying*. A school being designated as DEIS status would indicate a particularly disadvantaged student uptake, while Fee-Paying would suggest a relative advantage over the other groups. The retention rate of the 2007 cohort in DEIS schools was approximately 80%, as opposed to the national average of approximately 90% (Ireland 2014), and while the latest reports show that the number of young people from DEIS schools completing school has risen to approximately 82%, this figure still lags 10% behind the percentage of young people from non-DEIS schools completing second-level (Ireland 2015). Because the data from DEIS and Fee-Paying schools come from a

small number of schools, they should be taken as indicative of patterns rather than conclusive.

On the Confidence scale, there was no significant difference in the medians of students from DEIS or non-DEIS schools. However students from the Fee-Paying school reported significantly higher levels of confidence (Md = 7.625, n = 29) than students from non-DEIS schools (Md = 6.625, n = 447) U = 3688, z = -3.893, $p <$ .001, r = 0.178. The students from the Fee Paying school also reported significantly higher confidence (Md = 7.625, n = 29) than the students in the DEIS schools (Md = 6.625 n = 41) U = 356 z = -2.846 p = .004 r = .341. These patterns noted here indicate agreement with the work of (Wiederkehr *et al* 2015), albeit with a limited sample size.

On the Composure scale, there was no significant differences between responses of DEIS and non-DEIS students. However the students from the Fee Paying school reported significantly higher composure (Md = 7.00 n = 29) than students from non-DEIS schools (Md = 5.50 n = 483) U = 5094.5, z = -2.469, p = .014, r = 0.109. The Fee Paying school students also reported significantly higher composure (Md = 7.00 n = 29) than students from the DEIS schools (Md = 5.25 n = 45) U = 426.5 z = -2.505 p = .012 r = .291. Although tentative, the above pattern is coherent with the earlier work of Dunn (1968), who established that middle-class children experience less anxiety than working class children

On the Planning scale, students from DEIS schools reported significantly higher medians (Md = 6.80 n = 44) than non-DEIS students (Md = 5.80 n = 479) U = 7254.5, z = -3.425, p = .001, r = .150. None of the other comparisons on this scale proved to be significant. This may indicate a tentatively that social class origin of responders is worthy of further probing.

While there were no significant differences observed on the Autonomy scale, there were on the Persistence scale. The significant difference was between students from the fee-paying school reported significantly higher persistence (Md = 7.286 n = 29) than students from non-DEIS schools (Md = 6.86 n = 472) U = 5071.5, z = -2.344, p = .019, r = .103. As above, there also appears to be tentative evidence of some linkage between social-class and persistence which may be worthy of further probing

Scale:	DEIS Status	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Confidence	DEIS	43	6.625	.719
	Non DEIS	452	6.625	
Confidence	**Fee-Paying**	**29**	**7.625**	**.000**
	Non DEIS	**452**	**6.625**	
Confidence	**Fee-Paying**	**29**	**7.625**	**.004**
	DEIS	**43**	**6.625**	

Table 7: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Confidence scale between DEIS statuses

Scale:	DEIS Status	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Composure	Non DEIS	483	5.50	.583
	DEIS	45	5.25	
Composure	**Fee-Paying**	**29**	**7.00**	**.014**
	Non DEIS	**483**	**5.50**	
Composure	**Fee-Paying**	**29**	**7.00**	**.012**
	DEIS	**45**	**5.25**	

Table 8: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Composure scale between DEIS statuses

Scale:	DEIS Status	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Planning	**DEIS**	**44**	**5.80**	**.001**
	Non DEIS	**479**	**6.80**	
Planning	Fee-Paying	29	6.60	.172
	Non DEIS	479	6.80	
Planning	DEIS	44	5.80	.231
	Fee-Paying	29	6.60	

Table 9: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Planning scale between DEIS statuses

Scale:	DEIS Status	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Autonomy	DEIS	468	3.60	.532
	Non DEIS	46	3.60	
Autonomy	Non DEIS	468	3.60	.109
	Fee Paying	28	3.40	
Autonomy	DEIS	46	3.60	.103
	Fee-Paying	28	3.40	

Table 10: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Autonomy scale between DEIS statuses

Scale:	DEIS Status	N	Median	p (2-tailed)
Persistence	DEIS	45	7.42	.079
	Non DEIS	472	6.85	
Persistence	**Fee-Paying**	**29**	**7.28**	**.019**
	Non DEIS	**472**	**6.85**	
Persistence	Fee-Paying	29	7.28	.549
	DEIS	45	7.42	

Table 11: Mann-Whitney U test for differences in Medians on Persistence scale between DEIS statuses

8.4.3 Indicative relationships between students self-reported scores and the location of their school

The final tests investigated the differences by school location. The latest early school leaving reports suggests that early school leaving continues to be more prevalent in cities rather than urban areas (Ireland 2014, 2015). Within this data set, the DEIS schools were all located in cities (n=46/134), and the data from the Fee-Paying School originated from a non-city school (n=30/447). Also, data from city schools has arisen largely from girls (n=109) rather than boys (n=25).

Only two scales suggested significant differences, on the Composure scale, there was a significant difference in the responses of students from non-city schools (Md = 6.000 n = 427) and city schools (Md = 4.750 n = 130) U = 20192, z = -4.711, p <.001, r = .200. This result was as expected, and consistent with earlier examinations of school intake (where the median response of students in girls-only schools was significantly lower than the students in either co-educational or boys-only schools). It was also consistent with the earlier examination of DEIS status (where the median

score of the Fee-Paying students was significantly higher than their peers in the other groups).

On the Autonomy scale, there was also a significant difference between the responses from city schools (*Md* = 3.800 *n*= 128) and non-city schools (*Md* = 3.600 *n* = 414) *U* = 23237.5, *z* = -2.106, *p* = .035, *r* = .090. This was also consistent with the earlier analysis of school intake, where students from girls only schools rated themselves as significantly higher on this scale than students in either co-educational or boys only schools.

Scale	**Location**	**N**	**Median**	**p (2-tailed)**
Confidence	City	122	6.75	.256
	Non City	395	6.62	
Composure	**Non City**	**427**	**6.00**	**.000**
	City	**130**	**4.75**	
Planning	Non City	426	6.00	.985
	City	126	5.90	
Autonomy	**City**	**128**	**3.80**	**.035**
	Non City	**414**	**3.60**	
Persistence	City	127	7.00	.562
	Non City	419	6.87	

Table 12: Mann-Whitney U test for differences of Medians on scales between school locations

8.4.4 Section Review:

To review the results of this section, the initial analysis aimed to ascertain whether a relationship existed between responses the students' responses and the kinds of schools they attended. To review the significant results in this analysis:

- On the Confidence scale, students in Fee Paying schools had a higher median score relative to DEIS or non-DEIS schools, with the patterns noted here indicating agreement with the work of (Wiederkehr *et al* 2015).

- On the Composure scale, students in girls-only schools had a lower median score than students in boys-only or co-educational schools. Students in Fee-Paying schools had a higher median score than students in either DEIS or non-DEIS schools, and finally, students in non-city schools had a higher median score than students in city schools. Marcia argues that adolescents experiencing moratorium show higher anxiety (Marcia 1980a), and the lower median scores for girls generally were as expected Allgood-Merten *et al.* Allgood-Merten *et al* (1990) have also found that girls are more likely to experience anxiety, and Ohannessian *et al* (2001) have also linked this lower perceived level of self-competence with these higher levels of anxiety. The higher anxiety reported by girls is also consistent with five-factor-model personality research reported by McCrae and Terracciano (2005). Thus, the results above are as expected.
- On the Planning scale, students in boys-only schools had a higher median score than students in girls-only schools. Given that the data is self-reported, boys responding with greater assertiveness than girls may could would be expected (Connor *et al* 1982). Students in DEIS schools also had a higher median score than students in non-DEIS schools.
- On the Autonomy scale, students in girls-only schools had a higher median score relative to students in boys-only or co-educational schools. Students in city schools also had a higher median score than non-city students. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) also suggest that girls tend to score higher than boys on measures of autonomy right through early adolescence and up to age 15.
- On the Persistence scale, students in Fee-Paying schools had a higher median score than students in non-DEIS schools, and students in boys-only schools had a higher median score than students in girls-only schools.

While the above findings were significant, they should be treated as indicative, rather than representative but nonetheless, suggest some useful avenues for further analysis. Significant differences between school feeder populations could indicate significant differences between the responses of girls and boys. While based on small samples, significant differences between DEIS and non-DEIS schools may be indicative of a socio-economic link to responses also. These avenues are explored in the next section.

8.5 Analysis: Student Data

The analysis of differences between schools, suggests some patterns that may be indicative. The analysis also suggested that a closer examination of differences between individuals (in particular differences in responses between girls and boys, and also in relation to students from different socio-economic backgrounds). In the questionnaire, students were asked to identify their nationality, sex, to provide information on their parents' education level, and finally their parents' occupations. Occupational data was coded in line with the analysis of the most recent census at the time (Central Statistics Office 2012a, 2012b) In order to do this, students were stratified according to a number of criteria: their *sex, nationality, parents' education level, parents' socio-economic status,* and finally *parents' social class*. Where students who did not provide parental data for the measure concerned, their case was excluded from the analysis. The number of exclusions were Mothers Education unknown (n = 88), Mother's Socio-economic Status/Social Class unknown (n = 93), Father's Education unknown (n = 100) Father's Socio-economic Status/Social Class unknown (n = 138)

This section concludes with an examination of students' self-reported likelihood of leaving school early and their responses to the five measures, and a discussion of the findings.

Criteria	Groupings	N	% of Sample
Sex	Male	327	56.3
	Female	254	43.7
	Total	**581**	**100**

Table 13: Breakdown of respondents' reported sex

Criteria	Groupings	N	% of Sample
Nationality	Irish	493	84.9
	UK	42	7.2
	Others*	46	7.9
	Total	**581**	**100**

Table 14: Breakdown of respondents' reported nationality

***Others consisted of a total of 12 other nationalities, of which no one category was large enough for meaningful analysis**

Criteria	Groupings	N	% of Sample
Parents' Education*	After Primary	20	2.1
	Some Secondary	240	24.6
	Leaving Certificate	295	30.3
	Some Third-level	77	7.9
	Completed Third-level	342	35.1
	Total	**974**	**100**

Table 15**: Breakdown of the reported educational level of the respondents' parents**

Criteria	Groupings	N	% of Sample	% of Population (CSO 2012)
Parents SES*	Unskilled	14	1.5	4.5
	Semi-Skilled	118	12.8	10.6
	Skilled Manual	187	20.3	11.4
	Non-Manual	220	23.8	27.5
	Lower Professional	189	20.5	16.4
	Higher Professional	105	11.4	8.7
	Employer/Manager	90	9.7	20.8
	Total	**923**	**100**	**100**

Table 16: Breakdown of the reported socio-economic status of the respondents' parents.

Criteria	Groupings	N	% of Sample	% of Population
Parents SC*	Unskilled	16	1.7	4.5
	Semi-Skilled	137	14.7	13.0
	Skilled Manual	241	25.9	18.8
	Non-Manual	157	16.9	21.3
	Managerial-Technical	276	29.6	33.3
	Professional	104	11.2	9.0
	Total	**931**	**100**	**100**

Table 17: Breakdown of the reported social class of respondents' parents.

*For brevity in these tables, the relative numbers of fathers and mothers in each of these categories is not included. These are elaborated upon in the discussion below.

8.5.1 Indicative Relationship between student sex and the five measures

Scale	Sex	N	Median	p(2-tailed)
Confidence	**Female**	**223**	**6.37**	**.015**
	Male	**294**	**6.75**	
Composure	**Female**	**242**	**4.75**	**.000**
	Male	**315**	**6.25**	
Planning	Female	239	5.60	.171
	Male	313	6.20	
Autonomy	**Female**	**235**	**3.80**	**.000**
	Male	**307**	**3.40**	
Persistence	**Female**	**234**	**6.64**	**.001**
	Male	**312**	**7.14**	

Table 18: Mann-Whitney U analysis of student sex and Median scores on five scales

As had been noted above, schools showed some significant differences in intake, and accordingly, it was expected that there would be significant differences on the Composure, Planning, Autonomy and Persistence scales when students were stratified by sex. As there were no significant differences on the Confidence scale in terms of intake, there were no significant differences expected on that scale when students were stratified by sex, however when this hypothesis was tested, and in apparent contradiction to the earlier findings, there was a significant difference between the responses of boys (Md = 6.75 n = 294) and girls (Md = 6.375 n = 223) U = 28702.50, z = -2.425, p = .015, r = .107. There was also a significant difference on the Composure scale between the responses of boys (Md = 6.250 n = 315) and girls (Md = 4.750 n = 242) U = 25399.5, z = -6.759, p <.001, r = .286. A significant difference also emerged on the Persistence scale between the responses of boys (Md = 7.143 n = 312) and girls (Md = 6.643 n = 234) U = 30670, z = -3.200, p = .001, r = .137. On the Confidence, Composure and Persistence scales, the median score of the boys was higher than that of the girls. On the Autonomy scale there is also a significant difference between the girls (Md = 3.800 n = 235) and boys (Md = 3.400 n = 307) U = 29192, z = -3.811, p <.001, r = .164. In this instance, the above trend is

reversed – with the median score from the girls significantly higher than that of the boys.

The results regarding the differences on the confidence scale indicate agreement with earlier literature, where it has been long established that girls tend to have lower expectations for success relative to boys (Crandall 1969, Deaux 1976, Maccoby and Jacklin 1974, Parsons and Ruble 1977) Wigfield *et al.* also note a significant differences between the self-concept of boys and girls, where boys are likely to have a more favourable one (2002). Other research also argues that girls self-confidence is more effectively fostered in single sex environments relative to co-educational environments (Riordan 2002, Salomone 2003). Additionally, the significant differences between the reported levels of composure (or low anxiety) found in this sample were as expected. Allgood-Merten *et al.* (1971) have found also found that girls are more likely to experience anxiety, and Ohannessian *et al.* have also linked this lower perceived level of self-competence with these higher levels of anxiety (2001). The higher anxiety reported by girls is also consistent with five-factor-model personality research reported by McCrae and Terracciano (2005). When compared to existing literature on the development of autonomy in adolescence, Steinberg and Silverberg also suggest that girls tend to score higher than boys on measures of autonomy right through early adolescence and up to age 15 (1986).

8.5.2 Indicative relationship between student nationality and the five measures

The vast majority of students in the data set were Irish (n=493). The next most common nationality was UK (n=42). There was a wide range of nationalities represented in the remaining 46 students, but no one group was large enough for reliable statistical analysis. Mann-Whitney U tests did not suggest any significant differences between Irish and UK students on any of the five measures.

8.5.3 Indicative relationship between parental demographic data and the five measures

The data was next stratified based on demographic information about the parents of the students. Both parents were coded for their highest education level achieved (0-if they left school after primary level, to 4-completed third-level), socio economic status (0-unskilled to 6-employer/manager) and social class (0-unskilled to 5-professional). Spearman's Rho analysis was conducted on each of them to ascertain

any correlation between them and the students' results on the five scales. The results are reported below. For brevity, mothers' and fathers' education levels are abbreviated 'MED' and 'FED' respectively, their respective socio-economic statuses as 'MSES' and 'FSES', and finally their social classes as 'MSC' and 'FSC'. In some cases there was data for one parent, but not the other. Where possible in these instances, these gaps were filled with data from the other parent. These scales are abbreviated 'MSES(xf)' where missing data from mothers has been coded with data from the father, and 'FSES(xm)' where missing data from fathers is filled by data from the mother.

The data reported above suggests that members from professional groups are over represented, and those from unskilled groups and non-manual groups are significantly under represented. As mentioned earlier, it is possible that more meaningful generalisations could be made from a more representative sample. In the tables below:

* denotes that values were significant at .05 level (2-tailed);

** denotes that values significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

		Confidence	**Composure**	**Planning**	**Autonomy**	**Persistence**
MED	Cor.	**.095***	**.120****	.084	**-120****	.086
	Sig	**.039**	**.008**	.067	**.009**	.064
	N	**447**	**477**	473	**468**	468
FED	Cor.	**.099***	**.186****	.086	**-.161****	.078
	Sig	**.039**	**.000**	.064	**.001**	.095
	N	**439**	**464**	460	**455**	455

Table 19: Spearman's Rho correlations between Parental Educational Level and scores on the five scales

		Confidence	Composure	Planning	Autonomy	Persistence
MSES	Cor.	**.169****	**.123****	.003	-.089	.008
	Sig	**.000**	**.008**	.946	.057	.865
	N	**440**	**468**	468	461	463
MSES(xf)	Cor.	**.193****	**.116****	.039	**-.098***	.038
	Sig	**.000**	**.008**	375	**.027**	.392
	N	**492**	**518**	515	**507**	511
FSES	Cor.	**.148****	**.104***	**.157****	**-.119***	.092
	Sig	**.003**	**.033**	**.001**	**.016**	.062
	N	**394**	**422**	**417**	**412**	413
FSES(xm)	Cor.	**.155****	**.114****	**.151****	**-.113***	**.092***
	Sig	**.001**	**.009**	**.001**	**.011**	**.038**
	N	**493**	**519**	**514**	**506**	**510**

Table 20: Spearman's Rho correlations between Parental Socio-Economic Status and scores on the five scales

		Confidence	**Composure**	**Planning**	**Autonomy**	**Persistence**
MSC	Cor.	**.184****	**.118***	.014	**-.106***	.021
	Sig	**.000**	**.011**	.766	**.023**	.656
	N	**440**	**468**	468	**461**	463
FSC	Cor.	**128****	**.115***	**.142****	**-.111***	.086
	Sig	**.010**	**.018**	**.003**	**.023**	.079
	N	**401**	**429**	**425**	**420**	420

Table 21: Spearman's Rho correlations between Parental Social Class and scores on the five scales

The data in the table above shows several significant (if small) correlations between the reported scores on the scales and parental demographic data. The two factors which explain most of the variance, Confidence and Composure show significant positive correlations with the education and socio-economic data of both parents; i.e. as education level increases so too does self-reported scores on the Confidence and Composure scales.

Responses on the Confidence scale show a positive correlation with all demographics. The strongest correlation (.193, p < .001), was with mother's socio-economic status (with substitutions from father's data where missing).

There were significant positive correlations across all the demographics with respect to the Composure scale. The strongest of these was with father's education level (.186, p < .001). There was a significant positive correlation noted between father's socio-economic status and social class on the Planning scale. The stronger was with socio-economic status (.157, p = .001). Substituting missing data brought about a marginal reduction in the correlation. One significant but weak positive correlation (.092 p =. 038) emerged between the Persistence scale and father's socio-economic status (with substitutions from mother where necessary).

The Autonomy scale presented a divergence from the universally positive correlations noted above. The correlations noted on the Autonomy scale were all negative (although small). The strongest correlation noted was with father's educational level (-.161, p = .001); i.e. responses on the Autonomy scale decrease with increasing educational level. In Chapters Six and Seven, I argued that students who showed the highest conformity were the students most likely to succeed. When the results of this quantitative phase are set alongside these findings, they perhaps offer a tentative agreement with Bourdieu's argument of how the dominant culture is reproduced in schools. Bourdieu argues that socialisation at home during the early years of life empowers young people from the dominant class with dispositions which allow them to succeed more readily in school than young people from the dominated class, whose socialisation has not inculcated these dispositions. All of the dispositions likely to bring about success in school in the context of this research – high confidence, planning, persistence, composure and low autonomy (i.e. high conformity) correlate positively with the socio-economic status of one or both parents.

8.5.4 Indicative variance between the likelihood of leaving school early and responses on the five measures:

The final question on the instrument asked students to rate their likelihood of leaving school early on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). The intention was to examine for a link between how students responded to the instrument and their

perceived likelihood of leaving school early. Recent Irish Government figures (2014, 2015) reaffirm that early school leaving continues to be more prevalent in vocational schools, relative to secondary or community/comprehensives, and is most prevalent in DEIS schools in particular which have rates that trail almost 10% behind school completion rates in non-DEIS schools. The under-representation of DEIS schools and vocational schools in this sample likely impacts on the differences reported in the table below potentially supressing variability that might exist in a more representative sample. Even though not every student who reports themselves as likely to leave school early may go on to do so, data from the Irish context suggests that students' aspirations map onto their outcomes a significant amount of the time (Byrne and Smyth 2010, p.33). Additionally, despite the small number of students from DEIS relative to non-DEIS schools, the differences noted between their self-reported likelihood of completing school and that of their peers in non-DEIS schools is very close to statistical significance (DEIS students more likely to respond that they were likely to leave early). It is quite probable with a larger data set that this result would become significant, as per the table below.

Grouping		N	Median	p (2-tailed)
DEIS Status	Non DEIS	459	1.00	.051
	DEIS	93	1.00	

Table 22: Mann-Whitney U Analysis of median likelihood of leaving school early and school DEIS status

When data is non-normal, a parametric test isn't as useful in assessing differences between groups as a non-parametric test. When data is extremely skewed, as in this instance, Mann-Whitney U tests are far more powerful (Bridge and Sawilowsky 1999). Paulhus (1991) argues that responders to survey instruments may seek to present themselves in a more favourable light than reality – a process termed 'socially desirable responding'. It is feasible that certain individuals may feel pressure to conform to responses that are likely to win approval of others. This may manifest itself in students responding on the SBI that they are not likely to leave school early, as successful completion of school is certainly desired by their teachers. With this in mind, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed about a cut point set at the median of the distribution (which was 1). The table below presents the results of a Man-Whitney U analysis of the reported scores on the five measures, and the reported likelihood of leaving school early.

Scale	Median LLE	N	Mean Rank	p (2-tailed)
Confidence	**Unlikely to leave**	**414**	**6.75**	**.000**
	More likely to leave	**86**	**6.06**	
Composure	Unlikely to leave	445	5.75	.209
	More likely to leave	88	5.37	
Planning	**Unlikely to leave**	**444**	**6.00**	**.000**
	More likely to leave	**90**	**5.10**	
Autonomy	Unlikely to leave	434	3.60	.157
	More likely to leave	90	3.80	
Persistence	**Unlikely to leave**	**436**	**7.00**	**.001**
	More likely to leave	**86**	**6.42**	

Table 23: Mann-Whitney U analysis of median of likelihood of leaving early and five scales

As can be noted in the results above, significant differences emerged between students above and below the median on three of the five scales - Confidence, Planning and Persistence. On the Confidence scale, the students who reported themselves less likely to leave school had a higher median score (Md = 6.75 n = 414) than the students who reported themselves more likely to leave school (Md = 6.06 n = 86) U = 13458.5 z = -3.564, $p < .001$, r = .156. On the Planning scale, the students who reported themselves less likely to leave school also had a higher median score (Md = 6.000 n = 444) than students who reported themselves more likely to leave early (Md = 5.100 n = 90) U = 14273.5 z = -4.278, $p < .001$, r = .185. On the Persistence Scale, students who reported themselves less likely to leave school early had a higher median score (Md = 7.00 n = 436) than students who reported

themselves more likely to leave school early (*Md* = 6.429 *n* = 87) *U* = 14594.5 *z* = -3.251 *p* = .001, *r* = .142. It is plausible that a more sophisticated instrument, more widely deployed may yield further insights into the differences that are indicated above.

8.5.5 Indicative intersectionality

Potential intersectionality can be investigated using as two-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA). A two-way ANOVA allows a simultaneous test for the effect of independent variables on a dependent variable, along with any interaction effect between the independent variables (Pallant 2007, p.258). For example, the type of school attended might contribute to a student's reported confidence, but that effect may different for students from different social groups. The analysis reported previously suggested a number of potentially useful avenues for further exploration, and this subsection reports the results of three two-way ANOVAs – specifically investigating for the presence of an interaction effect between socio-economic status (SES) and school-type on responses to the scales, student sex and school feeder populations, and finally SES and likelihood of leaving school early

8.5.5.1 SES and school type

The first group of tests sought to explore the impact of socio-economic status and school type on students' responses to the scales. Students were divided into three groups according to what type of school they attended (Vocational, Secondary or Community/Comprehensive), and into two groups for SES (unskilled/semi-skilled/skilled-manual or non-manual/managerial-technical/professional).

As previously, where data was missing, this was substituted with data from the mother. When the Confidence scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and type of school attended was not statistically significant, *F* (2, 487) = .164, *p* = .848. There was no statistically significant main effect for School Type: *F* (2, 487) = .617, *p* = .540. The main effect for father's SES was significant *F* (1, 487) = 6.838, *p* = .009; however the effect size was small (partial eta squared = .014).

When the Composure scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and type of school attended was not statistically significant, *F* (2, 518) = .559, *p*

= .572. There was no statistically significant main effect for either School Type: F (2, 518) = .262, p = .769, or father's SES F (1, 518) = .872, p = .351.

When the Planning scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and type of school attended was statistically significant, F (2, 515) = 4.025, p = .018 (partial eta squared = .010) There was no statistically significant main effect for School Type: F (2, 515) = 2.562, p = .078. The main effect for father's SES was significant F (1, 515) = 13.637, $p < .000$; however the effect size was small (partial eta squared = .015).

Arising from this significant interaction between SES and school type, the data file was split by SES and analysed using a one-way between-groups ANOVA to explore the impact of school type on the response on the Planning Scale. For the students of the unskilled-skilled-manual SES group (working class), no significant differences emerged between the three school types on the Planning scale F (1, 30) = .802, p = .378. For the students of the lower-professional-employer manager group (middle-class) There was, however, a significant difference in the Planning scores between the three school types F (2, 206) = 4.261, p = .015. Although this reached statistical significance, the difference between the groups was quite small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .04. Post-hoc comparisons using the Least Squares Difference test (LSD) indicated that the mean score for the students in the middle-class group attending secondary schools (M = 5.96, SD = 1.62) was significantly lower than the middle class students in either Vocational (M = 7.00, SD = 1.28) or Community/Comprehensive schools (M = 6.74, SD = 1.73).

When the Autonomy scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and type of school attended was not statistically significant, F (2, 507) = .003, p = .997. There was no statistically significant main effect for either School Type: F (2, 507) = .286, p = .752, or father's SES F (1, 507) = 1.727, p = .189.

When the Persistence scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and type of school attended was not statistically significant, F (2, 510) = .779, p = .459. There was no statistically significant main effect for either School Type: F (2, 510) = .797, p = .451, or father's SES F (1, 510) = 3.209, p = .074.

8.5.5.2 School feeder population and student sex

The second group of tests sought to explore the impact of school feeder population and student sex on the students' responses. To do this, the 'select case' function was used in SPSS to segregate the data of girls and boys, which allowed for Mann-Whitney U tests to be conducted on both groups separately. However, no significant differences emerged between the responses of either the girls from co-ed and girls-only schools or from boys from co-ed schools and boys-only schools.

8.5.5.4 Student sex and SES

The third group of tests sought to explore the impact of student SES and sex on the students' responses. As above, students were broken into two groups for SES, and two groups for sex. This segregation allows for the comparison of working-class and middle-class males and females.

When the data from girls was examined, two significant differences emerged. On the confidence scale, girls from middle-class origin had a significantly higher score ($Md = 6.75$ $n = 139$) than girls from working-class origin ($Md = 6.25$ $n = 72$) $U = 4048.50$, $z = -2.273$, $p = .023$, $r = .180$. The data also suggested that middle-class origin girls reported significantly higher Persistence ($Md = 6.54$ $n = 80$) than girls from working-class origin ($Md = 6.42$ $n = 138$) $U = 4584.50$, $z = -2.805$, $p = .037$, $r = .140$.

Scale	SES	N	Median	p(2-tailed)
Confidence	**Working-Class**	**139**	**6.25**	**.023**
	Middle-Class	**72**	**6.75**	
Composure	Working-Class	143	4.75	.275
	Middle-Class	80	4.75	
Planning	Working-Class	141	5.40	.110
	Middle-Class	81	5.60	
Autonomy	Working-Class	139	3.80	.113
	Middle-Class	81	4.00	
Persistence	**Working-Class**	**138**	**6.42**	**.037**
	Middle-Class	**80**	**6.54**	

Table 24: Mann-Whitney U analysis of girls' medians on the five scales by SES group

When the data from boys were examined, there were also two significant differences evident in the data. Like previously, boys of middle-class origin also had significantly higher confidence scores (Md = 7.00 n = 157) than boys of working-class origin (Md = 6.625 n = 125). U = 8100.5, z = -2.518, p = .012, r = .150. On the Composure scale, there was also a significant difference. Again, boys from middle-class origin (Md = 6.50 n = 132) reported higher scores relative to boys from working-class origin (Md = 6.00 n = 169) U = 9502.0, z = -2.207, p = .027, r = .127.

Scale	SES	N	Median	p(2-tailed)
Confidence	**Working-Class**	**157**	**6.625**	**.012**
	Middle-Class	**125**	**7.000**	
Composure	**Working-Class**	**169**	**6.000**	**.027**
	Middle-Class	**132**	**6.500**	
Planning	Working-Class	171	6.000	.084
	Middle-Class	128	6.400	
Autonomy	Working-Class	167	3.400	.256
	Middle-Class	126	3.400	
Persistence	Working-Class	167	7.142	.764
	Middle-Class	131	7.142	

Table 25: Mann-Whitney U analysis of boys' medians on the five scales by SES group

Responses on the confidence scale were found to be significantly lower in working-class boys and girls, coherent with well-established research on self-efficacy formation (Gurin *et al* 1978, Wheaton 1980, Mirowsky and Ross 1983, Gecas 1989). Such theory suggests that in schools working-class young people are 'discursively constituted as an unknowing uncritical tasteless mass from which the middle classes draw their distinction' (Reay 2006, p.295), and so it may not be surprising to see such discourses manifesting in lower senses of self-efficacy reported by working-class boys and girls.

8.5.5.3 Likelihood of early school leaving and SES

The final group of tests sought to explore the impact of SES and likelihood of leaving school early on the student's responses. To do this, students were divided into the same SES groups as previously, and into one of three groups for the likelihood of leaving early (unlikely to leave, considering leaving early, and finally very likely to leave).

When the Composure scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and likelihood of leaving school early was not statistically significant, *F* (2,

496) = .861, p = .424. There was no statistically significant main effect for likelihood of leaving early: F (2, 496) = .554, p = .575, or for father's SES: F (1, 496) = 2.252, p = .134.

When the Planning scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and the likelihood of leaving school early was not statistically significant, F (2, 498) = .338, p = 713. There was a statistically significant main effect for likelihood of leaving early: F (2, 498) = 4.514, p = .011; but the effect size was small (partial eta squared = .018).The main effect for father's SES was not significant F (1, 498) = .523, p = .470.

When the Autonomy scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and the likelihood of leaving school early was not statistically significant, F (2, 490) = .366, p = .694. There was no statistically significant main effect for likelihood of leaving early: F (2, 490) = 1.714, p = .181, or for father's SES: F (1, 490) = 1.670, p = .197.

Finally, when the Planning scale was examined, the interaction effect between father's SES and the likelihood of leaving school early was not statistically significant, F (2, 488) = .894, p = .410. There was a statistically significant main effect for likelihood of leaving early: F (2, 488) = 1.480, p = .229, or for father's SES: F (1, 488) = 3.694, p = .055.

8.5.6 Section Review

In this section data on the differences between individual students was presented. There were significant differences between males and females on several of the measures. Boys reported higher scores on the Confidence, Composure and Persistence relative to girls, while girls reported higher scores on the Autonomy scale. There were no observed differences between the Irish students and the students from the UK, which was the only nationality large enough for a meaningful analysis. There were several correlations observed between students' self-reported scores and their parents' socio-demographic data. Significant small correlations were noted between the parents' education, socio-economic status and social class and the Confidence and Composure scales. There was a significant small positive correlation between the scores reported on the Planning scale, and the socio-economic status and social class of the father. There was also a small significant correlation between the

father's socio-economic status and the Persistence scale when information from mothers was used to fill gaps in the father's data. There was a small significant negative correlation on the Autonomy scale with all of the socio-demographic data with the exception of mother's socio-economic status. Intersectionality in the data was examined with two-way between-groups ANOVAs. This analysis indicated only one significant interaction, namely that middle-class responders attending secondary schools reported significantly lower scores on the Planning scale than their peers in either Vocational or Community/Comprehensive schools. Lastly, it was noteworthy that father's socio-economic status (with substitutions from mother's data) correlates with each of the measures – and perhaps offers a tentative agreement with Bourdieu's argument concerning the reproduction of culture in school. Students whose fathers have a relatively more advantaged status appear to report dispositions that would enable them to adapt to school successfully. Reay also notes (2004), mechanisms through which working-class young people come to be marginalised within neoliberal discourses of 'marketising' of education. Such discourses serve to pathologise working-class and ethnic 'other' identities, as well as the schools which serve them. Finally, students who reported themselves as less likely to leave school early also reported significantly higher scores on the Confidence, Persistence and Planning measures. While they also reported higher scores on the Composure score, this result was not significant, nor was the higher score these students reported on the Autonomy measure.

8.6 Discussion: Contributions, Implications, and Future Directions

The conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2008a) informed the development of the instrument reported in this chapter but aligned broadly with the findings reported on in Phase One. These findings suggested that in the process of creating identities in school, young people drew on resources which then impacted on their decisions in school, including decisions to either commit to staying in school or commit to leaving it prior to the completion of the senior cycle. The way in which students understood their social word also impacted on these decisions. Additionally, these chapters argued that successful students were those who internalised a particular set of values and practices which allowed them to succeed. These students also had a particular set of dispositions which allowed them to succeed in their second-level contexts – high self-efficacy, planning skills and persistence, along with low anxiety,

and an ability to conform to the expectations which those in power in the school fields (which can broadly be understood as the 'adults' in the field). These dispositions became the focus of inquiry for Phase Two of the research. Literature suggests that the dispositions identified map reasonably closely onto those of academic buoyancy, with the exception of autonomy. Literature also suggests that these dispositions are eminently teachable and can be fostered by teachers in the classroom. Suggestions for doing so include maximising students opportunities to experience success (Schunk and Miller 2002), enhancing students' negative self-beliefs (Bandura 1997, 2006), developing students' ability to set goals effectively (Locke and Latham 2002), and developing their abilities to maintaining effective and persistent strategies to pursue their goals (Zimmerman 2002). However, considering the role that students' perceptions of autonomy have on their academic buoyancy, teachers should rightfully question the power relationship which they foster in their classrooms. Approaches which aspire towards *praxis* (Grundy 1987) in which classrooms are positioned as democratic spaces which welcome participation, and which (in particular) encourage students to be critical of inequity in society, will offer more an emancipatory autonomy for students. Engaging in this type of sociological analysis, Bourdieu argues, is necessary to obtain freedom from the social determinants which shape practice. The SBI can offer an opportunity for students and teachers to reflect on buoyancy and resilience, and the affordances these concepts offer towards young people's social and emotional development.

8.6.1 Bridging the gap between perceptions and practice

Teachers must be aware that some students may not be capable of reporting their own mental processes accurately (Nisbett and Wilson 1977), and that they as teachers can play a role in mitigating this to an extent through understanding the social processes giving rise to these meta-cognitive abilities in their students (Whitebread *et al* 2008, p.66). Teachers must appreciate that in responding to the SBI, students must be capable of drawing upon metacognitive resources to report accurately on themselves, and that self-perception (though important) may not reflect actual ability, and particularly may not reflect practices. Martin also highlights these shortcomings (2014):

> “There are a number of potential limitations to consider when interpreting findings, and which suggest some caution and also some direction for future research. The first is that the data are self-reported. Given the intrapsychic nature of academic buoyancy, this has some justification; however**,** future research would do well to explore these issues using data derived from additional sources such as **observing students’ responses to everyday setback and the implications for their achievement and engagement.”**
>
> (Martin 2014, p.103, my emphasis)

The validity and reliability of the scales reported earlier does not preclude the possibility that students may hold incorrect (but crucially, *consistently* incorrect) views of themselves and their practices. Studies of Emotional Intelligence now distinguish between ‘trait’ intelligence (relating to personality), and ‘ability’ intelligence (relating to practice) (Roberts *et al* 2001, Dunning *et al* 2004, Corcoran and Tormey 2012), and it is reasonable to remain open to the possibility that while the SBI may measure self-perception, this perception may not translate to practice, and there is a role for the teacher in assessing whether there is a gap to be bridged.

8.6.2 Labelling and Responsible usage of the SBI

With the above in mind, it is important that the SBI is used in a responsible way that affirms young people and their competencies, rather than serves to label them. Labelling theory is long established in the literature on deviance (Tannenbaum 1938) and began to receive significant attention following the work of Becker (1963). Some forty years after Tannenbaum first postulated that ‘the person becomes the thing he is described as being’ as a result of being ‘tagged’ (1938, p23), researchers began to establish empirical evidence for the process in the context of criminology (Farrington 1977).

Labelling theory has also received attention in the context of schools. Classic studies in this area include those of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), and Rist (1970, 1977). In Rosenthal and Jacobson’s experiment, IQ tests were given to groups of students, and the names of a small number of randomly selected ‘spurter’ students were made known to teachers following the tests. Teachers were told these ‘spurters’ could be expected to show accelerated development relative to their peers. At the end of the study, while there was a mean rise in IQ test score across all students, the spurters

showed higher relative gains – suggesting that teachers' expectations had impacted on student achievement. This was evidence then of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Subsequent work by Rosenthal (1973) demonstrates that while teacher's expectations do not always result in self-fulfilling prophecies, the existence of their expectations often did result in students performing in the direction expected (Brophy 1982). The qualitative data reported earlier in this thesis also demonstrated evidence of young people internalising the expectations of their teachers, albeit in this instance the students internalised their teachers' expectations of their behaviour rather than their performance.

In Rist's work in the 1970's, he tracked the progress of a group of kindergarten students and found that the way in which their teacher behaved toward the different socio-economic groups in the cohort became a predicting influence on the achievement of the students (Rist 1970, 1977). Teachers' practice, therefore, reinforced existing socio-economic inequalities (Rist, 1970), and longitudinal tracking suggested this differentiated treatment remained stable as these children progressed through school. This mechanism, essentially where students whose habitus matches that valued by their school flourished at the expense of those whose habitus was not so well suited is consistent with the mechanism discussed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977).

In Ireland, there is also recent research evidence of practices which reinforce such socio-economic inequalities in society. Drawing on the Irish Post-Primary Longitudinal Study there is evidence that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately allocated to lower-streams on the basis of 'ability' (Smyth *et al* 2004, 2006, 2007a). Though this practice is becoming less common, students in the lower streams in schools that practice it are more likely to leave school early and experience negative outcomes relative to their peers in higher ability groups. Students in this study also reported that streaming results in students being labelled on the strength of their grouping (Smyth *et al* 2004), potentially internalising the assumptions teachers make of them and then fulfilling these expectations.

Such insights are of particular concern because of the pronounced power differentials between the teachers who label, and the students whom they label in the context of school. Such insights also implore responsible use of the SBI. This

responsible use would be to avoid labelling students as being 'at-risk' on the strength of lower scores, as such practices may potentially create self-fulfilling prophecies of their own as a result of the process of labelling – undermining the purpose of this instrument. Instead, responsible use of the SBI would encompass broadening and building on the existing competencies of students as outlined at the beginning of this section, as well as offering a starting point for dialogue with students about the purpose of academic resilience and buoyancy in young peoples' social and emotional development.

8.6.3 Suggestions for Refinement of the SBI

Following the deployment of the SBI and the analysis of the results, I believe that future work could modify the SBI so that the question items draw the school experiences to the front of student's minds more readily. While many of the 'Confidence' items such as *'I like getting my work exactly right'* and *'I am quick to understand things'* would lend themselves towards encouraging students to reflect on their experiences in school, it is possible that others may not do so as effectively. For example, the Composure item *'I am usually relaxed'* might describe a student's disposition generally, but the same student may find that they are *'stressed easily'* in the context school, or in the context of specific subjects. A more appropriate effective wording for the item might be *'I don't let study stress get on top of me'* for example as it draws the responders focus on the school context.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the SBI, which was designed to allow students and teachers to reflect on academic buoyancy and its affordances for young people's social and emotional development. Bourdieu argues that statistical analysis can help to discover important patterns for sociological investigation (1984, p.22). To create an instrument to understand wider patterns with respect to academic buoyancy, items were drawn from the IPIP repository to assess 'Self-Efficacy', 'Planfullness', 'Anxiety', 'Persistence' and 'Locus of Control'. These dispositions were identified from the results of Phase One of the research and coherent with those identified by Martin and Marsh (2006). The chapter then discussed the validity testing that was carried out based on the results of the deployment of the instrument to a sample of 581 students in the Republic of Ireland. A Principal Components Analysis suggested

that the factors loaded broadly as expected. Discriminant validity was established through examining the correlation matrix of the retained items, and this suggested that the factors were distinct from each other. Face Validity was established with the assistance of an Expert Group convened at the University of Limerick. The instrument displays some predictive validity. While the number of schools involved is too small to make meaningful comparisons between them, some of the differences noted between boys and girls who were assessed are consistent with findings noted elsewhere. The results also suggested small but significant positive correlations between students' self-reported levels of Confidence, Composure, Planning and Persistence with their parents' socio-economic status, with a small significant negative correlation between Autonomy and parents' socio-economic status. There was also evidence that the students least likely to report themselves as likely to leave school early in this cohort reported significantly higher scores on the Confidence, Persistence and Planning scales than their peers who reported themselves as more likely to leave. It was noteworthy that the dispositions noted in successful students in Phase One each correlated with increasing socio-economic status in the Phase Two analysis. This perhaps offers some tentative evidence for young people of middle-class origin experiencing advantage in school (Bourdieu 1977, Reay 2004).

This chapter also suggested some implications arising from the development of this instrument. I caution teachers and others against using this instrument to label students and to use their knowledge of the social processes in their own contexts to assess students' ability to report on their internal processes accurately. There is ample research evidence to suggest that teachers' expectations are likely to be internalised by their students leading to self-fulfilling prophecies where these expectations become a reality. The SBI should not be used to perpetuate such labelling of students as 'at-risk' or 'of low buoyancy'. Such labelling applied to students is likely to hinder the development of their buoyancy, and lessen their chances of success. This development could instead be more effectively achieved by emancipatory approaches in the classroom – where students' autonomy is facilitated by reimagining classrooms as democratic spaces (Dewey and Boydson 1981), which welcome student input, and which encourage young people to ask critical questions of society and inequality (Ladson-Billings 1995, Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995, Sleeter 2001). Such approaches are preferable to those which uncritically present

young people with models which encourage them to emulate the success of others experiencing adversity (Freire 1970). While psychology literature focuses on teaching students *how* to be resilient or buoyant, a sociological lens in schools could confront the equally important question of *why* they need to be resilient or buoyant. Young people must certainly face some adversity, and schools can be a place to learn skills to respond positively to same. However, some kinds of adversity are cross-cut with distinctly political decisions and schools can and should be a place where young people critically analyse such decisions.

Lastly, the chapter presents a proposed improvement to the SBI. I argue that the tool could be enhanced by rephrasing some of the items so that they more effectively centre student's reflections on their experience of school. I would suggest that contextualising the responses in this way would make the students' responses more meaningful.

The results of the SBI also serve to challenge the tension between 'autonomy' as it is understood in psychological literature (internal locus of control), and 'autonomy' as it is practiced in schools – where students are must wilfully participate in controlled activities (conforming to external control). The analysis from the SBI did not indicate a significant association between internal locus of control and self-reported likelihood of completing school. These findings, do corroborate the earlier observations reported in Chapters Six and Seven – where the students who most successfully internalised the practices and values expected by their teachers, rather than generated themselves, were the students believed most likely to be successful in each field. Recent research has called for greater understanding of the social processes which foster buoyancy in students (Martin 2014), and in attempting to address this call the data presented in Chapters Six, Seven and here pose some new challenges concerning the construction of 'autonomy' in particular. It is important to acknowledge that in the context of school – success is obtained through conforming to values and expectations which are arbitrarily decided by those in power in the field of schooling. To uncritically champion that students should internalise these arbitrary values and expectations as a means of becoming buoyant, absolves schools as institutions from examining what it is that is valued and expected in the first place, as well as the ideologies which underpin who 'selects' what is to be valued.

Ireland is currently moving towards the implementation of a new junior cycle, with a focus on learners key skills (NCCA 2014). This new framework explicitly references 'Managing Myself' as a key-skill area and outlines outcomes which map specifically onto buoyancy, including 'finding ways of dealing with setback and difficulty', 'make plans in order to act on my decisions', 'consider a number of possible consequences when planning and deciding on actions' (p.5). This new framework also suggests that there may be a greater role for students in deciding what it is that is valued in schools. The new framework articulates that students should 'set personal goals' and 'set learning goals and evaluate (their) progress towards achieving these' (p.5). In contrast, in this research students rarely learned the rationale for their structured experiences. Should these aspirations become a reality in schools, they could amount to the kind of shift towards a liberal-progressive ideology which may facilitate a space in which student autonomy might be a more adaptive disposition.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion: Bounce vs. Buoyancy

9.0 Introduction

"When the weekend comes, I know I'll feel alive."

(Calvin Harris 2011)

Dewey argued that school isn't preparation for living, but rather school *is* living (1897). Buoyancy and resilience in schools can similarly be understood as concerned with preparation; in this instance, preparation to endure, and to reach the end of school. Neither is concerned with 'living'. Living is concerned with identity creation, particularly for adolescents such as the students of Smithstown and Goodwin, and these students used resources from both inside and outside of their respective schools in the creation of their identities. The students used music, sport, fashion, their perceptions of particular school subjects, and their perceptions of vocations as part of the individual and group identities they constructed. Also evident in the construction of these identities were different understandings of the social world and the 'value' of school completion. In Smithstown, for example, Isabella points out the necessity for completing a Leaving Certificate to access viable employment pathways, but in contrast, some of the students in Goodwin rate their likely success as early school leavers much higher than research on such pathways would suggest (McCoy *et al* 2014b). Some students formed identities concerning 'careers' which could be understood as long-term in nature requiring further study in higher education; other students formed identities around 'jobs' which could be acquired without needing to complete a second-level formal education. The Internalisers in Smithstown accept the messages delivered by their teachers – and believe that with hard work and persistence, their success is inevitable. The students in Goodwin, however, see their positions in LCA as a similar inevitability, due to their inability to conform to expectations elsewhere in their school.

Buoyancy and resilience are concerned with fostering autonomy, which can be understood as being an 'adult'. In Smithstown and Goodwin, the adults were autonomous, but autonomy was not afforded to all of the students reported on in this

study. In the examples where students imposed their autonomy, whether through open rebellion such as the practice of 'bouncing' in Goodwin or in Smithstown where students deliberately disengaged from the expected but unmonitored study practices, their displays did not serve the needs of their schools. Accordingly, this thesis argued whether 'autonomy', as is currently understood in the context of buoyancy is an advantageous disposition in the Irish educational context. This context is characterised by the dominance of transmission type pedagogies (Shiel *et al* 2009), underpinned by a classical-humanist ideology in which the teacher is positioned as an authoritative master, and the role of the student is to conform. The students of Goodwin adopted the Calvin Harris song 'Bounce' for their symbolic resistance against those in power in the field, one of the lines of which opened this chapter. If school *is* living, according to Dewey, perhaps to make our students feel alive within in it there is cause then to place a greater value on our students' autonomy, and on them as people: 'the oppressed must be *their own example* in the struggle for their redemption' (Freire 1970, p.54, my emphasis).

To do so will challenge pedagogy as currently exercised in schools, where students are tasked with adopting practices, without learning the rationale for these experiences and practices. The discourse surrounding resilience should instead challenge teachers to consider the wider socio-economic and political inequalities which disadvantage their students in the first instance in their teaching. Schools can (and should) be places where young people analyse what kinds of adversity exist, and which kinds would be useful to face and develop resilience against. It should also be a place where young people and teachers critique and learn to creatively challenge the kinds of adversity which need not be faced in a democratic and just society. Such approaches which aspire towards *praxis* (Grundy 1987) in which classrooms are positioned as democratic spaces which welcome participation, and which (in particular) encourage students to be critical of inequity in society, will offer more an emancipatory autonomy for students, and the arising sociological analysis offers an avenue for young people to modify their practices (Bourdieu 1998, p.ix). The SBI can offer an opportunity for students and teachers to reflect on buoyancy and resilience, and the affordances these concepts offer towards young people's social and emotional development. It is important however that buoyancy is not simply uncritically adopted as a way to 'fix' deficit students. Such reflection

should take a more critical position – 'if the education system does nothing more than require 'others' to adapt, then the system itself needs to be critiqued' (O'Brien 2016, p.161).

In this concluding chapter of the thesis, several aspects will be discussed. The research will be reviewed, and some conclusions and implications that can be drawn from same will be discussed. Following this, some recommendations, and suggestions for further exploration arising from this study are explored. Finally, I offer a reflection, concerning a major challenge I faced in conducting this research.

9.1 Review of key literature

This study sought to explore buoyancy as it manifests itself in young people in schools in Ireland. This undertaking concerned investigating the *process*es through which buoyancy manifests itself in schools, how young people interpret their experiences, and how these interpretations, in turn, mediate their decision making. This undertaking also lead to the development of an instrument (the SBI) that could be useful for teachers and those concerned with the personal development of young people to reflect on buoyancy. To review the themes of the chapters in this thesis, following the introductory chapter, three literature review chapters explored the themes of educational disadvantage (Chapter Two), adolescence (Chapter Three), and resilience and buoyancy (Chapter Four).

The first of these literature review chapters (Chapter Two) explored educational disadvantage. In it, I gave an overview of Irish literature concerning educational disadvantage. Despite the diversity of perspectives as well as policy concerning education disadvantage, there was a lack of debate surrounding the contestation of whether the largely output-driven assessments of disadvantage and interventions in Ireland are effective in tackling the disadvantage they seek to remedy; and on whether they are even appropriate at all. Debate on educational disadvantage forms part of a broad and distinctly political dialogue concerning inequality in society – however this debate is subverted by efforts made to portray disadvantage as something that is a deficit of the individual and their community, rather than a shortcoming of a social system that structures society in such a way as to perpetuate inequality of resources and opportunity. Bourdieu's theory of reproduction allows a

critical lens through which to examine the perpetual nature of such inequality (Bourdieu 1977, 1990b, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977).

In Chapter Three, Bourdieu's notion of the habitus and field allows for an examination of adolescence. Using these constructs the development of identity is explored, and in particular, these constructs allow for an examination of the way in which actions may seem adaptive in one context, but may prove to be maladaptive in others. This chapter also uses the theory of 'practices' to link the social with the psychological. In this context, the school is an important institutional arena where adolescents find their experiences routinized and rarely do they find any rationalisation for these experiences. In this way, it can be hard to them to reflect and bring about what Bourdieu terms the 'awakening' necessary to challenge one's practice.

In the final section of the literature review, the construct of resilience and buoyancy are explored. Both are complex constructs, involving the interplay of personal as well as social factors. Encouragingly for teachers, the school is an example of a particular external factor that has the capacity to allow adolescents to build supportive relationships with adults, and with other peers, and so formed the focus of this study. There is a parallel to be drawn between criticisms of educational disadvantage as well as resilience and buoyancy. Much of the debate surrounding these constructs are grounded in an epidemiological model, which can at best only offer a limited understanding – omitting the political nuances of the social arena. Neoliberal ideology, for example, repositions responsibility for disadvantage on the individual, which serves to subvert any critical examination of the process or examination of those in power. Such power relations are critical to understanding conceptualising resilience and buoyancy. Bottrell argues (2009, p.329) that 'normative models of resilience are likely to preclude non-conformist forms and to categorize them in psychopathological terms'. Accordingly, this chapter advocated for a constructivist understanding of resilience, in which resistance is reframed as resiliency by taking the significance of social identities and collective experiences of young people into account. It is encouraging that many studies point out that buoyancy is something that is 'teachable', suggesting it a worthwhile point for reflection for teachers, but it should not be considered a magic bullet capable of 'solving' the wider social inequalities which advantage some young people at the

expense of others. Such ‘emulation models’ subvert efforts to emancipate individuals (Freire 1970).

While the exploration of others examining resilience and motivation and resilience and academic buoyancy was noted (Martin 2008, 2013, 2014, Martin *et al* 2010, 2013, Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, 2009), of particular interest in this study was investigating how buoyancy manifests itself in schools, and how the process through which it does so impacts on how young people in school interpret their experiences and make decisions to either remain in, or leave school early, which the literature review suggested was entirely novel in the Irish context. In order to address this contribution to the literature, several aims were devised and are discussed in the upcoming section.

9.2 Aims

As pointed out in the methodology chapter (Chapter Five), the aims of this research were to investigate how student resistance and buoyant adaptation to school is made evident in their construction and performance of school-based practices, and the differences in experiences of young people who are identified as likely to leave school early, and those who are thought of as likely to complete school. The final aim of this research was to investigate how can teachers help develop students' capacity for buoyancy.

In order to address these aims, a two-phase approach was adopted, acknowledging that affordances of quantitative and qualitative approaches to enquiry (Bourdieu 1984), so as to minimise the risks of distorting or biasing the perception of the social activities being investigated (Cohen *et al* 2007, p.141). Accordingly, this research is divided into two related but distinct phases. The first phase comprised of two case studies, in which data was gathered in an observer-as-participant capacity in two second-level schools in Ireland. This phase sought to understand young peoples' interpretation of their social world and the construction and performance of school-based practices. As will be reported later, young people's resistance and their buoyant adaption are evident in the performance of these practices. The buoyant adaption of students who were identified as being likely to complete school successfully was coherent with adaption reported elsewhere (Martin and Marsh 2006), although this research queries whether this adaption could be better supported

through emancipatory approaches to pedagogy. The second phase of the research adopts a quantitative approach to understanding patterns of these buoyant dispositions in the wider population, and how these relate to young peoples' orientations towards school completion. To do so, a survey instrument was adapted from the conceptual work of Martin and Marsh (2006) and administered to a total of 581 students in second level schools.

Once this data was gathered, the thesis presented insights gained from case study one (Smithstown) in Chapter Six, and case study two (Goodwin) in Chapter Seven. These chapters highlighted that students drew on resources both from inside and outside of school in the creation of identities. In the process of creating individual and group identities in school, students internalised the values and practices expected of them by those in power (the teachers) to varying degrees of success. While some students internalised dispositions that were coherent with those desired by their teachers which were consistent with buoyancy (such as the Internalisers in Smithstown), some students *resisted*; most clearly manifested through the symbolic resistance of 'bounce' in Goodwin, but also through Smithstown students disengaging with unmonitored assignments, as well as the themes of opposition (rap) and escape (EDM) which is evident in the music which the students used as badges in constructing group identities. Accordingly, consistent with Giroux's argument that reproduction in school concerns a conflict between either recognising the legitimacy of what is imposed or resisting what is imposed, the case study schools can be understood as arenas of conflict between *bounce vs. buoyancy.* It was also evident that students' different understandings of the social world also impacted on the identities created, with several students (particularly in Goodwin) maintaining perhaps unrealistic forecasts of their likely success as early school leavers.

The second phase of the research was a statistical analysis of buoyancy, and the development of a survey questionnaire The SBI tool allowed a sample of 581 students and their teachers to reflect on academic buoyancy and probed students' self-reported levels of self-efficacy, planning, persistence, anxiety, and locus of control. The analysis of these results suggested that each of the dispositions identified in the successful students in the case study schools: self-efficacy, planning, persistence, low anxiety and low internal locus of control correlated positively with the socio-economic status of students' fathers in the cohort of examined students.

Additionally, there were small correlations found between students' self-reported likelihood of completing school and three of the five measures (Autonomy and Composure being the exceptions).

9.3 Conclusions

Having reviewed the study, the following section presents the conclusions which can be made from the data presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The conclusions are presented below thematically, under each of the major aims of the research to which they relate.

9.3.1 How student resistance and buoyant adaption to school is made evident in their construction of identities and performance of school-based practices.

The data presented in Chapters Six and Seven showed that several important differences emerged in the experiences of young people who were thought of as being 'at-risk' of early school leaving and those thought to be likely to successfully complete school. In this section, these major differences are reviewed.

In both fields, students were engaged in the creation of individual and group identities and utilised resources both from inside school (friendships, identification with particular subjects) as well as resources from outside the school (leisure interests, identification with vocations, their understandings of the social world) to do so. In tandem with these factors, identities were also mediated by the greater or lesser degree to which students internalised the values and practices which were expected of them by their teachers in school. As mentioned above, this process can be understood as a conflict, as *bounce vs. buoyancy*, in which some students recognised and accepted these desired values and practices, and accordingly were disposed to act in ways which meant they were perceived as being likely to complete school successfully. Other students, who did not recognise the legitimacy of these values and practices, were accordingly disposed to act in ways which suggested to their teachers that they were highly likely to leave school early. There were several practices of students perceived as likely to complete school. They were disposed to comply with expectations in class and readily engaged with tasks assigned to them by their teachers. They also engaged with and completed homework assignments. In Smithstown, while many did not entirely comply with expectations around the (unmonitored) study expectations, it remained the case that those who conformed

most closely to the teachers' expectations were perceived by them as most likely to be successful. Students who were perceived as likely to be successful therefore required comparatively less intervention from teachers to engage with the body work expected in the field, and were also amongst the most popular members of their respective social groups. That there is no necessary trade-off between academic engagement and popularity is a notable feature of the Irish school context (Smyth 2015). It was also worthy of note that students' expectations of their own likely success mapped quite closely onto the expectations held by teachers. It is worth stressing that no students in either of the case study schools were universally practiced this conformity to expectations in all subjects. The process through which this conformity comes about is nuanced – it was mediated by the extent to which students valued specific subjects and how useful they predicted subjects to be in their future lives (with greater levels of conformity shown in classes deemed vocationally relevant). This process was also mediated by the students' different understandings of the social world – some students had dubious predictions surrounding their likely success as early school leavers, in some instances drawing on the experiences of their idols in rap music to reason that material success through non-conventional means outside of credentialed education is possible. Others – such as Landon – misread the day-to-day life of an architect, and accordingly, he prioritised engaging with Technical Graphics believing that the primary task of an architect is drawing rather than design.

This research also sought to identify how students rationalised their practices. How did they reason their compliance (or not) with such expectations? What was found was that the students identified as likely to be successful articulated that while they may not necessarily 'enjoy' school, they are aware of its importance in terms of their future life chances – and that regardless of their own desires to do otherwise at times, they must *play the game* of schooling, so as to maximise their chances of later success in life. Conversely, the less buoyant students displayed less desire to *play the game*. Instead, they saw school as a waste of their time and energy. These insights suggest that a conflict exists in terms of understanding the social value placed on the credentials offered through schooling. Students in both schools drew on leisure activities to escape from the unenjoyable experiences of school. In Smithstown, the students used sports and music to escape. The male Adaptors, in particular, used

football to escape – with Cayden in particular much preferring to spend his time after school at the AstroTurf pitches, rather than at the study desk. The Internaliser students used EDM music, characterised by themes of escape and disrupting the everyday mundane, as a safe space in which to resist and explore an oppositional identity. The Fringe and Perseverant students similarly utilised Rap music for this purpose – which draws on themes of opposition, resistance, and aspirations towards an improved situation. In Goodwin, where musical taste was the primary badge of identification between the social groups, the students similarly used EDM, rap and RnB/Hip-hop music as safe spaces in which to resist. These students also engaged in open rebellion against *playing the game* through 'bouncing'.

The examination of the students perceived as likely to be successful shone a light on a number of distinguishing features that seemed to facilitate their success, and these are elaborated on in the upcoming section.

9.3.2 Are there any distinguishing features of this buoyancy that can be identified in young people, and if so, what are these?

Arising from the qualitative data gathered and reviewed in the previous section, a number of characteristics of this buoyant adaption emerged. It became clear in that the students identified as likely to complete school successfully by their teachers and school completion programme personnel had a number of dispositions in common – which map broadly onto those previously identified by Martin and Marsh as markers of student academic buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a). They shared a willingness to conform to the expectations of those in power in the fields, composure and confidence in relation to their prospects for successfully completing school, a belief that they were in control of their success, and that it was a function of their sustained effort and planning.

With these characteristics in mind, the tool reported on in Chapter Eight was developed, with the intention that it serve as an instrument with which teachers and students can reflect on and potentially develop these eminently teachable competencies. The instrument was demonstrated to have an acceptable level of validity and reliability. While it would be speculative to generalise from the non-representative sample used in developing this tool, it is still noteworthy that the results demonstrated significant small correlations between parental socio-economic

status and each of the five measures examined. These trends may indicate that the dispositions associated with buoyancy: high confidence (self-efficacy), composure (low anxiety), persistence, planning, and conformity (low autonomy) are more likely to be reported by the relatively more advantaged students – making them perhaps more likely than their less advantaged peers to succeed in school. Bourdieu argues that school advantages those from the dominant class origin, whose habitus more closely aligns with the expectations of school. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

9.3.3 How can teachers help develop students' capacity for buoyancy?

The SBI reported in Chapter Eight was developed with a view that it might provide teachers with a starting point for dialogue with their students with respect to inequality in society and how, as democratic citizens, we should respond to same. The observations reported in Chapters Six and Seven suggested that with appropriate support, young people can develop their buoyancy and enhance their chances of success, but to do so requires an examination of teacher methodology. Freire cautions against uncritically presenting the success of those who succeed in spite of adversity for others to emulate (1970, p.34). Instead, the discourse surrounding resilience should challenge teachers to consider the wider socio-economic and political inequalities which disadvantage their students in the first instance in their teaching. Young people in schools are poorly positioned to challenge these inequalities. However, school can (and should) be a place where young people analyse what kinds of adversity exist, and which kinds would be useful to face and develop resilience against. It should also be a place where young people and teachers critique and learn to creatively challenge the kinds of adversity which need not be faced in a democratic and just society. Such approaches aspire towards *praxis* (Grundy 1987), a pedagogical approach where the question of whether curriculum practices serve to emancipate participants is constantly asked, and power dynamics are closely scrutinised: 'whose interests are served by the curriculum, what curriculum would promote greater equity emancipation and social justice, how is power distributed in the teaching and learning process and how can it be more equitably distributed?' (Grundy 1987, p.122). Ladson-Billings argues that effective culturally-relevant pedagogy: 'not only addresses achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical

perspectives which challenge inequities which schools (and other institutions) perpetuate' (1995, p469). Such approaches would allow students to gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality and ways in which these social problems might be eliminated' (Suzuki 1984, p.308).

9.4 Contributions and Implications

In the following section, the main theoretical implications arising from this research are discussed. These implications are discussed under four headings, specifically how this research informs the discourse surrounding autonomy support, identity, reproduction and finally buoyancy in education.

9.4.1 Autonomy Support

Contexts which support autonomy are presumed to enhance engagement (Connell 1990). Such autonomy-supportive classrooms are characterized by a number of factors, for example, student choice, shared decision making, the absence of external controls as reasons for complying with teachers such as grades or punishments (Deci and Ryan 1985, Connell 1990). Such features are congruent with constructivist approaches to teaching and align with Habermas' 'practical' interest (1972). On the other hand, threats, deadlines and some forms of evaluation and surveillance have negative effects on student self-determination (Deci and Ryan 1987). Ryan and Stiller argue that 'the more we try to control and pressure learning from without, the more we obstruct the tendencies of students to be actively involved and to participate in the own education' (1991, p.117). It is clear that the goal for teachers is to create and to foster classrooms which support students in becoming autonomous and self-directed learners and to identify what practices may support student autonomy.

Classrooms vary considerably to the extent that they support student autonomy (deCharms 1976, Ryan and Grolnick 1986). Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) in an early investigation of teacher leadership styles, found that democratic leadership styles influenced student motivation, participation and also the completion of work, whereas students who were led by authoritarian teachers experienced heightened anxiety. Others have developed this early work – (Deci *et al* 1981, Grolnick and Ryan 1989, Boggiano and Katz 1991, Skinner and Belmont 1993, Weinert and Helmke 1995) and the emergent consensus indicated that authoritarian environments contributed to low achievement, higher anxiety and a preference for easy work, as

well as contributed to a student reliance on others to evaluate their work (Boggiano and Katz 1991). Conversely, supportive environments have been linked to students displaying a preference for optimally difficult work (Harter 1978), students striving for conceptual understanding (Grolnick and Ryan 1989), with intrinsic motivation (Zuckerman *et al* 1978), perceived competence (Cordova and Lepper 1996) and students sense of enjoyment in school (Ryan and Deci 2000). Research from the United States has also suggested previously that elementary school students work more strategically in class, and persist longer in the face of difficulty when afforded open-choice tasks (Turner 1995, Perry 1998), but studies of Junior High school classrooms do not corroborate presumed influences of autonomy support (Fredricks *et al* 2004). Junior High classrooms are however characterised by a greater influence on teacher's control and discipline, affording fewer opportunities for student decision making (Midgley and Feldlaufer 1987).

9.4.1.1 Autonomy Support in Smithstown and Goodwin

The findings from the case studies suggested that student autonomy was supported to differing extents in Smithstown and Goodwin. In Smithstown, the in-class experiences of the students were characterised as being coherent with Habermas' "technical interest". This technical interest is rooted in a positivistic philosophy, and a classical humanist value system (Skilbeck 1976). The classical humanist value system employs Freire's (1970) 'banking model' of education where teachers are seen as "authoritative masters of an academic discipline, teaching in a formal, instructional and didactic way" (Carr 1998, p.327). In this classical humanist value system, students were reduced to largely passive recipients of information, devoid of any meaningful agency over decisions surrounding their in-class experiences. The historical context of the Irish education system has been described by Schmitt as 'traditional and authoritarian' (1973, p.50), and the way in which the Smithstown students' experiences were dominated by the then impending Junior Certificate examination is both typical and long-noted within the Irish context (Gleeson 2010, p.96-97). This dominance also forms an example of the prevalence of the 'technical interest' in Irish education (Gleeson 2010, p.122). Within this paradigm, Smithstown's teachers largely took roles which could be understood as authoritative masters, while students are demoted to the role of passive recipients (Carr 1998, p.327). The learning experiences of the students of Smithstown largely 'structured'

in nature. Examples of 'structuring' practices engaged in by Smithstown teachers included: stating learning goals, reviewing homework or checking student understanding. There was limited evidence of what could be understood as 'student-oriented' practices. Students were, for example, afforded no opportunities to co-determine lesson content, but teachers did attempt to differentiate their teaching by setting differing expectations for students following the higher level and ordinary level pathways in their subjects. Outside of Woodwork classes, where students were working on projects for a number of weeks, there was no evidence of other 'enhanced' practices, such as debates. This is consistent with previous TALIS findings in relation to Ireland, (Shiel *et al* 2009 p.7), in which Irish teachers reported heavily favouring 'structuring' practices, relative to either 'student-enhanced' or 'enhanced' activities. It could, therefore, be said that the students in Smithstown were afforded few opportunities to experience autonomy support.

In Goodwin, the LCA program has a specific emphasis on active teaching and learning experiences and could be understood as coherent with Habermas' (1972) conception of the 'practical interest' of knowledge. This focuses on understanding and meaning-making within a 'historical-hermeneutic' context. This interest is focused on understanding the environment based on a 'consensual interpretation of meaning' (Grundy 1987, p.14) through interaction, in which participants engage in 'action oriented to mutual understanding' and strive towards a consensus of meaning (Habermas 1972, pp.310-312). Communication is, therefore, crucial to derive an understanding of meaning (Bullough and Goldstein 1984, Hoffman 1987). From this standpoint, actions are considered meaningful, and Carr and Kemmis (1986) cite teaching as a meaningful action. The practical interest of knowledge, therefore, recognises the role of the teacher and student in the learning process and promotes communication and a deliberate dialogue between participants (Habermas 1974; Gleeson 2010). In taking a practical approach, the relationship is more of equal partners in communication. Usher (1996) argues that the focus shifts from a positivist view of prediction and control, to an interpretivist view of interactions and meaning making. This interpretivist approach is concerned with 'intersubjective meaning based on consensual norms and expectations' (Ewert 1987, p.351). Habermas' conception of the practical interest of knowledge can also be understood as being aligned with the constructivist perspective. Constructivism recognises that

learning is a search for individual meaning-making which is the guiding pedagogic practice (Hein 1999). Furthermore, meaning is intimately connected with experience; both prior experiences that students bring to the classroom and the active, experiential learning which takes place in the classroom (Caprio 1994).

While there were structuring practices evident, in Goodwin as discussed in Chapter Seven, there was a considerable emphasis on 'student-oriented' practices in the day-to-day experiences students were afforded. Students were presented with frequent opportunities to co-determine lesson content, which was usually achieved by class-wide discussions, as well as frequent opportunities to work in groups. The 'student task' element required several weeks to complete, and formed an example of an enhanced practice, as well as the use of debate-style discussions, in Communications lessons in particular.

9.4.1.2 Integrating findings from the SBI:

The data from the SBI was largely gathered from students on Established Leaving Certificate pathway. This pathway, similar to the Junior Cycle pathway being undertaken by the students in Smithstown has been described as 'training our young people to ask for the answer to every question, as opposed to training them to question every answer' as well as richly rewarding the passive acceptance of knowledge (Cosgrave and Hannon, 2008, cited in Gleeson 2010, p.13). Given that this context can be described as encouraging students to conform to the control of their teachers, rather than developing a sense of self-direction for themselves, it was perhaps not surprising that the SBI analysis found that students who had positive perceptions of their own autonomy concurrently reported themselves as being more likely to leave school early.

The failure of schools to support young people in developing autonomy is problematic, given that autonomy support is linked to enabling young people's cognitive engagement (Jang *et al* 2010), by enabling young people to persist for longer and to engage more strategically with challenging tasks (Turner 1995, Perry 1998). Conversely, authoritarian type environments are linked with young people experiencing higher anxiety (Boggiano and Katz 1991). From a children's rights perspective, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

ensures that children have a right to participate in all matters which concern them actively, however the structure of second level education in Ireland and the prevailing influences of Classical Humanism and 'technical' interest serve to constrain the opportunities which young people to participate actively in school. In response to this, the 'pupil voice' movement is based on the premise that schools should be more reflective of democratic structures in society at large – and in this conception, schools become communities of participants engaged in the common endeavour of learning (Flutter and Rudduck 2004, p.135).

9.4.1.3 Reimagining the roles of students and teachers

The findings from both Phase One and Phase Two indicate that opportunities for students to develop a sense of autonomy are limited. I argue that learners should be included in the decision-making processes which surround their education. This may, in turn, lead to a more balanced power differential in the classroom. Students should be consulted with respect to curricular decisions, and such consultation should occur in an environment which supports meaningful collaboration amongst students and teachers, and which responds to the needs and concerns of both parties, rather than engages in what Beane and Apple (2007, p.10) describe as 'the "engineering of consent" towards predetermined conclusions' to give an illusion of democracy.

Behavioural, cognitive and affective engagement may be facilitated where students have increased control and power over their learning, by participating in the negotiation of decisions related to curriculum content, the learning approaches and assessment structures (Fredricks *et al* 2004). It, however, remains the case that students are typically excluded from the decision making process' in schools, and the agendas of young people are rarely taken into account (Beane 1997). I agree therefore with calls from authors such as Taylor and Robinson who have stated that 'at the level of the institution and at the level of the classroom the aim is to increase students' representation at, and participation in, processes and practices from which they have historically been excluded' (2009, p.162) as well as Beane (1997, p.50) who believes that curriculum decisions 'must sooner or later involve direct participation by young people so that students have a genuine say in the curriculum and that through the process of involving students and teachers in decision-making roles, the communicative roles they assume could work towards challenging and achieving some of Habermas' (1970a) claims around power and communication.

Communicative action, for example, could be achieved through facilitating spaces where students and teaches come to a mutual agreement through social and meaningful interactions. Discourse and dialogue could also be encouraged in such interactions where participation in learning environments could be afforded to all on an equitable basis. Furthermore, through reimagining classrooms as spaces that afford a more equitable distribution of power Habermas' '*systematically distorted communication'* theory which attributes the distortion of communication to an imbalance of power could be challenged.

In Phase One, in particular, opportunities for the co-construction of knowledge through social interactions between teachers and students had a powerful effect – helping students who had otherwise quite negative perceptions of school to feel included and valued as learners. The implications therefore are that students should be provided with opportunities to interact socially, collaborate with their teacher and peers, and to work collaboratively in order to construct knowledge which is meaningful for the students concerned, coherent with Dewey's (1938) view of school as a 'community' where learners come together to construct knowledge socially. In Phase Two, the findings indicated no link between students self-reported perceptions of their autonomy, and their likelihood of completing school. While just outside statistical significance, the findings, in fact, diverged from the earlier work of Vallerand *et al* (1997), who have demonstrated that the less positively students perceive their own autonomy, the more likely they are to develop motivations to drop-out of school early. Instead, the findings of the SBI indicated that students who viewed their autonomy less positively were, in fact, more likely to indicate their likelihood of completing school. This should be of concern to teachers as autonomy support has been demonstrated to be correlated with many important buoyancy constructs, such as self-efficacy (Oriol *et al* 2016), persistence (Vallerand *et al* 1997), and reduced anxiety (Boggiano and Katz 1991). It is therefore both feasible as well as eminently desirable that young people's buoyancy and resilience are supported through increased democratisation of schools. Such democratisation is a necessary pre-requisite in order for students to begin to critique the social world. Such a critical outlook is the focus of Habermas' 'emancipatory interest' (1972) and aims to make the world more egalitarian (Tripp 1990). Critical theory and the emancipatory paradigm are linked with *praxis,* which has been described by

Kincheloe to be ‘action informed by reflection with an emancipatory intent’ (1991, p.177), and is coherent with liberal-progressive approaches to teaching and learning. Emancipatory approaches are necessary to allow marginalised learners to accept and affirm their cultural identity, as well as to ‘allow students to gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality and ways in which these social problems might be eliminated’ (Suzuki 1984, p.308). In *curriculum as praxis*, the question of whether curriculum practices serve to emancipate participants is constantly asked, and power dynamics are closely scrutinised: ‘whose interests are served by the curriculum, what curriculum would promote greater equity emancipation and social justice, how is power distributed in the teaching and learning process and how can it be more equitably distributed?’ (Grundy 1987, p.122). Gleeson argues that *praxis* can only supplant the prevailing tradition of *techne* (where teachers see themselves as fountains of information) by allowing for greater accountability, partnership, leadership, and awareness of the socio-cultural context that education takes place in (2010, p.4). While buoyancy and resilience concepts may be concerned with equipping young people with the tools to reach goals in spite of adversity, they do not readily call into question whether the goals to be met are culturally relevant for all students, nor do they query whether we as teachers serve our students better by equipping them with the tools to critically challenge adversity, rather than merely coping with it. Such uncritical perspectives also limit the transformative potential offered by becoming aware of the processes which shape practices.

9.4.2 Identity Discourse

The findings discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven demonstrated that the students in both school fields engaged in the construction of identities, and to do so they drew on resources from both inside and from outside school. In Smithstown, the most popular students in the class were the Adaptor students. The male students of this group drew on sport, and football in particular, in the construction of their identities. I noted a typology was present in this group, where the most popular members of the group were those who *played a lot* of football, in conjunction with supporting teams themselves. These students were more popular than those who participated by *mainly supporting* football teams but *playing a little*, and these were, in turn, more popular than male members who *supported only* and did not play at all.

Connell (1996) noted that different constructions of masculinity do not sit side-by-side, rather that there is a hierarchical relationship between different forms of masculinity, in which some forms are more honoured than others. In the context of Smithstown, the data suggests that a passion for football is an important component of the dominant (or what Connell calls the 'hegemonic') masculinity, and playing prowess is the form most honoured. This is consistent with the findings of others concerning the salience of sporting prowess as a component of hegemonic masculinity in schools (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Hickey 2008, Carless 2012).

In Goodwin, musical taste was the primary identifier used by the students to signal their identity, consistent with research elsewhere (Zillman and Gan 1997, North and Hargreaves 1999, North *et al* 2000). The students of Goodwin used music as a safe space in which to explore resist. The EDM style favoured by Adalyn, Erica, Elaine and Chantel affords an opportunity to disrupt the everyday mundane, and of escape. The female icons of the RnB/Hip-Hop genre favoured by Leighanne, Georgina, Denise and Philipa are known for presenting themselves in hyper-sexualised ways, standing in contrast to the regulations surrounding the Goodwin's uniform – which embodies demureness, modesty and neatness. The Rap music favoured by Corbin, Ronny, Zach, Gabriel and Darnell also features themes of opposition and aspiring for a better situation, and these Rap Boys also perhaps misread the potential for success through the non-conventional means of rejecting school, as communicated by rap stars such as *50 Cent* or *Eminem.*

Part of the developmental work of adolescence involves developing a sense of identity and independence or autonomy; breaking down the dependency on the ties to the family which were important during earlier childhood. Part of how students assert this autonomy was through *resisting* (as per Giroux 1983) the values and practices expected by others. In Smithstown, students used the football and music they identified with to resist their teachers by prioritising these activities ahead of unmonitored study expectations. In Goodwin, the rebellion was open. The students imposed their collective identity and autonomy through their symbolic practice of 'bounce' which served as an attempt to subvert their teachers' efforts. Such resistances are understood as 'practices which express opposition to rules and norms in specific contexts, and which contain critiques of social relations, from the lived experience of marginalisation' (Bottrell 2007, p.599).

9.4.2 Resilience and Buoyancy Discourse

Of particular interest in this research, was the role played by the school as a specific arena that is capable of mediating some of the risk factors experienced by adolescents. The findings of this study are broadly in agreement with existing literature on buoyancy and resilience in adolescence. As was discussed in Chapter Four, Gilligan (2000) has pointed out that the school can foster resilience in adolescents by allowing them to experience a secure base, and develop their self-esteem and self-efficacy. In the instrument developed in this study of buoyancy (which correlates with resilience), the two factors that explained most of the variance in the students were Confidence and Composure, both of which are related quite closely to Gilligan's findings. When one examines the items contained within the Confidence factor, it is apparent that students showing high levels of confidence responded that they were quick to understand things, that they could think quickly, and that their success was a product of how good they were, rather than a product of being lucky. These items suggest that the buoyant students are showing the self-efficacy to which Gilligan refers. Additionally, Gilligan refers to the school as being capable of providing students with a secure base. The items contained within the Composure factor also indicate that buoyant students have such a base. The buoyant students reported being rarely stressed, or rarely being easily bothered by things. In this way, this research re-emphasises the earlier findings of others that it is important that schools look for opportunities for students to experience a secure base, and to develop their self-esteem and self-efficacy, as a way of enhancing students' buoyancy and chances of success.

In addition to this contribution, the findings of this study also are indicative of agreement with earlier work by Martin and Marsh (2006). This study and others discussed above have examined buoyancy in relation to motivation and engagement in school. However, in this thesis, the affordances of this five factor model of buoyancy for understanding young peoples' perceptions regarding school completion was also investigated - a novel approach in the Irish context. As reported earlier, students showing relatively higher levels of confidence, planning and persistence were significantly less likely to report themselves as being likely to leave school early, and each of the dispositions associated with success in school as identified in the first phase of the research (confidence, planning, composure, persistence and low

autonomy) correlated positively with socio-economic data from students' fathers. While it would be incorrect to generalise on a non-representative sample of students – the test used to generate these findings was demonstrated to be both valid and reliable – suggesting that the buoyancy concept could prove quite informative for teachers as well as students with regards to combatting early school leaving and is worthy of further investigation and integration into our teaching. As teachers, we could move away from problematic deficit language such as 'disadvantage' in our schools and in our teaching, moving instead towards more empowering language such as buoyant or resilient. Our roles as teachers should be to broaden and build upon these teachable competencies, rather than to label deficiency.

Teachers need to be particularly conscious that as neoliberal ideology repositions responsibility for disadvantage on the individual, critical examination of the process can be subverted. Under such an ideology, Bottrell argues (2009, p.329), 'normative models of resilience are likely to preclude non-conformist forms and to categorize them in psychopathological terms'. Accordingly, this research advocated for a constructivist understanding of resilience, which recognises, like Bottrell (2009), that resistance may be reframed as resilience by taking the significance of social identities and collective experiences of young people into account. To acknowledge the diverse experiences of adaptive tasks confronting young people requires an understanding of the social processes of differentiation that underpins their accounts (Bottrell 2009, p.331)

9.4.3 Reproduction Discourse

In Chapter Three of this thesis, the theory of reproduction in education and practices was explored, with particular reference to the work of Bourdieu (1972, 1984 and 1990). The theory of reproduction in education posits that education reproduces the existing social, political and economic inequalities in wider society, as it is structured in such a way as to be closer aligned with the values of relatively advantaged individuals, and less so with the values of the disadvantaged. In this way, the habitus of the middle and upper classes renders them more likely to succeed, at the expense of the lower classes. This favouritism ensures the status quo remains.

Data from this study suggests agreement with aspects of this theory of reproduction in education. In this study, the data collected in both case study schools suggested

that students who successfully internalised the values of the fields, and modified their practices accordingly were perceived as more likely to be successful. Modification of these practices was mitigated by students' understandings (and in several instances, their perhaps questionable understandings) of the social world. Additionally, each of the buoyancy measures, as measured by the SBI showed significant (small) correlations with father's socio-economic status (with data substituted from mothers when this data was absent). Four of the five measures (with the exception of Persistence) showed such correlations with multiple measures from both parents (education levels, social class). While the process through which resilience comes about is no doubt complex, a part of the process is explained by social class differences. The data from the SBI suggested that the 'Confidence' factor explained the most variance in the sample of students. Responses on this scale were found to be significantly lower in working-class boys and girls, coherent with well-established research on self-efficacy formation (Gurin et al 1978, Wheaton 1980, Mirowsky and Ross 1983, Gecas 1989). Such theory suggests that in schools working-class young people are 'discursively constituted as an unknowing uncritical tasteless mass from which the middle classes draw their distinction' (Reay 2006, p.295), and so it may not be surprising to see such discourses manifesting in lower senses of self-efficacy reported by working-class boys and girls. Although the correlation was small, self-efficacy was significantly correlated with students' self-reported likelihood of completing school. This should be of concern to teachers.

Part of the mechanism through which the dominant class are advantaged in school, Bourdieu argues, is the way in which schools are primarily concerned with conveying explicit abstract knowledge. However, the tools to think abstractly in order to grasp the explicit message are never conveyed – significantly advantaging those who came to school with a basic form of such skills. Such advantaged children are inevitably from a dominant class origin. As teachers, we should reflect on how we can make the implicit more explicit in our classrooms. The results offered by SBI suggests that there is a place in our teaching to more explicitly convey (in an emancipatory way) the tools our students need to become more buoyant – as argued in the previous section

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9.5 Recommendations

This section outlines some recommendations arising from the major findings and theoretical implications of this research.

Firstly, the findings reported on in Chapter Eight show that the instrument used was both valid as well as reliable. In addition, the results obtained from the sample used suggested an agreement with the work of others -in particular Gilligan (2000) - in the area of resilience – further lending weight to the potential usefulness of the instrument as a reflective tool for teachers and students. Because of the documented capacity for resilience and buoyancy to bring about an improvement in the success of young people in literature, the first recommendation is for further research into the constructs outlined in this thesis, and the use of the instrument as a means for teachers to begin dialogue with students aimed towards praxis; and critiquing inequality in society rather than simply adapting to it; and in doing so offering an avenue to transform students' practices. With this said, there is an important caveat that must be reemphasised. The intention of this research is the affirmation of students and their competencies, to enhance their chances rather than limit them. It is, therefore, imperative that the usage of this tool doesn't result in negative labelling of students as being 'deficient' in one or more areas; as such language can only have a negative impact on students. Instead, this tool should serve as a starting point for students as well as their teachers to reflect on buoyancy, and additionally for teachers to reflect on ways in which they can adapt their teaching (as per the previous section) to support their students in developing these clearly teachable competencies more explicitly.

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Appendix A: Twelve Recommendations for fostering resilience (Downey 2008)

- Build healthy interpersonal relationships with students
- Set and communicate high, realistic expectations for academic performance
- Use students' strengths to promote high self-esteem
- Tell students that they are personally responsible for their success
- Develop a meaningful caring community
- Provide opportunities for meaningful participation
- Set clear and consistent expectations for student's behaviours
- Promote cooperative learning strategies
- Encourage students to tutor other students
- Teach transferrable life skills
- Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities
- Emphasize effective literacy skill

Appendix B Research Information and Consent Documents

Phase One Documents: Ref: ULREC 09/53

Phase Two Documents: Ref EHSREC 11-01

University *of* Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Information Sheet for Principals

Title of Project:

Resilience and Early School Leaving

What is the study about?

This study aims to get insight into the processes that motivate young people to leave second level schools early (before completing a Leaving Certificate), by comparing the school experiences of students in second level schools with those of students who have left such schools prior to completion of the Leaving Certificate.

What will I have to do?

The researcher is eager to learn about the interactions between 'at-risk' students in the schools selected. Of particular interest to the researcher is to study *'resilient'* students – those who appear likely to complete second level education despite their 'at-risk' status. The purpose of the project is to study how this 'resilience' manifests

itself in some people, and to compare the experiences and interactions of resilient youth, with young people who have left school early.

To do this, the researcher aims to assume an observational role in the classrooms selected for this study and aims to fit in with normal classroom life as much as possible. Some students will be requested to participate in a focus group discussion outside of normal class time, in order for the researcher to clarify the information learned from this observation, and to allow the students a more informal platform on which to air their views on the their secondary school experiences. In the event that a participating student leaves school early, by virtue of their participation their parents/guardians have given consent to allow me to request their personal contact details from your school to allow me to maintain a research link with them, and I ask that you facilitate me in such a request if it is needed. The focus of the study is entirely on the students and their experiences – this is not an investigation of teachers or staff of the schools, or an inquiry into the quality of teaching and learning taking place. It is hoped that you can facilitate me in this endeavour.

What are the benefits?

It is hoped that by participating in this project, those involved can suggest ways in which schools can be made more enticing and relevant places for young people to pursue an education.

What are the risks?

The risks to the participants should be minimal. The names of the young people and institutions participating will not be used either in the finished report or in field notes in order to ensure the privacy of all involved.

What if I do not want to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, simply indicate so on the accompanying consent form.

What happens to the information given?

The information given will go into a research report, a thesis, journal articles and academic papers. The insight gained from the project will also be used to create a list of policy recommendations aimed at improving the retention rates of young people to Leaving Certificate. In addition, there will be feedback for the schools and young people participating in the project.

Who else is taking part?

It is hoped two groups will participate in the study. The first group are enrolled in Leaving Certificate programmes in a second level school. The second group are a group of young people who have chosen to leave second level school early, prior to the completion of senior cycle.

What happens at the end of the study?

At the end of the study, the researcher will use the information gathered in order to create a list of recommendations for ways in which second level schools could be made more relevant to young people today. The report will also be submitted to the University of Limerick for the purposes of the fulfilment of the researchers post graduate degree.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you have any further questions, you can contact either of the project investigators. Their contact details are listed below.

What happens if I change my mind during the study?

Participants are free to withdraw from the study prior to the completion of the data collection. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the researcher will ensure that all records of that participant's input into the project are omitted from the final report, once consent is withdrawn prior to the completion of the data collection..

Contact name and number of Project Investigators:

Jason Comerford

Tel: 061 233660

Dr. Roland Tormey

Tel: 061 213526

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact

The Chairman of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee

c/o Anne O'Dwyer

Graduate School

University of Limerick

Limerick

Tel: (061) 202672

University *of* Limerick

O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

Information Sheet for Parents:

Title of Project:

Resilience and Early School Leaving

What is the study about?

This project is investigating the reasons why young people choose to become early school leavers, and more importantly, the reasons why some young people choose not to. It is hoped that by looking at the experiences of those who decide not to become early school leavers, it will be possible to make suggestions that may make schools more relevant for today's young people.

What is the researcher going to do?

The researcher will join your child's class group for a number of weeks to learn about the daily lives of the students there and to try to compare their experiences of school. In order to help the researcher to do this, some students will be asked to take

part in a discussion group outside of normal class time with the researcher to talk about their feelings about secondary school. Should your child leave school prior to the completion of senior cycle, the researcher would like to follow up with your child after this occurs, to get further information on their reasons for leaving school early. The researcher requests your permission to allow your child's school to share your contact details with him to allow this follow up to happen.

What are the benefits?

It is hoped that by taking part in this project, those involved can suggest ways in which schools can be made more meaningful and useful places for young people to learn.

What are the risks?

The risks to the participants should be minimal. The names of the young people and institutions participating will not be used either in the finished report or in field notes in order to ensure the privacy of all involved.

What if I do not want my child to take part?

If you do not want to give consent for your child to take part, simply indicate so on the consent form

What happens to the information given?

The information given will go into a research report, articles and academic papers. The insight gained from the project will also be used to create a list of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the numbers of young people completing Leaving Certificate. In addition, there will be feedback for the schools and young people participating in the project.

Who else is taking part?

Students in second level schools will be taking part in the study as well as a number of early school leavers.

What happens at the end of the study?

At the end of the study, the researcher will use the information gathered in order to create a list of ways in which schools could be made more useful for young people today. The report will also be submitted to the University of Limerick.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you have any further questions, you can contact either of the project investigators. Their contact details are listed below.

What happens if I change my mind during the study?

Participants are free to withdraw from the study prior to the completion of the data collection. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the researcher will

ensure that all records of that participant's input into the project are omitted from the final report. Simply contact either of the Project Investigators to withdraw consent.

Contact name and number of Project Investigators:

Jason Comerford

Tel: 061 233660

Dr. Roland Tormey

Tel: 061 213526

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact

The Chairman of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee

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Graduate School

University of Limerick

Limerick

Tel: (061) 202672

University *of* Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Information Sheet for Participants:

Title of Project:

Resilience and Early School Leaving

What is the study about?

This project is investigating why some young people choose to become early school leaver, and others do not. It is hoped that in doing this, the young people involved can make recommendations that may make schools more relevant for today's youth.

What is the researcher going to do?

The researcher will join your class for a number of weeks to learn about the daily lives of you, the students and to try to compare their experiences of school. In order to help the researcher to do this, some students will be asked to take part in a discussion group outside of the normal class time with the researcher to talk about their feelings about secondary school. Additionally, the researcher will try to contact

you should you leave school early in order to gain more information on your reasons for leaving.

What are the benefits?

It is hoped that by taking part in this project, those involved can suggest ways in which schools can be made more meaningful and useful places for young people to learn.

What are the risks?

The risks to the participants should be minimal. The names of the young people and institutions participating will not be used either in the finished report or in field notes in order to ensure the privacy of all involved.

What if I do not want to take part?

If you do not want to take part, simply indicate so on the consent form

What happens to the information given?

The information given will go into a research report, articles and academic papers. The insight gained from the project will also be used to create a list of policy recommendations aimed at increasing the numbers of young people completing Leaving Certificate. In addition, there will be feedback for the schools and young people participating in the project.

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Participants are free to withdraw from the study prior to the completion of the data collection. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the researcher will ensure that all records of that participant's input into the project are omitted from the final report.

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O L L S CO I L L U I M N I G H

Principal's Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Resilience and Early School Leaving

- I have read and understood the Principal's information sheet.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware of all of the procedures associated with this study as well as any risks and benefits associated with it.
- I know that my consent to allow the school's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent from the project before the completion of the data collection without giving any reason.
- I am aware that the results will be kept confidential

Principal's Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

University *of* Limerick

O L L S CO I L L U I M N I G H

Parent's/Carer's Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Resilience and Early School Leaving

- I have read and understood the parent/carer information sheet.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware of all of the procedures associated with this study as well as any risks and benefits associated with it.
- I know that my consent to allow the subject's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent from the project before the completion of data collection without giving any reason.
- I am aware that the results will be kept confidential
- I give my child's school permission to share my personal contact details with the researcher to facilitate maintaining a link with him and the research, **but only in the event that my child leaves school before completing senior cycle**

Signature: ______________________________ Date: ______________________

University *of* Limerick

O L L S CO I L L U I M N I G H

Subject's Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Resilience and Early School Leaving

- I have read and understood subject information sheet.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware of all of the procedures associated with this study as well as any risks and benefits associated with it.
- I know that my consent to allow the subject's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent from the project before the completion of the data collection without giving any reason.
- I am aware that my results will be kept confidential

Participant's Signature: ________________________ Date: __________

Parents/Guardians Signature ________________________ Date: __________

Parents/Guardians Name ___________________________

(Please print)

Sample Focus Group Questions:

Questions for Secondary School Students

- How do you find school?
- Have you ever considered dropping out? Why?
- Do you know any people who have dropped out of school?
- Why do you think they left? (main reasons)

Questions for Early School Leavers

- Why did you choose to leave school?

General Questions for both Groups

- Are there any benefits in staying in school?
- What would you say to someone considering leaving school early?
- What do you think should be done to encourage pupils to stay in school?
- What do you hope to get out of your education.

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Information Sheet for Principals

Title of Project:

Resilience and Early School Leaving

What is the study about?

This study aims to get insight into the process of resilience – which is the tendency for some 'at-risk' young people to persevere despite their adversity, and complete second level education

What will I have to do?

The researcher is eager to learn about the psychological traits which are linked to resilience. In order to learn about this, the researcher will administer a questionnaire to some of your senior cycle and junior certificate students. This questionnaire is designed so as to assess which students are in possession of the traits understood to be linked to resilience, and whether these traits are linked to the likelihood of a student completing school. The

questionnaire is reasonably short – and can be administered in approximately 40 minutes. The questionnaire is loosely modelled on the work of Marsh and Martin (2006) in that it targets 5 psychological traits associated with resilience: confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), and commitment (persistence). Young people who are resilient will tend to demonstrate these characteristics, and this will be examined in the questionnaire.

What are the benefits?

It is hoped that by participating in this project, your students can help to create and refine a tool which would be useful for schools in identifying which of their students have resilient traits, and which do not – and to tailor interventions accordingly to minimise early school leaving.

What are the risks?

The risks to the participants should be minimal. The questionnaire is tailored in such a way so as to be typical of a learning activity that might be administered as part of a SPHE class. The names of the young people and institutions participating will not be used either in the finished report or in field notes in order to ensure the privacy of all involved.

What if I do not want to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, simply indicate so on the accompanying consent form.

What happens to the information given?

The information given will go into a research report, a thesis, journal articles and academic papers. The insight gained from the project will also be used to create a list of policy recommendations aimed at improving the retention rates of young people to Leaving

Certificate, and also to refine the questionnaire further to make it more valuable. In addition, there will be feedback for the schools and young people participating in the project.

Who else is taking part?

Approximately 120 schools have been selected from a random stratified sample of schools and approached to participate in this study.

What happens at the end of the study?

At the end of the study, the researcher will use the information gathered to inform literature surrounding the area of resilience. The report will also be submitted to the University of Limerick for the purposes of the fulfilment of the researchers post graduate degree.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you have any further questions, you can contact either of the project investigators. Their contact details are listed below.

What happens if I change my mind during the study?

Participants are free to withdraw from the study prior to the completion of the data collection. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the researcher will simply omit them from the data collection process.

Contact name and number of Project Investigators:

Jason Comerford

Tel: 061 233660

Dr. Roland Tormey

Tel: 061 213526

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact

The Chairman of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee

c/o Anne O'Dwyer

Graduate School

University of Limerick

Limerick

Tel: (061) 202672

Principal's Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Resilience and Early School Leaving

- I have read and understood the Principal's information sheet.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware of all of the procedures associated with this study as well as any risks and benefits associated with it.
- I know that my consent to allow the school's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent from the project before the completion of the data collection without giving any reason.
- I am aware that the results will be kept confidential

Principal's Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Jason Comerford,
Government of Ireland Scholar (IRCHSS),
PhD Candidate,
Department of Education and Professional Studies,
FG-151,
University of Limerick,
Dublin Rd.,
Limerick

1/September /2012

Re: Research Proposal for your consideration

Dear Principal,

I would like to bring to your attention an opportunity to participate in a research program, supported by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which I am carrying out here in the Department of Education and Professional Studies in the University of Limerick.

My research is concerned with early school leaving and school completion. Of particular interest to me are those young people who are succeeding in second level

education, in spite of being conventionally understood as being at *high-risk* of early school leaving. The literature on early school leaving and educational disadvantage terms such young people *resilient* to early school leaving, and I am very much so interested in learning what I can from their experiences of education.

I am concerned with eliciting the truest account possible not only of *resilient* students, but also of the situation in which their resilience manifests itself. In order to do this, I have created a questionnaire designed to focus on 5 psychological traits understood to be linked with resilience. These traits are: confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), and commitment (persistence). Young people who are resilient will tend to demonstrate these characteristics, and this will be examined in the questionnaire. Before this questionnaire can be administered, I would require a meeting with you to discuss the contents of it further, as well as to get your written consent on behalf of your school.

Following the successful completion of the data collection phase – which will involve upwards of 120 schools in addition to your own if you choose to participate – I will be in a position to prepare a report (anonymity of participants maintained) for the participating schools which should give some novel and useful insights into their students for the consideration of school staff, which may go towards informing interventions to minimise early school leaving.

Of paramount importance for all concerned parties is anonymity – students, and indeed their school itself will be given pseudonyms for the purposes of my final reports and notes, in order to protect their identities.

Over the course of the next couple of days, I shall be in contact with your school administrator with the view to making an appointment to discuss the contents of this letter with you, if however you would be interested in contacting me in the meantime, or in learning more about my work here in the University of Limerick, please do not hesitate to call me on (085) 7293435.

I thank you for considering my proposal,

____

Jason Comerford,

Government of Ireland Scholar (IRCHSS),

Doctoral Researcher,

Department of Education and Professional Studies,

FG-151,

University of Limerick,

Dublin Rd.,

Limerick

Appendix C: Samples of Field Notes

Substantive: Smithstown Cohort – History Class:

4/3/10 History 4:40

Room appears to be used for History + Geog mainly
Rich in resources – Maps, pictures of artifacts, newspaper cutouts and informational posters (Volcanoes, map symbols, cross-section of the earth → crust, layers etc.
Student work prominently displayed – Junior Cycle.
Motivational Posters displayed over board – prominent throughout school. Room is bright though stuffy well lit at back by large window.
The class seems to be arranged loosely by sex – most of the girls are seated to the right of centre of the room.

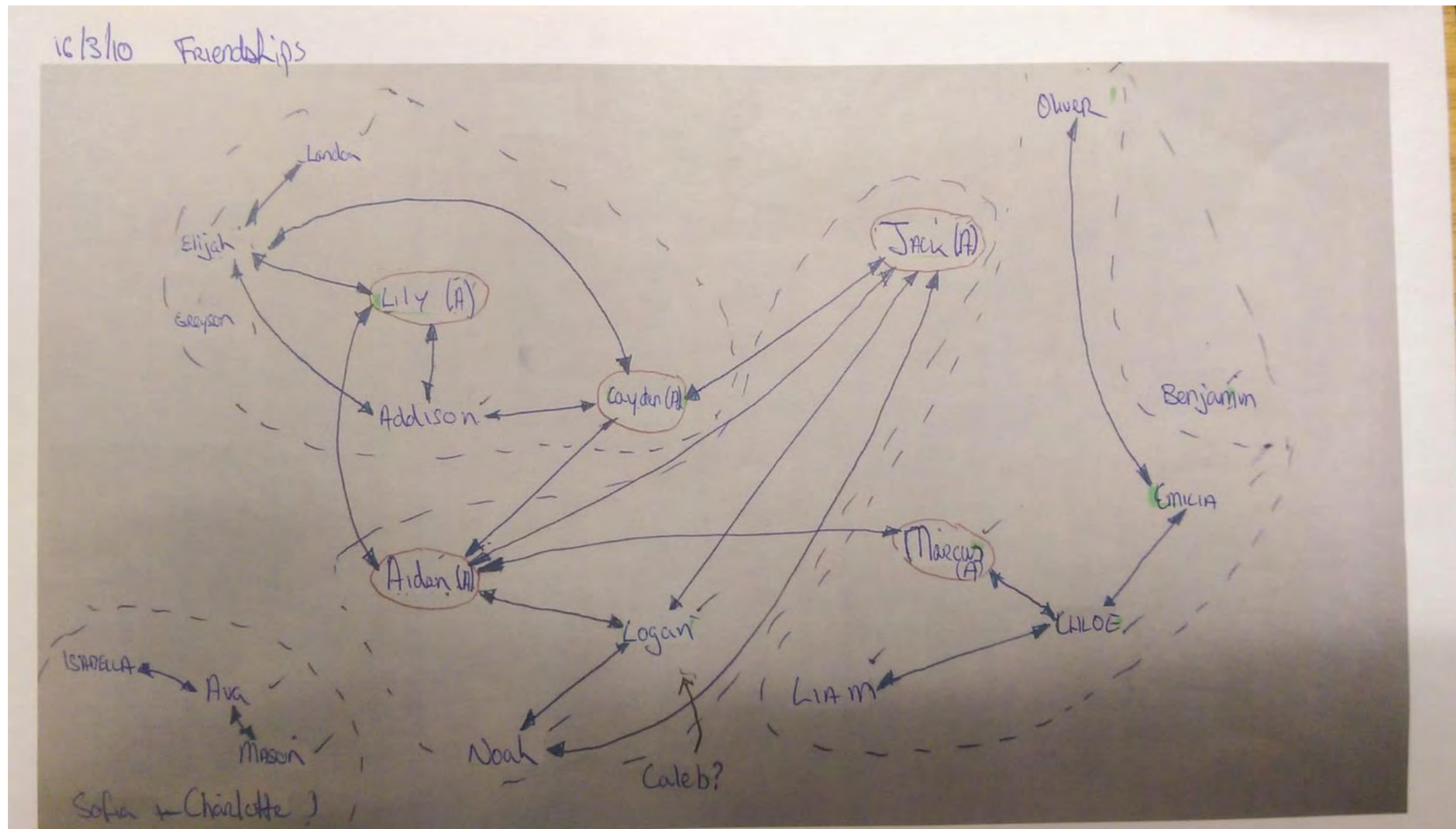
The teacher has opened the windows to let air in – the sound of traffic is so prominent in the background

The students seem interested in the topic → WWII, eagerly posing questions themselves and responding to the teacher when questions

Aidan seems particularly enthusiastic about my project, he has asked when I'm starting everytime I come to one of his classes.

Much of the feedback comes from the front of the class

Methodological: Hypothesised Friendship Groupings in Smithstown: Analysis of interactions in the field

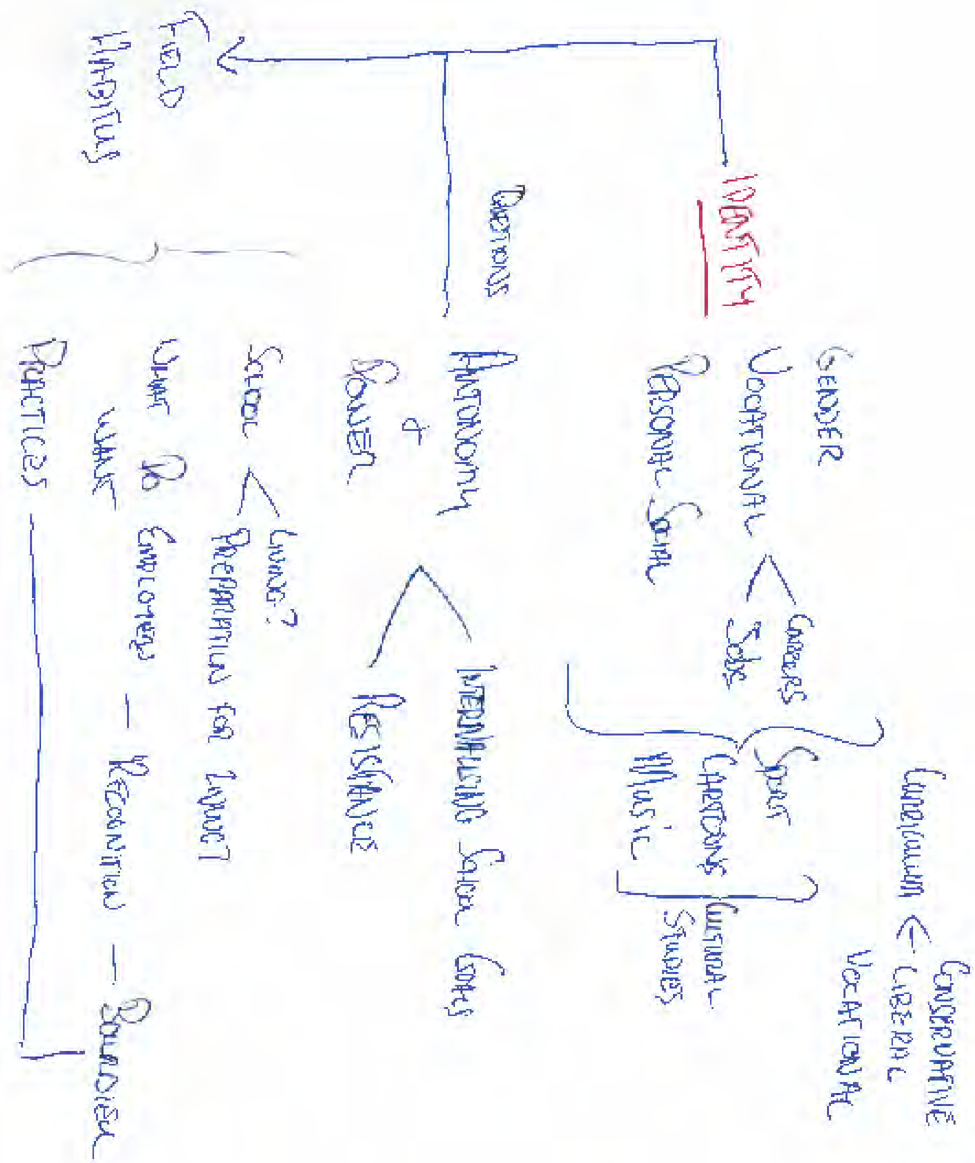


Analytical: Vocational Identities of Smithstown and Goodwin:

Smithtown			Goodwin		
Name	Occupation	Anticipated completion	Name	Occupation	Anticipated completion
Jack	Engineer	Uni	Leighanne	Unsure	LCA
Lily	Unsure	Uni	Georgina	Unsure	LCA
Aidan	Engineer	Uni	Denise	Unsure	LCA
Marcus	Unsure	Uni	Philipa	Early Childcare	PLC
Cayden	Unsure	LCE			
			Zach	Unsure	LCA
Elijah	Art	LCE	Darnell	Unsure - factory	LCA
Landon	Unsure	LCE	Corbin	Unsure	Leave
Addison	Beautician	PLC	Ronny	Unsure - factory	LCA
			Gabriel	Job - machinist	LCA
Logan	Engineer	Uni			
Noah	Engineer	Uni	Adalyn	Unsure	LCA
Liam	Architect	Uni	Elaine	Unsure – shop?	LCA
Emilia	Arts	Uni	Chantel	Job - shop?	LCA
Chloe	Biology	Uni			
Oliver	Unsure	LCE	Codes:	Profession	Requires University
Benjamin	Art	Uni		Job	No formal Qualifications
Caleb	Physics - Engineer	Uni		Intermediate	PLC
Isabela	Arts	Uni			
Charlotte	Unsure	JC			
Sofia	Unsure	JC			
Greyson	Apprenticeship	JC			
Ava	Unsure	LCA			
Mason	Unsure	LCA			

While student's employment aspirations were initially coded as 'jobs' in Smithstown, it became clear in Goodwin that the students in that setting were aspiring to different kinds of 'jobs', and so the coding structure evolved into 'professions' (requiring formal qualification and further study – mainly in Smithstown) as distinct from 'jobs' (not requiring any formal qualifications – mainly in Goodwin).

Appendix D: Concept map



Appendix E: Student Buoyancy Instrument

First of all, I would like to ask you some questions about yourself:

Q1. Age ________ years

Q2. Sex Female ☐ Male ☐ please tick V

Q3. Name 3 well known people you most admire:

____

____

____

Q4. What is the name of the television programme you watch most often:

____

Q5. What country were you born in:

____

Thank you. Please continue to the next page.

In some families there are two parents/guardians in the home, and in others there is one parent/guardian.

If you are from a **one parent/guardian** family, please complete **either** 6-8 (mother/female guardian) **or** 9-11 (father/male guardian)

If you are from a **two parents/guardians** family, please complete **6-11**

Q6. When did your **mother/female guardian** complete her formal education (tick the highest level that describes her)

- After primary ☐
- After some secondary ☐
- After Leaving Certificate ☐
- After some 3rd level ☐
- Finished 3rd level ☐
- Unsure ☐

Q7. Where does your **mother/female guardian's** work? What is her job title? (eg. Primary School - Teacher, Hospital- Nurse)

If she is not working outside the home, please write her last main job outside the home.

____

Q8. Describe what your **mother/female guardian does** in her main job outside the home? (eg. Teaches primary students, cares for patients)

If she is not working outside of the home, please describe her last main job outside the home

____

Thank you. Please continue to the next page.

Q9. When did your **father/male guardian** complete his formal education (tick the highest level that describes him)

After primary ☐

After some secondary ☐

After Leaving Certificate ☐

After some 3rd level ☐

Finished 3rd level ☐

Unsure ☐

Q10. Where does your **father/male guardian's** work? What is his job title? (eg. Factory - Machinist, Solicitors office - Solicitor)

If he is not working outside the home, please write his last main job outside the home.

___

Q11. Describe what your **father/male guardian does** in his main job outside the home? (eg. mills pieces, represents clients)

If he is not working outside of the home, please describe his last main job outside the home

___

Thank you. Please continue to the next page.

Please circle **one** number for each statement below. Choose the one that describes you best. Eg. For no.1. If the statement 'I like to plan ahead' doesn't describe you at all because you never plan ahead, you should circle either 1 or 2. If you always plan ahead, then the statement would describe you very well, and you should circle 9 or 10.

Go with your first instinct – it's probably the right one, and using a pencil will allow you to easily correct a mistake.

	Doesn't describe me at all		Doesn't really describe me		Describes me somewhat		Describes me fairly well		Describes me very well	
1. I like to plan ahead.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. I can think of ideas clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Success depends on how good you are, not on luck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. I don't finish what I start	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. I can handle difficult problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. I think bad things happen because of bad luck	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. I give up easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. I worry easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. I let others make choices for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. I get stressed out easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. I don't usually finish what I planned to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12. I don't quit a task until I finish it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13. I have excellent ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14. I'm not easily annoyed by things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15. I believe in the power of destiny	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16. I don't have a good imagination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17. I like getting my work exactly right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

18. I can think quickly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19. I make lots of last minute plans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20. I like to make snap decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21. I make plans and stick to them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
22. I am a hard worker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23. I follow the rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24. I'm usually relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25. I like having goals and trying to reach them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26. I don't get bothered by things easily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27. I let others decide things for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

28. I finish things I start, even if there are problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29. I make a mess of things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30. I don't often get distracted when I work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
31. I pay attention to details	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
32. I think some people are born lucky	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
33. I am quick to understand things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
34. I have frequent mood swings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
35. I think the world is controlled by a few powerful people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
36. I do few things on my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

37. I jump into things without thinking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
38. I never challenge things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
39. I make careless decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finally, on a scale from one to ten, how likely are you to leave school **before** completing a Leaving Cert/Leaving Cert Applied?

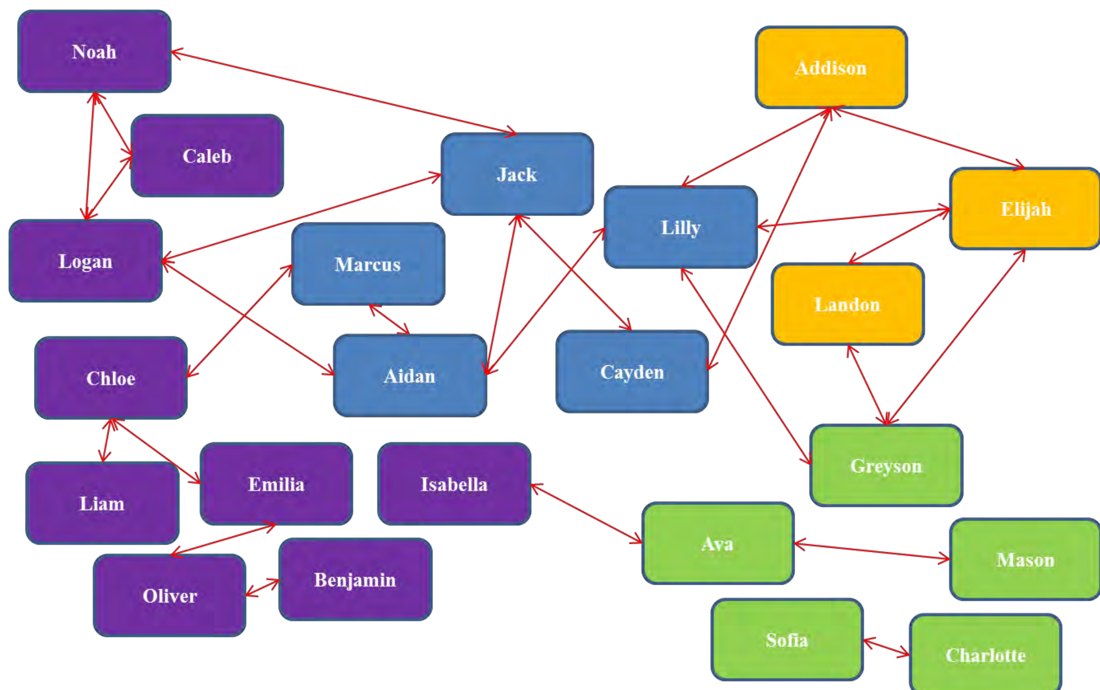
(1 being very unlikely to leave, 10 being very likely)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Thank you for your time and co-operation in finishing this questionnaire

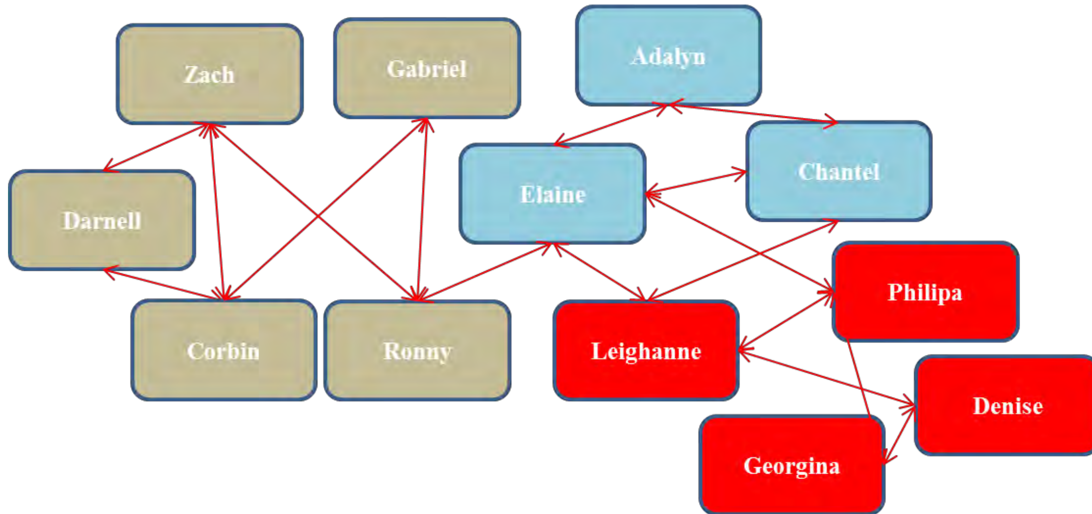
Appendix F: Organogram of Smithstown

- Internalisers: Purple
- Adaptors: Blue
- Perseverant: Orange
- Fringe: Green
- Red Arrows: Reciprocated Best friendships



Appendix G: Organogram of Goodwin

- Rap Boys – Brown
- EDM Girls – Blue
- RnB/Hip-Hop Girls – Red



Appendix H: Goodwin Visual Art Artefacts:

Figure 2: Leighanne (Goodwin, RnB/Hip-Hop Girl) Visual Art Poster

Figure 3: Ronny (Goodwin, Rap Boy) Visual Art Poster

Appendix I: SPSS PCA Output data

Factor Analysis

Notes		
Output Created		04-FEB-2014 16:16:10
Comments		
Input	Data	C:\Users\Jason\Dropbox\Jason\Quant\Survey\SPSS Files\PhD Questionaire Data (current to 29.1.14).sav
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	N of Rows in Working Data File	581
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	MISSING=EXCLUDE: User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	LISTWISE: Statistics are based on cases with no missing values for any variable used.

Syntax	FACTOR /VARIABLES Q1PlanAhead Q2ThinkClearly Q3SuccessHowGood rQ4DontFinish Q5HandleProblems rQ6BadThingsBadLuck rQ7GiveUpEasily rQ8WorryEasily rQ9LetOthersChoose rQ10StressedEasily rQ11DontFinishPlanned Q12DontQuitUntilFinish Q13ExcellentIdeas Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed rQ15BelieveInDestiny rQ16DontHaveImagination Q17LikeExactlyRight Q18ThinkQuickly rQ19LastMinutePlans rQ20SnapDecisions Q21StickToPlans Q22HardWorker Q23RuleFollower Q24UsuallyRelaxed Q25ReachGoals Q26NotBothered rQ27LetOthersDecide Q28FinishDespiteProblems rQ29MakeAMess Q30NotOftenDistracted Q31AttentionToDetails rQ32PeopleBornLucky Q33QuickUnderstand rQ34MoodSwings rQ35PowerfulControl rQ36FewThingsOwn rQ37JumpBeforeThinking rQ38NeverChallenge rQ39CarelessDecisions /MISSING LISTWISE /ANALYSIS Q1PlanAhead Q2ThinkClearly Q3SuccessHowGood rQ4DontFinish Q5HandleProblems rQ6BadThingsBadLuck

Resources	Processor Time	00:00:01.79
	Elapsed Time	00:00:01.39
	Maximum Memory Required	174372 (170.285K) bytes

[DataSet1] C:\Users\Jason\Dropbox\Jason\Quant\Survey\SPSS Files\PhD Questionaire Data (current to 29.1.14).sav

Correlation Matrix											
		Q1PlanAhead	Q2ThinkClearly	Q3SuccessHowGood	rQ4DontFinish	Q5HandleProblems	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	rQ7GiveUpEasily	rQ8WorryEasily	rQ9LetOthersChoose	rQ10StressedEasily
Correlation	Q1PlanAhead	1.000	.251	.227	.092	.189	.034	.077	-.131	-.030	-.097
	Q2ThinkClearly	.251	1.000	.247	.136	.320	.078	.251	.225	.112	.162
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.227	.247	1.000	.102	.222	.172	.149	-.026	.048	-.031
	rQ4DontFinish	.092	.136	.102	1.000	.019	.117	.366	.157	.256	.122
	Q5HandleProblems	.189	.320	.222	.019	1.000	-.028	.112	.031	.113	.099
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.034	.078	.172	.117	-.028	1.000	.166	.233	.254	.162
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.077	.251	.149	.366	.112	.166	1.000	.341	.263	.312
	rQ8WorryEasily	-.131	.225	-.026	.157	.031	.233	.341	1.000	.384	.710
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	-.030	.112	.048	.256	.113	.254	.263	.384	1.000	.384

	rQ10StressedEasily	-.097	.162	-.031	.122	.099	.162	.312	.710	.384	1.000
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.133	.213	.067	.437	.067	.110	.394	.267	.283	.213
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.215	.265	.275	.279	.164	.052	.339	.140	.143	.037
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.143	.468	.194	.055	.309	.015	.148	.141	.120	.091
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	-.016	.086	-.009	.079	.141	-.043	.123	.226	.031	.307
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	-.053	-.024	-.008	.017	-.079	.069	-.024	.010	.014	.020
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	-.022	.181	.027	.007	.084	.096	.104	.072	.163	.072
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.313	.288	.248	.159	.269	.049	.155	-.082	-.016	-.054
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.168	.483	.262	.079	.360	.063	.210	.079	.063	.100
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.360	.119	.052	.205	-.034	.120	.192	.040	.162	.057
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.185	-.069	.010	.115	-.076	.117	.003	-.019	.046	-.061
	Q21StickToPlans	.347	.267	.201	.202	.115	-.038	.196	.036	.087	.035
	Q22HardWorker	.312	.215	.268	.265	.188	.038	.268	.006	.065	-.021
	Q23RuleFollower	.286	.035	.193	.090	.070	-.039	.047	-.191	-.170	-.097

	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	-.019	.192	.073	.048	.129	.017	.193	.335	.067	.453
	Q25ReachGoals	.284	.284	.353	.258	.313	.064	.279	.001	.024	.035
	Q26NotBothered	-.073	.118	.057	.150	.111	.087	.218	.428	.172	.454
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.023	.065	.032	.208	.137	.209	.205	.245	.830	.265
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.195	.285	.160	.356	.197	.079	.381	.161	.181	.113
	rQ29MakeAMess	.140	.285	.145	.236	.151	.088	.285	.319	.337	.325
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.250	.211	.152	.243	.078	.065	.245	.121	.096	.083
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.369	.404	.294	.174	.256	.091	.209	-.011	.044	-.045
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.010	.103	.149	.174	.022	.346	.107	.131	.225	.107
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.283	.442	.248	.061	.390	.006	.163	.039	.008	.078
	rQ34MoodSwings	-.007	.134	.074	.157	-.004	.060	.266	.383	.171	.443
	rQ35PowerfulControl	-.033	-.061	-.047	.047	-.026	.133	.090	.153	.212	.149
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.032	.087	.000	.057	-.010	.059	.070	.129	.154	.126
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.275	.169	.119	.211	.100	.065	.170	.091	.114	.091

	rQ38NeverChallenge	.075	.304	.126	.149	.101	.126	.328	.231	.291	.235
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.314	.276	.153	.271	.184	.086	.310	.167	.198	.183
Sig. (1-tailed)	Q1PlanAhead		.000	.000	.024	.000	.234	.049	.002	.261	.018
	Q2ThinkClearly	.000		.000	.002	.000	.046	.000	.000	.008	.000
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.000	.000		.014	.000	.000	.001	.288	.151	.254
	rQ4DontFinish	.024	.002	.014		.342	.006	.000	.000	.000	.004
	Q5HandleProblems	.000	.000	.000	.342		.271	.008	.256	.007	.017
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.234	.046	.000	.006	.271		.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.049	.000	.001	.000	.008	.000		.000	.000	.000
	rQ8WorryEasily	.002	.000	.288	.000	.256	.000	.000		.000	.000
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.261	.008	.151	.000	.007	.000	.000	.000		.000
	rQ10StressedEasily	.018	.000	.254	.004	.017	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.002	.000	.074	.000	.075	.009	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.132	.000	.001	.001	.215
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.001	.000	.000	.121	.000	.374	.001	.001	.005	.025

	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.366	.033	.421	.045	.001	.178	.004	.000	.255	.000
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	.127	.301	.434	.356	.045	.070	.301	.412	.383	.335
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.315	.000	.278	.438	.036	.019	.013	.062	.000	.061
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.146	.000	.039	.366	.125
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.000	.000	.000	.045	.000	.087	.000	.045	.088	.016
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.000	.005	.131	.000	.236	.005	.000	.194	.000	.112
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.000	.071	.413	.007	.052	.006	.473	.339	.161	.095
	Q21StickToPlans	.000	.000	.000	.000	.007	.210	.000	.222	.031	.227
	Q22HardWorker	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.209	.000	.453	.081	.327
	Q23RuleFollower	.000	.228	.000	.026	.067	.200	.156	.000	.000	.019
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.342	.000	.059	.153	.003	.360	.000	.000	.074	.000
	Q25ReachGoals	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.086	.000	.495	.300	.226
	Q26NotBothered	.058	.005	.112	.001	.008	.031	.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.313	.082	.244	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.046	.000	.000	.000	.008
	rQ29MakeAMess	.001	.000	.001	.000	.001	.029	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.000	.000	.001	.000	.047	.082	.000	.005	.020	.038
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.025	.000	.407	.175	.167
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.413	.013	.001	.000	.320	.000	.011	.002	.000	.011
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.000	.000	.000	.095	.000	.451	.000	.200	.432	.047
	rQ34MoodSwings	.444	.002	.057	.000	.467	.100	.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ35PowerfulControl	.238	.096	.155	.156	.290	.002	.027	.000	.000	.001
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.244	.030	.498	.109	.419	.104	.067	.003	.000	.003
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.000	.000	.005	.000	.016	.082	.000	.026	.007	.026
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.053	.000	.003	.001	.015	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.032	.000	.000	.000	.000

Correlation Matrix											
		rQ11DontFinishPlanned	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	Q13ExcellentIdeas	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	rQ16DontHaveImagination	Q17LikeExactlyRight	Q18ThinkQuickly	rQ19LastMinutePlans	rQ20SnapDecisions
Correlation	Q1PlanAhead	.133	.215	.143	-.016	-.053	-.022	.313	.168	.360	.185
	Q2ThinkClearly	.213	.265	.468	.086	-.024	.181	.288	.483	.119	-.069
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.067	.275	.194	-.009	-.008	.027	.248	.262	.052	.010
	rQ4DontFinish	.437	.279	.055	.079	.017	.007	.159	.079	.205	.115
	Q5HandleProblems	.067	.164	.309	.141	-.079	.084	.269	.360	-.034	-.076
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.110	.052	.015	-.043	.069	.096	.049	.063	.120	.117
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.394	.339	.148	.123	-.024	.104	.155	.210	.192	.003
	rQ8WorryEasily	.267	.140	.141	.226	.010	.072	-.082	.079	.040	-.019
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.283	.143	.120	.031	.014	.163	-.016	.063	.162	.046
	rQ10StressedEasily	.213	.037	.091	.307	.020	.072	-.054	.100	.057	-.061
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	1.000	.291	.099	.148	-.116	.064	.160	.166	.235	.128
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.291	1.000	.271	.104	-.052	-.045	.336	.230	.128	-.028

	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.099	.271	1.000	.125	-.021	.219	.261	.434	-.049	-.151
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.148	.104	.125	1.000	-.145	-.093	-.008	.111	-.059	-.057
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	-.116	-.052	-.021	-.145	1.000	.005	-.055	.016	-.072	.079
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.064	-.045	.219	-.093	.005	1.000	.048	.068	.090	.072
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.160	.336	.261	-.008	-.055	.048	1.000	.409	.098	-.013
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.166	.230	.434	.111	.016	.068	.409	1.000	-.024	-.156
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.235	.128	-.049	-.059	-.072	.090	.098	-.024	1.000	.512
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.128	-.028	-.151	-.057	.079	.072	-.013	-.156	.512	1.000
	Q21StickToPlans	.390	.334	.205	.115	-.079	-.047	.260	.247	.211	.008
	Q22HardWorker	.260	.274	.180	.029	-.024	-.070	.334	.254	.209	.066
	Q23RuleFollower	-.040	.114	.024	.032	-.041	-.059	.276	.133	.245	.182
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.121	.145	.238	.376	.026	-.002	.067	.236	-.043	-.113
	Q25ReachGoals	.251	.333	.331	.171	-.112	-.003	.377	.336	.070	-.058
	Q26NotBothered	.126	.128	.150	.443	-.069	-.016	.092	.142	-.066	-.054

	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.231	.127	.094	.015	.054	.173	.024	.044	.143	.034
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.417	.477	.195	.127	.030	-.002	.331	.331	.149	-.014
	rQ29MakeAMess	.185	.147	.175	.135	.032	.060	.114	.165	.242	.126
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.273	.286	.121	.156	.015	-.022	.323	.285	.271	.111
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.162	.217	.363	.029	-.043	.076	.438	.418	.159	.117
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.127	.090	-.008	.020	.183	.065	.058	.060	.208	.195
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.096	.249	.417	.114	-.026	.065	.397	.591	.053	-.092
	rQ34MoodSwings	.218	.062	.077	.298	.034	.078	.001	.067	.206	.165
	rQ35PowerfulControl	.029	-.025	-.123	.034	.025	-.006	-.121	-.068	.083	.167
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.126	.057	.001	.015	.028	-.003	.043	.111	.114	.055
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.234	.177	.044	.108	.031	-.021	.211	.173	.362	.347
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.235	.226	.214	.143	-.018	.100	.131	.245	.163	-.058
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.278	.247	.160	.125	-.034	.073	.282	.248	.428	.232
Sig. (1-	Q1PlanAhead	.002	.000	.001	.366	.127	.315	.000	.000	.000	.000

tailed)	Q2ThinkClearly	.000	.000	.000	.033	.301	.000	.000	.000	.005	.071
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.074	.000	.000	.421	.434	.278	.000	.000	.131	.413
	rQ4DontFinish	.000	.000	.121	.045	.356	.438	.000	.045	.000	.007
	Q5HandleProblems	.075	.000	.000	.001	.045	.036	.000	.000	.236	.052
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.009	.132	.374	.178	.070	.019	.146	.087	.005	.006
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.000	.000	.001	.004	.301	.013	.000	.000	.000	.473
	rQ8WorryEasily	.000	.001	.001	.000	.412	.062	.039	.045	.194	.339
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.000	.001	.005	.255	.383	.000	.366	.088	.000	.161
	rQ10StressedEasily	.000	.215	.025	.000	.335	.061	.125	.016	.112	.095
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned		.000	.017	.001	.006	.085	.000	.000	.000	.003
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.000		.000	.013	.131	.166	.000	.000	.003	.272
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.017	.000		.004	.325	.000	.000	.000	.145	.001
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.001	.013	.004		.001	.023	.434	.008	.102	.109
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	.006	.131	.325	.001		.457	.117	.367	.060	.046

	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.085	.166	.000	.023	.457		.151	.071	.026	.061
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.000	.000	.000	.434	.117	.151		.000	.017	.390
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.000	.000	.000	.008	.367	.071	.000		.306	.000
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.000	.003	.145	.102	.060	.026	.017	.306		.000
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.003	.272	.001	.109	.046	.061	.390	.000	.000	
	Q21StickToPlans	.000	.000	.000	.007	.045	.157	.000	.000	.000	.436
	Q22HardWorker	.000	.000	.000	.270	.304	.066	.000	.000	.000	.078
	Q23RuleFollower	.195	.007	.306	.248	.188	.102	.000	.002	.000	.000
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.004	.001	.000	.000	.287	.486	.076	.000	.179	.008
	Q25ReachGoals	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008	.476	.000	.000	.066	.107
	Q26NotBothered	.003	.003	.001	.000	.070	.363	.024	.001	.078	.125
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.000	.003	.021	.373	.123	.000	.302	.175	.001	.232
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.000	.000	.000	.003	.259	.480	.000	.000	.001	.385
	rQ29MakeAMess	.000	.001	.000	.002	.249	.099	.007	.000	.000	.003

	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.000	.000	.005	.000	.376	.315	.000	.000	.000	.009
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.000	.000	.000	.266	.176	.052	.000	.000	.000	.006
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.003	.026	.433	.334	.000	.082	.107	.101	.000	.000
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.019	.000	.000	.007	.286	.082	.000	.000	.126	.025
	rQ34MoodSwings	.000	.093	.050	.000	.230	.047	.491	.076	.000	.000
	rQ35PowerfulControl	.265	.295	.004	.233	.292	.453	.005	.073	.038	.000
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.003	.112	.493	.373	.274	.478	.179	.009	.007	.120
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.000	.000	.170	.010	.250	.322	.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.000	.000	.000	.001	.350	.016	.002	.000	.000	.106
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.000	.000	.000	.003	.236	.059	.000	.000	.000	.000

Correlation Matrix											
		Q21StickToPlans	Q22HardWorker	Q23RuleFollower	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	Q25ReachGoals	Q26NotBothered	rQ27LetOthersDecide	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	rQ29MakeAMess	Q30NotOftenDistracted
Correlation	Q1PlanAhead	.347	.312	.286	-.019	.284	-.073	.023	.195	.140	.250
	Q2ThinkClearly	.267	.215	.035	.192	.284	.118	.065	.285	.285	.211
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.201	.268	.193	.073	.353	.057	.032	.160	.145	.152
	rQ4DontFinish	.202	.265	.090	.048	.258	.150	.208	.356	.236	.243
	Q5HandleProblems	.115	.188	.070	.129	.313	.111	.137	.197	.151	.078
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	-.038	.038	-.039	.017	.064	.087	.209	.079	.088	.065
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.196	.268	.047	.193	.279	.218	.205	.381	.285	.245
	rQ8WorryEasily	.036	.006	-.191	.335	.001	.428	.245	.161	.319	.121
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.087	.065	-.170	.067	.024	.172	.830	.181	.337	.096
	rQ10StressedEasily	.035	-.021	-.097	.453	.035	.454	.265	.113	.325	.083
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.390	.260	-.040	.121	.251	.126	.231	.417	.185	.273
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.334	.274	.114	.145	.333	.128	.127	.477	.147	.286

	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.205	.180	.024	.238	.331	.150	.094	.195	.175	.121
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.115	.029	.032	.376	.171	.443	.015	.127	.135	.156
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	-.079	-.024	-.041	.026	-.112	-.069	.054	.030	.032	.015
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	-.047	-.070	-.059	-.002	-.003	-.016	.173	-.002	.060	-.022
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.260	.334	.276	.067	.377	.092	.024	.331	.114	.323
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.247	.254	.133	.236	.336	.142	.044	.331	.165	.285
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.211	.209	.245	-.043	.070	-.066	.143	.149	.242	.271
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.008	.066	.182	-.113	-.058	-.054	.034	-.014	.126	.111
	Q21StickToPlans	1.000	.358	.235	.080	.295	.092	.090	.407	.113	.229
	Q22HardWorker	.358	1.000	.295	.056	.377	.062	.076	.383	.201	.248
	Q23RuleFollower	.235	.295	1.000	.015	.211	.069	-.163	.151	.042	.214
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.080	.056	.015	1.000	.225	.370	-.004	.137	.150	.130
	Q25ReachGoals	.295	.377	.211	.225	1.000	.217	.006	.370	.192	.276
	Q26NotBothered	.092	.062	.069	.370	.217	1.000	.055	.139	.217	.143

	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.090	.076	-.163	-.004	.006	.055	1.000	.139	.315	.058
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.407	.383	.151	.137	.370	.139	.139	1.000	.197	.273
	rQ29MakeAMess	.113	.201	.042	.150	.192	.217	.315	.197	1.000	.211
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.229	.248	.214	.130	.276	.143	.058	.273	.211	1.000
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.326	.343	.299	.039	.355	.052	.001	.317	.202	.255
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.026	.076	.052	-.018	.024	.049	.244	.114	.230	.078
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.270	.265	.225	.240	.343	.116	-.015	.333	.162	.265
	rQ34MoodSwings	.114	.134	.045	.300	.076	.369	.170	.127	.314	.189
	rQ35PowerfulControl	-.005	.032	-.023	.034	-.055	.121	.174	-.020	.112	.012
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	-.004	-.028	-.016	.025	.023	.069	.168	.054	.243	.089
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.234	.144	.290	.037	.154	.112	.134	.241	.373	.293
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.151	.093	-.078	.160	.189	.103	.280	.203	.269	.094
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.268	.231	.317	.112	.315	.183	.171	.292	.489	.346
Sig. (1-	Q1PlanAhead	.000	.000	.000	.342	.000	.058	.313	.000	.001	.000

tailed)	Q2ThinkClearly	.000	.000	.228	.000	.000	.005	.082	.000	.000	.000
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.000	.000	.000	.059	.000	.112	.244	.000	.001	.001
	rQ4DontFinish	.000	.000	.026	.153	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Q5HandleProblems	.007	.000	.067	.003	.000	.008	.002	.000	.001	.047
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.210	.209	.200	.360	.086	.031	.000	.046	.029	.082
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.000	.000	.156	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	rQ8WorryEasily	.222	.453	.000	.000	.495	.000	.000	.000	.000	.005
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.031	.081	.000	.074	.300	.000	.000	.000	.000	.020
	rQ10StressedEasily	.227	.327	.019	.000	.226	.000	.000	.008	.000	.038
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.000	.000	.195	.004	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.000	.000	.007	.001	.000	.003	.003	.000	.001	.000
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.000	.000	.306	.000	.000	.001	.021	.000	.000	.005
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.007	.270	.248	.000	.000	.000	.373	.003	.002	.000
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	.045	.304	.188	.287	.008	.070	.123	.259	.249	.376

	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.157	.066	.102	.486	.476	.363	.000	.480	.099	.315
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.000	.000	.000	.076	.000	.024	.302	.000	.007	.000
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.001	.175	.000	.000	.000
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.000	.000	.000	.179	.066	.078	.001	.001	.000	.000
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.436	.078	.000	.008	.107	.125	.232	.385	.003	.009
	Q21StickToPlans		.000	.000	.042	.000	.024	.027	.000	.008	.000
	Q22HardWorker	.000		.000	.115	.000	.093	.051	.000	.000	.000
	Q23RuleFollower	.000	.000		.376	.000	.070	.000	.001	.182	.000
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.042	.115	.376		.000	.000	.462	.002	.001	.003
	Q25ReachGoals	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.449	.000	.000	.000
	Q26NotBothered	.024	.093	.070	.000	.000		.117	.001	.000	.001
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.027	.051	.000	.462	.449	.117		.001	.000	.105
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.000	.000	.001	.002	.000	.001	.001		.000	.000
	rQ29MakeAMess	.008	.000	.182	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000

	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.001	.105	.000	.000	
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.000	.000	.000	.199	.000	.130	.491	.000	.000	.000
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.288	.051	.134	.347	.304	.147	.000	.007	.000	.046
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.006	.376	.000	.000	.000
	rQ34MoodSwings	.007	.002	.169	.000	.051	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000
	rQ35PowerfulControl	.460	.248	.309	.236	.119	.005	.000	.334	.008	.396
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.465	.272	.363	.299	.308	.069	.000	.124	.000	.028
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.000	.001	.000	.215	.000	.008	.002	.000	.000	.000
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.001	.023	.048	.000	.000	.013	.000	.000	.000	.022
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Correlation Matrix										
		Q31AttentionToDetails	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	Q33QuickUnderstand	rQ34MoodSwings	rQ35PowerfulControl	rQ36FewThingsOwn	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	rQ38NeverChallenge	rQ39CarelessDecisions
Correlation	Q1PlanAhead	.369	.010	.283	-.007	-.033	.032	.275	.075	.314
	Q2ThinkClearly	.404	.103	.442	.134	-.061	.087	.169	.304	.276
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.294	.149	.248	.074	-.047	.000	.119	.126	.153
	rQ4DontFinish	.174	.174	.061	.157	.047	.057	.211	.149	.271
	Q5HandleProblems	.256	.022	.390	-.004	-.026	-.010	.100	.101	.184
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.091	.346	.006	.060	.133	.059	.065	.126	.086
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.209	.107	.163	.266	.090	.070	.170	.328	.310
	rQ8WorryEasily	-.011	.131	.039	.383	.153	.129	.091	.231	.167
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.044	.225	.008	.171	.212	.154	.114	.291	.198
	rQ10StressedEasily	-.045	.107	.078	.443	.149	.126	.091	.235	.183
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.162	.127	.096	.218	.029	.126	.234	.235	.278
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.217	.090	.249	.062	-.025	.057	.177	.226	.247

	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.363	-.008	.417	.077	-.123	.001	.044	.214	.160
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.029	.020	.114	.298	.034	.015	.108	.143	.125
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	-.043	.183	-.026	.034	.025	.028	.031	-.018	-.034
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.076	.065	.065	.078	-.006	-.003	-.021	.100	.073
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.438	.058	.397	.001	-.121	.043	.211	.131	.282
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.418	.060	.591	.067	-.068	.111	.173	.245	.248
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.159	.208	.053	.206	.083	.114	.362	.163	.428
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.117	.195	-.092	.165	.167	.055	.347	-.058	.232
	Q21StickToPlans	.326	.026	.270	.114	-.005	-.004	.234	.151	.268
	Q22HardWorker	.343	.076	.265	.134	.032	-.028	.144	.093	.231
	Q23RuleFollower	.299	.052	.225	.045	-.023	-.016	.290	-.078	.317
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.039	-.018	.240	.300	.034	.025	.037	.160	.112
	Q25ReachGoals	.355	.024	.343	.076	-.055	.023	.154	.189	.315
	Q26NotBothered	.052	.049	.116	.369	.121	.069	.112	.103	.183

	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.001	.244	-.015	.170	.174	.168	.134	.280	.171
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.317	.114	.333	.127	-.020	.054	.241	.203	.292
	rQ29MakeAMess	.202	.230	.162	.314	.112	.243	.373	.269	.489
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.255	.078	.265	.189	.012	.089	.293	.094	.346
	Q31AttentionToDetails	1.000	.063	.407	.030	-.068	.036	.222	.155	.385
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.063	1.000	.001	.196	.154	.127	.150	.151	.161
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.407	.001	1.000	.081	-.197	.060	.233	.196	.268
	rQ34MoodSwings	.030	.196	.081	1.000	.191	.193	.282	.146	.267
	rQ35PowerfulControl	-.068	.154	-.197	.191	1.000	.075	.090	.040	.074
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.036	.127	.060	.193	.075	1.000	.280	.190	.261
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.222	.150	.233	.282	.090	.280	1.000	.127	.582
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.155	.151	.196	.146	.040	.190	.127	1.000	.308
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.385	.161	.268	.267	.074	.261	.582	.308	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Q1PlanAhead	.000	.413	.000	.444	.238	.244	.000	.053	.000
	Q2ThinkClearly	.000	.013	.000	.002	.096	.030	.000	.000	.000

	Q3SuccessHowGood	.000	.001	.000	.057	.155	.498	.005	.003	.000
	rQ4DontFinish	.000	.000	.095	.000	.156	.109	.000	.001	.000
	Q5HandleProblems	.000	.320	.000	.467	.290	.419	.016	.015	.000
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.025	.000	.451	.100	.002	.104	.082	.003	.032
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.000	.011	.000	.000	.027	.067	.000	.000	.000
	rQ8WorryEasily	.407	.002	.200	.000	.000	.003	.026	.000	.000
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.175	.000	.432	.000	.000	.000	.007	.000	.000
	rQ10StressedEasily	.167	.011	.047	.000	.001	.003	.026	.000	.000
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.000	.003	.019	.000	.265	.003	.000	.000	.000
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.000	.026	.000	.093	.295	.112	.000	.000	.000
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.000	.433	.000	.050	.004	.493	.170	.000	.000
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.266	.334	.007	.000	.233	.373	.010	.001	.003
	rQ15BelieveInDestiny	.176	.000	.286	.230	.292	.274	.250	.350	.236
	rQ16DontHaveImagination	.052	.082	.082	.047	.453	.478	.322	.016	.059

	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.000	.107	.000	.491	.005	.179	.000	.002	.000
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.000	.101	.000	.076	.073	.009	.000	.000	.000
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.000	.000	.126	.000	.038	.007	.000	.000	.000
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.006	.000	.025	.000	.000	.120	.000	.106	.000
	Q21StickToPlans	.000	.288	.000	.007	.460	.465	.000	.001	.000
	Q22HardWorker	.000	.051	.000	.002	.248	.272	.001	.023	.000
	Q23RuleFollower	.000	.134	.000	.169	.309	.363	.000	.048	.000
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.199	.347	.000	.000	.236	.299	.215	.000	.008
	Q25ReachGoals	.000	.304	.000	.051	.119	.308	.000	.000	.000
	Q26NotBothered	.130	.147	.006	.000	.005	.069	.008	.013	.000
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.491	.000	.376	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.000	.007	.000	.003	.334	.124	.000	.000	.000
	rQ29MakeAMess	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Q30NotOftenDistracted	.000	.046	.000	.000	.396	.028	.000	.022	.000
	Q31AttentionToDetails		.090	.000	.262	.072	.220	.000	.000	.000

	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.090		.488	.000	.000	.003	.001	.001	.000
	Q33QuickUnderstand	.000	.488		.042	.000	.097	.000	.000	.000
	rQ34MoodSwings	.262	.000	.042		.000	.000	.000	.001	.000
	rQ35PowerfulControl	.072	.000	.000	.000		.053	.027	.196	.056
	rQ36FewThingsOwn	.220	.003	.097	.000	.053		.000	.000	.000
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.000	.001	.000	.000	.027	.000		.003	.000
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.000	.001	.000	.001	.196	.000	.003		.000
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.000	.000	.000	.000	.056	.000	.000	.000	

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.849
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6144.344
	df	741
	Sig.	.000

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Q1PlanAhead	1.000	.474
Q2ThinkClearly	1.000	.576
Q3SuccessHowGood	1.000	.508
rQ4DontFinish	1.000	.479
Q5HandleProblems	1.000	.519
rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	1.000	.630
rQ7GiveUpEasily	1.000	.506
rQ8WorryEasily	1.000	.658
rQ9LetOthersChoose	1.000	.827
rQ10StressedEasily	1.000	.694
rQ11DontFinishPlanned	1.000	.611
Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	1.000	.475
Q13ExcellentIdeas	1.000	.558
Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	1.000	.518
rQ15BelieveInDestiny	1.000	.785
rQ16DontHaveImagination	1.000	.575
Q17LikeExactlyRight	1.000	.459
Q18ThinkQuickly	1.000	.613
rQ19LastMinutePlans	1.000	.667
rQ20SnapDecisions	1.000	.625
Q21StickToPlans	1.000	.473
Q22HardWorker	1.000	.508

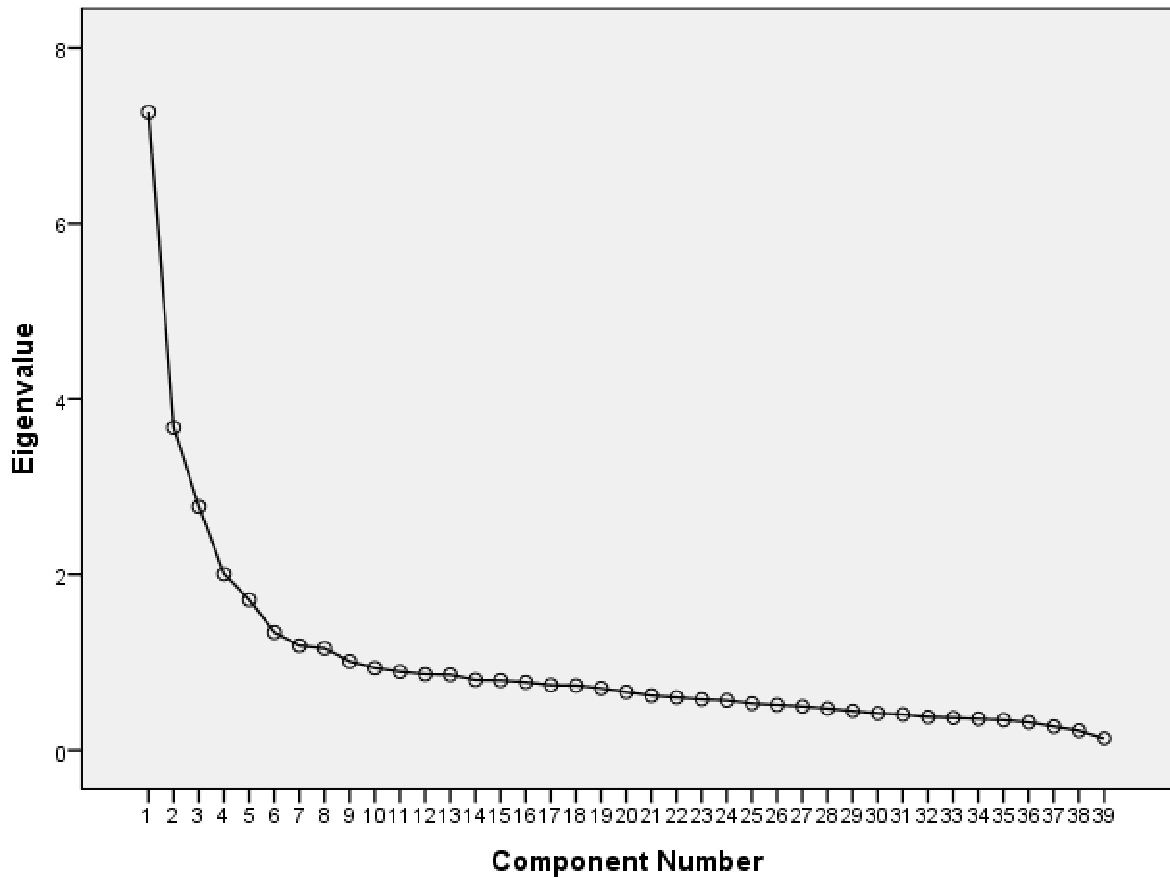
Q23RuleFollower	1.000	.522
Q24UsuallyRelaxed	1.000	.531
Q25ReachGoals	1.000	.540
Q26NotBothered	1.000	.597
rQ27LetOthersDecide	1.000	.833
Q28FinishDespiteProblems	1.000	.598
rQ29MakeAMess	1.000	.495
Q30NotOftenDistracted	1.000	.361
Q31AttentionToDetails	1.000	.517
rQ32PeopleBornLucky	1.000	.529
Q33QuickUnderstand	1.000	.615
rQ34MoodSwings	1.000	.531
rQ35PowerfulControl	1.000	.353
rQ36FewThingsOwn	1.000	.612
rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	1.000	.630
rQ38NeverChallenge	1.000	.477
rQ39CarelessDecisions	1.000	.662

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained						
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.266	18.631	18.631	7.266	18.631	18.631
2	3.674	9.421	28.051	3.674	9.421	28.051
3	2.775	7.115	35.167	2.775	7.115	35.167
4	2.006	5.144	40.310	2.006	5.144	40.310
5	1.715	4.397	44.707	1.715	4.397	44.707
6	1.342	3.442	48.149	1.342	3.442	48.149
7	1.192	3.055	51.204	1.192	3.055	51.204
8	1.160	2.975	54.179	1.160	2.975	54.179
9	1.012	2.595	56.774	1.012	2.595	56.774
10	.937	2.403	59.177			
11	.895	2.295	61.472			
12	.866	2.221	63.694			
13	.861	2.207	65.900			
14	.801	2.054	67.954			
15	.796	2.041	69.995			
16	.775	1.987	71.981			
17	.743	1.904	73.886			
18	.737	1.891	75.777			
19	.706	1.810	77.586			
20	.663	1.700	79.287			
21	.623	1.598	80.885			

22	.602	1.545	82.429			
23	.581	1.490	83.919			
24	.568	1.458	85.377			
25	.533	1.368	86.745			
26	.517	1.325	88.070			
27	.498	1.278	89.348			
28	.474	1.216	90.564			
29	.447	1.145	91.709			
30	.421	1.078	92.787			
31	.407	1.045	93.832			
32	.379	.972	94.804			
33	.371	.951	95.755			
34	.358	.919	96.674			
35	.345	.884	97.557			
36	.320	.820	98.377			
37	.273	.699	99.076			
38	.226	.578	99.654			
39	.135	.346	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



Component Matrix[a]								
	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Q1PlanAhead	.409	-.401	.293	-.029	.083	-.098	.189	-.069
Q2ThinkClearly	.579	-.140	-.250	.205	.225	-.081	.012	.244
Q3SuccessHowGood	.387	-.259	-.022	.141	.049	.395	.114	-.158
rQ4DontFinish	.453	.133	.213	.017	-.434	.057	-.093	.100
Q5HandleProblems	.387	-.205	-.287	.168	.200	-.048	.220	-.327
rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.206	.258	.146	.283	.054	.518	.090	.093

rQ7GiveUpEasily	.558	.221	-.024	.030	-.287	.025	-.008	.222
rQ8WorryEasily	.365	.646	-.253	-.085	.000	.039	.025	.184
rQ9LetOthersChoose	.376	.566	.082	.462	-.086	-.108	.128	-.285
rQ10StressedEasily	.361	.645	-.296	-.185	.091	.019	.079	.067
rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.524	.177	.125	.016	-.451	-.196	-.008	.214
Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.534	-.137	-.044	.062	-.365	.032	-.145	-.020
Q13ExcellentIdeas	.457	-.184	-.423	.233	.195	-.069	.119	.131
Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.273	.214	-.337	-.486	-.033	-.043	.109	-.167
rQ15BelieveInDestiny	-.046	.096	.092	.143	.173	.424	-.485	.163
rQ16DontHaveImagination	.115	.109	-.025	.368	.266	-.108	.361	.445
Q17LikeExactlyRight	.506	-.429	-.026	.068	.012	.076	-.065	-.056
Q18ThinkQuickly	.560	-.279	-.343	.143	.213	.043	-.181	.017
rQ19LastMinutePlans	.367	.045	.631	-.092	.095	-.155	.210	.212
rQ20SnapDecisions	.114	.077	.665	-.165	.201	.067	.221	.188
Q21StickToPlans	.509	-.234	.072	-.076	-.303	-.134	.070	-.017
Q22HardWorker	.505	-.275	.122	-.029	-.261	.176	.117	-.115
Q23RuleFollower	.276	-.403	.282	-.360	.123	.176	.107	-.112
Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.337	.218	-.466	-.342	.084	.112	.024	.093
Q25ReachGoals	.570	-.296	-.156	-.062	-.153	.114	.094	-.141
Q26NotBothered	.359	.344	-.342	-.417	.016	.163	.116	-.129
rQ27LetOthersDecide	.322	.490	.141	.515	-.057	-.139	.088	-.360
Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.611	-.111	-.011	.038	-.382	.032	-.190	.062

rQ29MakeAMess	.532	.296	.130	.002	.249	-.110	-.093	-.156
Q30NotOftenDistracted	.507	-.100	.140	-.197	-.055	.031	-.145	.085
Q31AttentionToDetails	.557	-.397	.038	.092	.149	.047	.103	.062
rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.253	.257	.291	.206	.138	.477	-.109	-.019
Q33QuickUnderstand	.550	-.371	-.289	.038	.258	-.040	-.095	.038
rQ34MoodSwings	.392	.441	.022	-.365	.156	.071	.037	.098
rQ35PowerfulControl	.056	.366	.211	-.061	.019	.197	.188	-.288
rQ36FewThingsOwn	.218	.218	.155	.006	.271	-.246	-.500	-.169
rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.494	.017	.422	-.246	.266	-.161	-.202	-.094
rQ38NeverChallenge	.447	.208	-.092	.241	.036	-.202	-.140	.042
rQ39CarelessDecisions	.651	.020	.315	-.156	.237	-.201	-.080	-.053

Component Matrix[a]	
	Component
	9
Q1PlanAhead	.040
Q2ThinkClearly	-.027
Q3SuccessHowGood	-.273
rQ4DontFinish	.016
Q5HandleProblems	.136
rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	-.362
rQ7GiveUpEasily	-.110
rQ8WorryEasily	.008
rQ9LetOthersChoose	.169
rQ10StressedEasily	.081
rQ11DontFinishPlanned	-.031
Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	-.096
Q13ExcellentIdeas	.091
Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	-.070
rQ15BelieveInDestiny	.524
rQ16DontHaveImagination	.054
Q17LikeExactlyRight	-.026
Q18ThinkQuickly	.054
rQ19LastMinutePlans	-.037
rQ20SnapDecisions	.083

Q21StickToPlans	.182
Q22HardWorker	.191
Q23RuleFollower	.066
Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.083
Q25ReachGoals	-.186
Q26NotBothered	-.046
rQ27LetOthersDecide	.209
Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.155
rQ29MakeAMess	.012
Q30NotOftenDistracted	.064
Q31AttentionToDetails	.001
rQ32PeopleBornLucky	-.115
Q33QuickUnderstand	.106
rQ34MoodSwings	.100
rQ35PowerfulControl	.099
rQ36FewThingsOwn	-.283
rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.028
rQ38NeverChallenge	-.321
rQ39CarelessDecisions	-.093

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.[a]

a. 9 components extracted.

Appendix J: Correlation Matrix of SBI items

Correlation Matrix

		Q33QuickUnderstand	Q18ThinkQuickly	Q13ExcellentIdeas	Q2ThinkClearly	Q5HandleProblems	Q31AttentionToDetails	Q17LikeExactlyRight	Q3SuccessHowGood	rQ10StressedEasily	Q26NotBothered	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	rQ20SnapDecisions	rQ19LastMinutePlans
Correlation	Q33QuickUnderstand	1.000	.594	.423	.453	.397	.402	.388	.236	.078	.115	.252	.124	.217	-.095	.025
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.594	1.000	.445	.496	.373	.407	.403	.244	.103	.144	.241	.117	.171	-.154	-.031
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.423	.445	1.000	.481	.328	.359	.258	.182	.089	.148	.244	.126	.031	-.146	-.061
	Q2ThinkClearly	.453	.496	.481	1.000	.335	.397	.287	.235	.153	.114	.200	.083	.156	-.066	.101
	Q5HandleProblems	.397	.373	.328	.335	1.000	.241	.267	.203	.101	.116	.146	.142	.088	-.074	-.050
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.402	.407	.359	.397	.241	1.000	.434	.279	-.043	.055	.042	.046	.212	.100	.155
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.388	.403	.258	.287	.267	.434	1.000	.232	-.054	.096	.066	-.008	.218	-.005	.102
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.236	.244	.182	.235	.203	.279	.232	1.000	-.034	.066	.077	-.008	.120	.006	.067
	rQ10StressedEasily	.078	.103	.089	.153	.101	-.043	-.054	-.034	1.000	.458	.457	.317	.098	-.076	.057
	Q26NotBothered	.115	.144	.148	.114	.116	.055	.096	.066	.458	1.000	.378	.449	.123	-.055	-.055
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.252	.241	.244	.200	.146	.042	.066	.077	.457	.378	1.000	.383	.034	-.120	-.050
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.124	.117	.126	.083	.142	.046	-.008	-.008	.317	.449	.383	1.000	.108	-.066	-.061
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.217	.171	.031	.156	.088	.212	.218	.120	.098	.123	.034	.108	1.000	.331	.371
	rQ20SnapDecisions	-.095	-.154	-.146	-.066	-.074	.100	-.005	.006	-.076	-.055	-.120	-.066	.331	1.000	.488
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.025	-.031	-.061	.101	-.050	.155	.102	.067	.057	-.055	-.050	-.061	.371	.488	1.000
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	.253	.240	.144	.258	.173	.365	.284	.154	.195	.195	.120	.132	.588	.210	.431
	Q1PlanAhead	.274	.150	.142	.245	.184	.370	.317	.217	-.101	-.068	-.017	-.017	.266	.192	.344
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	-.001	.046	.103	.077	.144	-.014	.013	.037	.256	.048	.007	.008	.115	.030	.120
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.016	.071	.125	.119	.123	.036	-.014	.049	.381	.170	.073	.028	.116	.034	.154
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.017	.077	.016	.088	-.019	.081	.049	.168	.165	.094	.033	-.041	.069	.100	.113
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.012	.084	.003	.119	.030	.062	.061	.139	.105	.048	-.014	.018	.150	.193	.200
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.223	.274	.234	.325	.125	.154	.127	.122	.225	.093	.166	.142	.117	-.058	.140
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.087	.153	.087	.200	.058	.167	.161	.084	.210	.130	.122	.149	.239	.124	.248
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.323	.321	.189	.279	.191	.321	.341	.167	.109	.149	.138	.129	.249	-.002	.159
	rQ4DontFinish	.073	.094	.063	.147	.027	.176	.153	.121	.125	.158	.070	.086	.207	.099	.206
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.243	.224	.257	.258	.155	.210	.334	.285	.029	.132	.140	.101	.184	-.016	.137
	Q21StickToPlans	.257	.236	.197	.260	.109	.336	.264	.202	.033	.097	.076	.114	.236	.012	.218
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.156	.210	.140	.242	.110	.206	.164	.150	.316	.228	.196	.128	.188	.000	.205
	Q22HardWorker	.267	.253	.182	.218	.191	.346	.343	.248	-.018	.064	.060	.035	.146	.072	.198

		rQ39CarelessDecisions	Q1PlanAhead	rQ27LetOthersDecide	rQ9LetOthersChoose	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	rQ38NeverChallenge	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	rQ4DontFinish	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	Q21StickToPlans	rQ7GiveUpEasily	Q22HardWorker
Correlation	Q33QuickUnderstand	.253	.274	-.001	.016	.017	.012	.223	.087	.323	.073	.243	.257	.156	.267
	Q18ThinkQuickly	.240	.150	.046	.071	.077	.084	.274	.153	.321	.094	.224	.236	.210	.253
	Q13ExcellentIdeas	.144	.142	.103	.125	.016	.003	.234	.087	.189	.063	.257	.197	.140	.182
	Q2ThinkClearly	.258	.245	.077	.119	.088	.119	.325	.200	.279	.147	.258	.260	.242	.218
	Q5HandleProblems	.173	.184	.144	.123	-.019	.030	.125	.058	.191	.027	.155	.109	.110	.191
	Q31AttentionToDetails	.365	.370	-.014	.036	.081	.062	.154	.167	.321	.176	.210	.336	.206	.346
	Q17LikeExactlyRight	.284	.317	.013	-.014	.049	.061	.127	.161	.341	.153	.334	.264	.164	.343
	Q3SuccessHowGood	.154	.217	.037	.049	.168	.139	.122	.084	.167	.121	.285	.202	.150	.248
	rQ10StressedEasily	.195	-.101	.256	.381	.165	.105	.225	.210	.109	.125	.029	.033	.316	-.018
	Q26NotBothered	.195	-.068	.048	.170	.094	.048	.093	.130	.149	.158	.132	.097	.228	.064
	Q24UsuallyRelaxed	.120	-.017	.007	.073	.033	-.014	.166	.122	.138	.070	.140	.076	.196	.060
	Q14NotEasilyAnnoyed	.132	-.017	.008	.028	-.041	.018	.142	.149	.129	.086	.101	.114	.128	.035
	rQ37JumpBeforeThinking	.588	.266	.115	.116	.069	.150	.117	.239	.249	.207	.184	.236	.188	.146
	rQ20SnapDecisions	.210	.192	.030	.034	.100	.193	-.058	.124	-.002	.099	-.016	.012	.000	.072
	rQ19LastMinutePlans	.431	.344	.120	.154	.113	.200	.140	.248	.159	.206	.137	.218	.205	.198
	rQ39CarelessDecisions	1.000	.300	.156	.199	.088	.154	.290	.285	.299	.271	.245	.263	.329	.234
	Q1PlanAhead	.300	1.000	.022	-.025	.021	.001	.065	.135	.206	.079	.212	.353	.076	.321
	rQ27LetOthersDecide	.156	.022	1.000	.824	.211	.239	.283	.213	.125	.204	.116	.078	.187	.070
	rQ9LetOthersChoose	.199	-.025	.824	1.000	.253	.219	.292	.273	.179	.246	.137	.087	.260	.069
	rQ6BadThingsBadLuck	.088	.021	.211	.253	1.000	.354	.126	.103	.071	.135	.052	-.037	.167	.028
	rQ32PeopleBornLucky	.154	.001	.239	.219	.354	1.000	.165	.119	.109	.183	.090	.025	.109	.075
	rQ38NeverChallenge	.290	.065	.283	.292	.126	.165	1.000	.222	.196	.160	.222	.141	.317	.100
	rQ11DontFinishPlanned	.285	.135	.213	.273	.103	.119	.222	1.000	.426	.438	.301	.399	.401	.258
	Q28FinishDespiteProblems	.299	.206	.125	.179	.071	.109	.196	.426	1.000	.352	.482	.417	.390	.390
	rQ4DontFinish	.271	.079	.204	.246	.135	.183	.160	.438	.352	1.000	.282	.201	.366	.251
	Q12DontQuitUntilFinish	.245	.212	.116	.137	.052	.090	.222	.301	.482	.282	1.000	.340	.341	.268
	Q21StickToPlans	.263	.353	.078	.087	-.037	.025	.141	.399	.417	.201	.340	1.000	.204	.358
	rQ7GiveUpEasily	.329	.076	.187	.260	.167	.109	.317	.401	.390	.366	.341	.204	1.000	.274
	Q22HardWorker	.234	.321	.070	.069	.028	.075	.100	.258	.390	.251	.268	.358	.274	1.000