DROP OUT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BRAZIL: AN EXERCISE IN PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

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This study explores the reasons why students drop out from a public secondary school in Brazil, paying particular attention to within-school reasons.

The theoretical point of view adopted in this research is that which considers that human nature is dialectical and education can be an instrument in the struggle to change reality. So, critical consciousness and 'resistance' must be mobilised through the pedagogical process and dialogue is one way of achieve them.

The study was undertaken with dropouts, continuing students, staff, teachers and parents from a secondary school in Florianópolis - SC - Brazil. Data about drop out were gathered through different techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, meetings and group discussions. The analysis of the data involved several meetings and group discussions with continuing students, teachers and staff, which emphasised the dialogue technique as a way of developing critical consciousness.

Participatory research, which comprises the research process (social investigation) with educational activities through actions designed to deal with a specific problem was the methodological approach adopted in this research. However, for reasons such as time constraints and temporary distance between the research's residence and the school, people's participation in the present research was limited to the period of 15 months in two spells of field work (1989 and 1991-92) and was most significant as an educational activity. Real action to transform reality did not occur although students critical consciousness started to increase.
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Educational reality has been presenting a paradox. While on the one hand people have placed a great value on education and the achievement of school certificates as a way of obtaining a good job and a higher socio-economic status, on the other hand, the statistics concerning people who drop out from school or who remain illiterate continue high, especially in developing countries. In Brazil, in 1986, there were more than 15 million illiterate people over 15 years old (Agenda CNPq, Nov. 1986). Of those who start school many of them drop out. Research undertaken by Brandão et al. (1982) showed that during the period of 1974/1978, from each 1000 students who started school, only 180 completed primary education, which comprises eight years of schooling.

The consequences of dropping out are related not only to educational but also to social and economic problems.

Educational research has shown a positive relationship between social class and marginalisation in education. In a general way, in a great number of school systems, the probability of lower class children completing compulsory schooling is only half that of middle class children and one-third that of upper class children (Hutmacher, 1978). Although the higher level of drop out is situated at the primary school level, high levels of drop out are also found at the secondary school or even tertiary levels.

In a study about the role played by school in early school-leaving, Wehlage and Rutter (1986: 377) recommended the need to undertake research which "can be constructive in reducing the chances that these students will drop out" and Callan (1988) recalls that there is a dearth of research on students' own accounts of what influences them to dropout. To Miller and Ferrel (1989) there is relatively little research that examined school conditions that contribute to or ameliorate the problem. Although these researchers were referring to the United States' reality, the same can be said about Brazil. In a classical study about dropout in Brazil, Brandão et al. (1982) recall that despite the considerable number of researches about dropout which have been undertaken, there is still a lack of practical studies which approach the problem from different perspectives and which lead to different solutions.

Two kinds of weaknesses can be pointed out in most of the researches carried out in education and social science in general: one is related to the theoretical framework and other is related to the role of social science and its methodological framework.

In relation to the theoretical framework, Giroux (1983a; 1983b) points out the need to study the questions of marginality and oppositional behaviour in school within a theory of resistance, to which he makes an important contribu-
For Giroux (1983b: 289-290), resistance theory points out a number of assumptions not taken into consideration in previous analyses, such as:

1 - a dialectical regard of human agency and consequently the consideration of both domination as a process neither static nor complete and the oppressed as active agencies;

2 - a deeper view of the way that power is exercised as a tool of both dominance and resistance;

3 - a manifest hope for radical transformation, "an element of transcendence that seems to be missing in radical theories..." (1983b: 290).

Freire (1970) agrees with Giroux when he states that human beings have repeatedly shown their capacity for transcending what is taken for granted. Actually, this is not the only common point between these two authors. Freire also agrees with Giroux that education can be an instrument in the struggle to change reality (Freire, 1970).

Although education can be considered a place for resistance and struggle against the status quo, educational research has been contributing little which has changed reality. This is regarded as a serious weakness, mainly by Marxist and Socialist educators.

The traditional methodological framework for social research is based on the positivist and functionalist model of science, which is based on the physical and natural sciences' emphasis on scientific rigour, objectivity and neutrality. This model has been criticised both for not having dealt with the central issues of social reality, such as social transformation, and for regarding the population studied as a passive object.

Many contemporary social scientists are concerned with the need for science to contribute to changing the social reality. To Lather we need a more emancipatory social science, which "allows us not only to understand the maldistribution of power and resources underlying our society but also to change that maldistribution to help create a more equal world" (1986: 258). However, this is not a recent preoccupation since Marx had already emphasised this in his Theses on Feuerbach

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however is to change it (Marx, in Marx and Engels, 1969: 286).

In recent decades there have been great efforts in the search for new methodological approaches which could surmount the weaknesses of the traditional research paradigm. Participatory research is one of the new approaches which has arisen. It is characterised by several assumptions such as:

1 - it integrates social investigation, educational work and action as part of the same process for changing reality;

2 - it tries to overcome the dichotomy between both theory and practice, and subject and object;

3 - it rejects the claim that science is neutral and defends the ideological
character of knowledge. In consequence it works with exploited or oppressed groups;
4 - it recognises both popular knowledge as a basis for scientific knowledge and people's capacity for producing knowledge and analysing it;
5 - its approach is problem-centred and should result in some benefits for the people involved;
6 - those who are researched participate in all or some phases of the research process.

In Latin America participatory research emerged from the work of Paulo Freire with oppressed people. In his work he developed a dialogic approach engaging people in critical analysis and organising actions to improve their reality (Freire, 1970).

Participatory research has commonly been undertaken with adult education students or with community development groups. No research undertaken with formal education students is known. In the present work formal education means the education realised within a traditional or conventional educational system which is institutionally-based and rigidly structured.

Considering that:
1 - dropout is a social, economic and educational problem;
2 - participatory research is a tool to study and solve problems;
3 - since the aims and assumptions of participatory research are practically the same as resistance theory and in Freire's theory, and that both of these theories are concerned with formal education, it was proposed to use a participatory research strategy in the study of dropout in Brazil.

Participatory research is characterised by involving the group being studied in the research process through their 'participation', which can take place at different levels such as: in all the research process; in the data gathering; from the educational activities which are intrinsic to participatory research; only on the return of information. It is a relatively recent approach so there is still a need to clarify a number of issues concerning who participates, what motivates that participation, how participation takes place, and so on. These questions are particularly true when participatory research is to be undertaken with a group that has never previously participated in research carried out using the participatory approach.

Although several studies have been carried out using participation or the participatory approach, many questions about how to promote meaningful participation remain. To reach this understanding Oakley and Marsden (1984: 90) suggest two major areas for further study:
1 - the organisation of documentation and the systematic study of the practice of participation, which can help the understanding of how to promote better participation;
2 - a major effort to tackle the difficult problem of monitoring and evaluating participation.

Although the suggestions of Oakley and Marsden are concerned with rural
development projects, we can consider them valid also either in a broader sense or in a very specific situation with a particular group. So, in the present research it was proposed to study questions about participation through participatory research about dropout. More specifically the attempt will be made to clarify questions about participation in a context of formal education, such as:

1 - Who are the participants?
2 - What motivates people to participate or not?
3 - How does participation take place?
4 - How can the scope of resistance and change existing in school be increased through participatory research?
5 - What are the sociological and educational implications of participation?

The study was carried out with students in a secondary school in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. Secondary school in Brazil comprises the ninth to eleventh grades and students are between 15 and 18 years old. In spite of the rate of drop-out being greater at the primary school level (Brandão et al., 1982), it was decided to work with secondary school students because it was supposed that it would be easier to obtain students’ participation at this level than at the primary school level.

The school to work with was chosen from those which had both a high rate of drop-out and where teachers were more committed to addressing the school’s problems. It was my intention to work with students who had dropped out from the school in different academic years, since the experiences and points of view of the latest drop-outs may differ from those who dropped out some years ago. However, time constraints limited this aim. Apart from the drop-outs, continuing students, staff, teachers and parents were also involved in the study, since they could also help in the understanding of the dropout question. However, only continuing students and school staff participated in meetings and group discussions. Due to time constraints, participation was limited to the period of field work and was most significant as an educational act.

Data about drop out questions were gathered through different techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, meetings and group discussions where the dialogue technique was used. The analysis of the data involved several meetings and group discussions which emphasised dialogue and consciousness with the researched group.

Being a case study, I do not intend to generalise the conclusions concerned about both drop out and participation to other schools either in Santa Catarina State or Brazil. Yet, I truly suspect that the reality studied does not differ too much from that in most of the other schools.

The theoretical contribution of the present work is concerned with the sociological and educational areas.

Chapter Contents
Chapter 1 focuses on the educational questions. Section 1.1 spotlights the questions about dropout. Since it is a worldwide problem, it presents the
results of studies undertaken both in Brazil and other places. According to LuZkacs (1969) one should insert the phenomenon studied in a wider context and according to Giroux (1981), schools must be seen in their historical and relational contexts. So, I completed the theoretical background with historical information about Brazilian reality. I tried, in this way, to provide a better understanding of the situation of and within the school (the present and particular situation) within an historical context (wider context). The reasons for and possibilities of overcoming school problems are seen in different ways, according to different theories. So, section 1.3 presents some fundamentals of reproduction and resistance theories, emphasising the latter one and within it the work of Freire and Gramsci.

Chapter 2 presents the shortcomings and limitations of traditional social science methods and outlines the fundamentals of two new methodological approaches: action research and participatory research. The central ideas and concepts with the theoretical underpinnings of participatory research are presented in this chapter.

As participation is a fundamental factor in participatory research, Chapter 3 is dedicated to it. Due to the lack of theoretical information about the question of participation in the literature about participatory research, the literature review about this theme is based mainly on the literature about adult education and decision-making for development projects.

Chapter 4 focuses on methodology, describing the problem identification, the process of choosing the school, the school itself and participants and the research methods employed for data gathering. The difficulties and limitations experienced during the field work are outlined.

Reasons for dropping out are located outside and inside the school. So, the presentation and analysis of data - Chapter 5 - are divided into exogenous (outside) and endogenous (inside) reasons. While within the exogenous group of reasons only one factor tended to be mentioned, within the endogenous group, several factors were mentioned in most of the cases.

Outside school reasons, which included economic and domestic and personal factors, were the most frequently mentioned factors for leaving school early. Of the 172 dropouts interviewed, 116 (67% of all) mentioned outside school factors as the main reason for dropping out. From these, 69 (40% of all) mentioned economic factors. Among those who left school because of economic factors, 70% mentioned employment as the main cause. The other 30% were also directly related to the fact of either getting a job or keeping it. The long and huge economic crisis in Brazil seems to be the main cause why secondary school students chose between a job and a school certificate.

Problems in the family were the most frequently mentioned non-economic exogenous reason for dropping out. However, in most of the cases these reasons were at least indirectly associated with economic reasons such as illness caused either by the hard working conditions or by the bad nutrition endured by the lower classes.
Among the endogenous group of reasons, teacher-related factors were by far the most frequently mentioned. Among these, the most frequently mentioned by both dropouts and continuing students was the kind of relationships existing between teachers and students. The second most cited endogenous or school-related reason for dropping out was the teaching style. Disruptive effect caused by the lack of classes either because of teacher failure to turn up or because of teachers' strike, was also mentioned as one of the most significant contributors for increasing the dropout rate.

Chapter 6 presents the results concerning exogenous reasons, which comprises economic and domestic and personal reasons and Chapter 7 highlights the endogenous or within-school reasons. Although economic-related were the main reasons for dropping out, the data analysis focuses on the within-school ones as the main aim of the study was to try to change them. As participation was the tool used for trying to change within school reasons for dropping out, Chapter 8 is dedicated to interpreting the students' and teachers' participation in the research.

Finally, Chapter 9 outlines the findings of the present research and presents some suggestions for improving the school situation as well as for further research.

Due to some constraints such as the limited time available for the study and the location of the research school, people's participation was limited to the period of field work and was most significant as an educational activity for developing in the individuals a critical view of the society and the awareness of their capacity to change the school. Real action to transform reality did not occur, or at least not in the dimensions that were expected. However, a more critical and reflexive attitude on the part of some students started to be developed. Some of them started to behave differently, being more critical and less submissive. They started to see school problems as a materialisation of the historic and social reality. They also started to regard themselves as individuals rather than as a 'class' or a 'group' and began to be more confident in struggling for their rights in school. They also realised that collective effort was more profitable than individual struggle. However, due to several constraints, the influence was not enough to generate lasting and productive results.

Students, in general, were more willing to participate than teachers and the most interested students were those who were already participating in other social or political movements outside the school.
PART I - LITERATURE REVIEW
1 - EDUCATION

1.1 - Dropout Questions

A great deal of educational literature is concerned with the inadequacies of the educational system at all levels. Dropout is commonly regarded as both a paramount indicator of this inadequacy and the major educational, social and economic problem. High levels of dropout have been observed not only in developing countries (Brandão et al., 1982; Agenda CNPq, 1986) but in developed countries too (Faure et al. 1972; McDill et al. 1986; Wagenaar, 1987). Because of their special socio-economic conditions, the rate in the former countries tends to be higher than in the latter ones.

Several authors (Elliott and Voss, 1974; Hammack, 1986; Mann, 1986; Marrow, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987) have pointed out the existence of different concepts of dropout and the consequent differences in the formulae used to calculate it. This makes comparative analysis difficult. These differences are not only between countries but can also be between districts, as observed by Barber and McLellan (1987) and since "The definition and calculation of dropouts rate is a highly political issue" (Wagenaar, 1987: 164) it is highly likely that this problem will persist.

In a study about America's dropouts, these researchers observed the existence of different definitions of dropout and presented three definitions from three different districts (Barber and McLellan, 1987: 267). Some of the definitions found out in the American literature about dropout are presented below in order to illustrate the existing differences:

Dropouts refers to students who have left the school and district system for one of the following reasons: (1) The student quits school after reaching the compulsory attendance age. (2) The student enlisted in the Armed Services. (3) The student dropped out of school and district system prior to reaching age 16 or completing the 10th grade (Barber and McLellan, 1987: 267).

(A) dropout is any person who has legally left school for reasons other than graduation, transfer to another school or comparable program, enrollment in the armed service, marriage, or illness (Barber and McLellan, 1987: 267).

(A) dropout is a pupil who leaves school, for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of the program of studies and without transferring to another school. ... Such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms, whether his dropping out occurs before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance age, and where applicable, whether or not he has completed a
minimum required amount of school work (Barber and McLellan, 1987: 267).

Dropouts refers to the proportion of students who enrol for course but withdraw before the examination test (Glatter and Wedell, cited by Naylor, 1986a: 71).

... a dropout is an individual whose natural progression toward graduation from high school has been interrupted (Strother, 1986: 326).

"Dropout" is ... someone who has not graduated from, or is not currently enrolled in, a full-time, state-approved education program (Rumberger, 1987: 105).

As one can see, although all the above definitions consider graduation and/or legal age to classify a student as a dropout, some differ in relation to the reason. For instance, the first definition considers as dropouts those who leave school to enlist in the Army while in the second one those persons are not considered as having dropped out. The phrase "before the examination test" in the penultimate definition is ambiguous since one can leave school before the examination but after reaching age 16. Transference is another issue not clearly established in all definitions although it might bring problems in dropout rate when not clearly considered.

Some of the Brazilian educational literature defines the 'dropout' as the student who had left school before the end of the academic year (Kafuri, 1985; Bruns, 1987). This definition has two main problems. First, since the educational legislation requires no more than 75% of class attendance, a student who has attended this amount of classes and has already obtained the minimum grade to pass can enrol himself in the subsequent grade in the following academic year. In this case, it is almost a nonsense consider him as a dropout. Another problem with this definition is the fact that it does not consider the possible return of the student to school. A student can leave school before the end of the academic year but return in the following and complete the course. In this case he had just a temporary withdrawal but had not dropped out of the course.

Another definition considers as dropouts those students who leave school before the end of the academic year or before the end of the course (Girardi, 1983). Although this definition might consider the return of those students who quit school temporarily it has a practical problem. Since, because of the lack of human resources, in many schools the student's file is not well organised or completed, it is difficult to take account of those students who return to school, specially when the return is not to in the same school as before.

Kafuri (1985) states that dropout is generally considered to be a 'detachment' from the school instead of the educational system. In his 8 years follow-up study he observed that in many cases what was considered as dropout was just the change of school for reasons such as: the attempt to find a better school,
parents' moving, temporary work, and so on. He also found out that death and temporary withdrawal because of illness were considered as dropout. So, he calls attention to the need to distinguish between definitive, temporary, and circumstantial withdrawal. In this case, the students' transference to another course and/or school must be carefully considered in any study about dropout. Although we totally agree with Kafuri in relation to the need to consider the transference of school/course, we are realistic about the difficulties in doing this in many of the Brazilian schools. With a shortage of school staff and with the teachers' overload of work, this aim is not easy to achieve.

The consequences of dropping out are related to individual (Steinberg et al., 1984), educational as well as social and economic problems (Elliott and Voss, 1974; Rubenbauer, 1983, 1987; Steinberg et al., 1984; McDill et al., 1985; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Larsen and Shertzer, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987; Bickel, 1988). Having prematurely truncated their education, which is considered one important mechanism for achieving a better place in the labour market, dropouts are considered to have severely limited their economic and social well-being throughout their adult life (Beck and Mula, 1980; Rumberger, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987). Because of their limited training, dropouts experience higher unemployment rates and their lifetime earnings are considerably lower. They also increase the expenditure for government on both crime-related and training programmes (Steinberg et al. 1984).

Levin (in Rumberger, 1987) pointed out a series of social consequences related to dropouts' lack of adequate education. According to him, forgone income and revenue are frequently cited as social consequences. The lack of occupation frequently leads dropouts to marginalisation, including crime, and increases their demand for social services. The lack of schooling reduces their political participation and intergenerational mobility. Their low income generates poor living conditions and poorer levels of health.

The increase in the population on the one hand and technological improvements on the other, increase job competition and make job research difficult for nearly everyone. The constant advances in technology increase the level of automation and eliminates many low-skilled workers. Sherraden (1986) calls attention to the fact that the demand for young labour is declining in many sectors and it is predicted that it will become worst in the years ahead. Bickel (1988) reminds us that even in the least technically demanding job often there is a series of credential requirements. As dropouts are judged to be lacking the basic educational and technical skills, they have difficulties in getting a job even in the least demanding kind of work and according to Rumberger (1987) many dropouts find it difficult to secure steady employment and an adequate income.

Although most of dropout literature points out a relationship between dropout and difficulties concerning future employment, some authors have a different point of view. For Bickel (1988) the low difference in prospects between dropouts and those who have completed high school are more a consequence of the high rate of unemployment rather than a diploma.

Mayal (1986b) call attention to the psychological aspect of dropping out. To him, a student dropout from school means not only an educational but also a
psychological failure and means that that person has begun to lose faith in himself.

To sum up, we can quote Steinberg et al.:

It is well documented that dropping out of high school is associated with an array of individual and social costs. For the individual, failure to complete high school is associated with limited occupational and economic prospects, disenfranchisement from society and its institutions, and substantial loss of personal income over his or her lifetime. For society, premature school-leaving is associated with increased expenditure for government assistance to individuals and families, higher rates of crime, and maintenance of costly programs for purposes such as employment and training (Steinberg et al. 1984: 126).

Rumberger (1987) very well reminds us that the consequences are not the same for all social classes. Although he mentioned only the economic consequences, we can generalise the conclusion, including the other factors such as social services, crime, health, etc., because although these factors may have a relative independence, they are also related to the economic situation.

Dropping out from high school has been seen as a serious personal, social and educational problem not only in Third World countries but also in the First World (Faure et al., 1972). Although the dropout rate can vary between countries or within a country, there are several similarities in all the statistics. Dropout rates are higher for members of racial, ethnic, and language minorities, for men and for those with lower socio-economic status.

Several authors (Beck and Muia, 1980; Rumberger, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987) state that reducing dropout rate benefits society since school helps to prepare for the adult role. In this case, secondary school has a fundamental role in teaching skills for the work force. Levin (apud Wagenaar, 1987) states that the social costs attributable to dropping out problems far exceed the estimated cost of programs to keep students in school.

The negative status of being a dropout is neither expected nor planned by the students and usually the decision to leave school early is based more on the interaction of different factors—personal, social and structural—than in an individual and careful consideration of all options (Wagenaar, 1987).

Dropouts have reported a number of different reasons for leaving school early and generally they occur in combination (Beck and Muia, 1980; Sherraden, 1986; Larsen and Shertzer, 1987; Rowley, 1989). These reasons can be different for different social groups and according to Wagenaar (1987) certain reasons such as work for males, and family for females, can, sometimes, be more related to the desire to achieve the adult role or status and leave the subservient student role in which most high school place them, than the reason pointed out.

Hewitt and Johnson (apud Wagenaar, 1987) recalled that the reasons pointed out
reflect the demands of the dropouts' own lives and the larger social context. So, emphasis on economic or school related reasons can vary over time. For Natirello et al. (1986) such changes may also reflect changing orientations toward completing high school as well as changes in life experiences. Based on these facts, Wagenaar (1987) suggests the need for more extensive research on the variety of stated and unstated reasons.

The decision to leave school early does not occur in isolation (Sherraden, 1986; Rowley, 1989) and it is rarely made impulsively (Beck and Mui\textsuperscript{a}, 1980). Generally it starts early and increases each successive year, following several steps: first, dropouts lose interest in their school work and consequently lower their grades. Without interest they begin to play truant lowering even more their grades. Finally, they withdraw from school (Beck and Mui\textsuperscript{a}, 1980; Larsen and Shertzzer, 1987). Unfortunately, many dropouts believed that they did not belong in school and that it would not help to talk to anyone in school about their problems/feelings (Mahan and Johnson, in Larsen and Shertzer, 1987).

To understand any social problem it is necessary to know its magnitude. Although this is a basic question in understanding the nature of the problem, it is also one of the most difficult. Statistics are not always accurate and so present several problems (Finn, 1987; Hahn, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987). For instance, Rumberger (1987) presented two different U.S. national dropout rates for the same period and pointed out that these two statistics were so different because they were designed to answer different questions about dropout.

A comparison between countries or regions and/or schools in one country is not simple or easy. That is because there is no consensus definition about dropout nor a standard method for computing dropout rate. Considering these constraints, rather than make a comparison between the situation in Brazil and other countries, a general literature about dropout is going to be presented, followed by the Brazilian one.

A large body of empirical research has identified a wide range of factors that are associated with dropping out. The factors can be grouped into several major categories: economic, demographic, family-related, individual, school-related, and peer-group related. Within each of these categories there can be a large number of specific factors.

The literature presents a close relationship between low socio-economic status and high rate of dropout. Many studies revealed that students left school early because of financial difficulties (McDill et al., 1985, 1986; Fine, 1986; Hammack, 1986; Finn, 1987; Hahn, 1987; Rumberger, 1983, 1987; Tidwell, 1988; among others). Most of these students wanted to or felt they had to work to help out their families. However, Wehlage and Rutter (1986) pointed out that it is not clear to what extend getting a job is initially seen as a desirable or necessary alternative. Quay and Allen (apud Wagenaar, 1987) observed that financial need itself seemed not to be a major factor in the decision to leave school early. For him, the status of having a job and its link with adult role seems to influence more than financial problems.
Statistics show a higher rate of dropout for members of racial and ethnic minorities. The higher rate for minorities may reflect the discrimination existing against these groups. Such discrimination may occur within the school at both the institutional and individual levels. Studies have shown that many teachers have lower expectations for minority groups students. This includes a lowering of standards for academic performance and for promotion to the next grade. At the institutional level school may impose different standards of behaviour and be more inclined to push out minorities than whites (Fine, 1986). They may also dropout as a consequence of a perceived future discrimination in the work force. Knowing their 'objective conditions' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) they may conclude that a high school diploma will not modify their chances.

Higher dropout rates for minorities are also associated with social class background. In a general way, family background influences the possibility of dropping out for members of all race and sex groups. Although the research literature in general revealed that members of racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to drop out of school than white, Sherraden (1986) states that this fact is not explained by race, but rather by income. In the same way, students from lower social origins are much more likely to drop out than students from the higher social origins (Beck and Muia, 1980; Rumberger, 1983; 1987; Nayal, 1986b).

Numerous studies have pointed out that low educational and occupational attainment levels of parents, low family income, and absence of learning materials in the home are strongly related to high levels of dropout (Rumberger, 1983; Steinberg et al., 1984). Parents' level of education seemed to influence their children's educational aspirations.

Several explanations were pointed out for this relationship but none are convincing to the exclusion of the others. More highly educated parents might simply serve as better role models, influencing their children's aspiration for more schooling. They may also spend more time with their children and hold higher expectations for them, increasing their academic ability and aspirations. More highly educated parents generally have a higher income and live in wealthier communities with better financed schools. So, their children are more likely to have more supportive and rewarding educational experiences, while, according to Rumberger (1983) the lower classes have fewer study aids such as books and newspapers and fewer opportunities for school-related learning. For him, this was the key family background predictor. On the other hand, lower class students feel difficulty in accommodating to school and middle class teachers' values. Teachers' difficulties in accepting students' lower class values might increase the problem even more. The widespread differences in dropout rates among different races, particularly between whites and minorities, can be explained mostly by differences in family background which bring differences in values and attitudes (Rumberger, 1983).

Gender has much to do with the decision of leave school early and reflects traditional sex role stereotyping. Males' reasons are more related to work while females' reasons are more related to family considerations (Rumberger, 1983). Males are somewhat more likely to drop out than females (Strother,
The associations between dropping out and early marriage and childbirth are also associated with gender. Having children at a young age affects the likelihood of a young woman finishing high school much more than a young man, even if she has a child some time after dropping out (Beck and Muia, 1980; Rumberger, 1983, 1987; McDill et al., 1986; Sherraden, 1986; Wehlage et al., 1986; Larsen and Shertzer, 1987).

Although family problems, pregnancy and marriage or marital plans are the most important reasons for dropping out (Rumberger, 1983; Finn, 1987; Hahn, 1987; Larsen and Shertzer, 1987; Tidwell, 1988), the quality of relationship within the family and the kind of interest and expectations the parents have of their children are factors which have a great influence on students' decisions to remain or abandon school (Beck and Muia, 1980; Nayal, 1986b; Wagnaar, 1987; Rowley, 1989). A lack of home security and a lack of understanding of conflicts which put the students into trouble have negative influences in students' academic performance and affect their decision to leave school early. Nayal (1986b) observed that researchers showed that persisters seem to get more parental advice, praise and expressed interest in their school experience.

Family structure is another factor frequently linked with high dropout rate. Children from a single-parent family are more likely to drop out than the child of two parents (Natriello et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1987). This relationship can be caused by either economic or psychological factors if not both. The lack of natural parents was pointed out (Rumberger, 1983) as a psychological factor which influenced dropout. Family size was also related to dropout. Children from larger families are more likely to leave school early (Rumberger, 1983). Although economic factors or social class are strongly related to family size, psychological reasons might also have some effects in the case of the child from a large family.

Servants and Husted (in Beck and Muia, 1980) reported that the dropout family is less solid and less influenced by a father-figure, less likely to participate in leisure activities and less able to communicate. Consequently their children are more insecure and feel difficulty in trusting. As the parents of dropouts generally have indifferent or negative attitudes towards school, their children develop feelings of hostility, resentment and confusion towards both parents and school.

Speaking a language other than that spoken in school has proven to be a strong factor leading to dropout (Tinto, 1975; Rumberger, 1987). Geographical location of residence and local employment conditions have also been pointed out as reasons for dropping out (Rumberger, 1983).

Psychological factors have been related to the causes for dropping out. Several studies (Beck and Muia, 1980; Rumberger, 1983; Steinberg et al., 1984; Eckstrom et al., 1986; Nayal, 1986b; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986, Finn, 1987; Rowley, 1989) observed that dropouts' self-concept strongly contributed to their decision to leave school early. These studies detected in dropouts feelings of alienation, powerlessness, low self-esteem, little desire for self-growth, a low sense of control over their life, an inability to set and
pursue goals, lack of commitment to social values, a lack of personal responsibility and low educational and occupational aspirations. According to Tidwell (1988) these feeling may be reinforced by the fact that dropouts are often judged negatively by others as well as by themselves.

Eckstrom et al. (1986) found that dropouts have different basic life values. They are more likely to emphasise the autonomy that money can bring to oneself and physical distance from their family of origin rather than steady work, strong friendship and family relationship. They also found that dropouts are less interested in school, are less satisfied with their educational experiences, acknowledged to be less popular and less important in the eyes of others. According to Beck and Muia (1980) these feeling generally are consequences of their perception of having suffered injustice. He also observed that many of these dropouts released their frustration and hostility through delinquent behaviour which frequently led to promiscuity and pregnancy.

Girardi (1988) states that psychologists and sociologists of a psychoanalytical tendency believe that the essence of the adolescence period is the conflict that adolescents experience towards their parents or other authorities. For Erickson (apud Girardi, 1988) adolescence is a period of life where there are huge psychological changes which generate one's own struggle in order to find her/himself and according to Hall (apud Girardi, 1988) the adolescence period is characterised mainly by strain and anguish. Hence, and considering that students in high school, or secondary school as is called in Brazil, are in their 'teen' years, dropout behaviour and the decision to leave school early can be related to the difficulties they experience in this period of their lives.

Drug and alcohol abuse were also mentioned as influencing students' decisions to leave school (Sherraden, 1986). However, these two problems should be seen more as a consequence of other problems than a problem by itself.

The influence of the peer group was also mentioned as influencing the decision to leave school. According to Rumberger (1987), friends' educational aspirations and expectations can be related to the decision to leave school early. This can be aggravated by the fact that dropouts generally make friends with others like themselves, since they are more likely to understand their problems and share their concerns (Beck and Muia, 1980; Fine, 1986). For Eckstrom et al. (1986), dropouts tend to select friends among those who are alienated from school. These are less likely to attend class regularly, are less popular, have lower grades and show less interest in school. They also found out that dropouts are more likely to be engaged in recreational activities outside school, such as driving around and going on dates. However, according to Rumberger (1987) it is not clear to what extent and in what way peers really can influence. He also comments that this category has not received much attention in dropout studies although it is a category which has been considered in other educational areas.

If, on the one hand, some companionship can influence the decision about dropping out, on the other hand, according to Larsen and Shertzer (1987), the lack of friends or social relationships in school can also affect the deci-
School-related factors are more frequently pointed out as the main reason for dropping out (Mann, 1986; McDill et al., 1985, 1986; Svec, 1986; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Finn, 1987; Rumberger, 1983, 1987; Wagenaar, 1987). In research about high school dropouts, Rumberger (1983) observed that over half of the reasons given by males and one third of those given by females were school-related. For Wehlage and Rutter (1986) school-related factors have received considerable attention because many of them can be manipulated through practice and policy, although in Fine's (1986) opinion, little attention has been given to the influence of the school itself and its teachers. However, according to Finn, (1987) being school-related does not mean that they are school-caused. They may have their origins in the individual, their family or their socio-economic condition.

The literature about dropout has revealed that low academic achievement, as measured by grades and test scores, is strongly associated with dropout (McDill et al., 1986; Finn, 1987; Hahn, 1987; Rumberger, 1983, 1987). Various studies have shown that low grades and having being kept down influences students' decisions to leave school. The fact that students are held back brings a feeling of inadequacy and low self-esteem and upsets them because they are separated from their mates during the school activities (Beck and Muia, 1980; Hahn, 1987). According to Elliot and Voss (1974), dropouts tend to attribute school problems to their own inabilitys and see no advantages in remaining in school.

Although the grades of potential dropouts are in a general way substantially lower than those of stayers, Wagenaar (1987) summarises several studies which show that many dropouts have the ability to have a better academic achievement or passing work. So, the decision of dropping out may be more strongly related to academic performance than to ability.

Poor school facilities and inadequate teaching staff are conditions that can affect teachers' and students' performance and influence students' decisions about dropping out (Fine, 1986). Poor school conditions and teaching style strongly influence students' feelings about school. Dislike of school was frequently pointed out as a reason for having dropped out (McDill et al., 1986; Hahn, 1987) and this can be related to the conditions observed by Tidwell (1988): crowded classroom and boring and uncaring teachers. Cervantes (cited by Whiteside and Merriman, 1976), observed that two out of three dropouts interviewed declared that they had never perceived their teachers as being their friends and a third of these school leavers insisted that none of their teachers had been supportive or concerned. Pangrota (1986) and Bickel (1988) observed that many dropouts criticised the schooling and the teacher style and had a negative view of the relationship between schooling and the labour market and Hunt and Clawson (1975) observed that the school curriculum was accused of being too academic. School values must also be considered as a reason for students' dropping out (Larsen and Shertzer, 1987). Lower class students are not accustomed to the school's middle class values and have some difficulties in conforming to them. This difficulty can influence some students to drop out.
Teacher motivation has a positive and significant association with student performance (Brandão et al., 1992). Students revealed that both teacher methodology and teacher interest in their subject had a considerable influence on their performance (Fine, 1986; Girardi, 1987). A study carried out by Wehlage and Rutter (1986) in a high school revealed that most students considered teachers as not particularly interested in students. Students also considered the discipline system to be neither effective nor fair. According to the authors, these factors contributed to widespread truancy and the consequent decision to abandon school.

Poor performance is considered an important reason for dropping out. Researches on academic performance have revealed that teachers' expectations influenced students' performance. Students interpret teacher expectations (and prejudice) and may be influenced by them. Studies (Nash, apud Neighan, 1981; McDill, 1986; Girardi, 1987) have revealed that the way that people were perceived by their teachers had a great influence upon their attainment. Following the students' progress, Nash concluded that their behaviour varied according to their teachers' expectations. When pupils were perceived favourably they did well and liked that teacher. When they were not perceived favourably, they did not do well and did not like being with that teacher. Teachers' expectations were shown to vary mainly with the class and race of the students.

Within-school related factors such as academic integration as well as social integration into the system of the school are closely related to individual performance and persistence (Tinto, 1975). To the extent that the school environment and values are those of the ruling class, it is natural that lower class students feel themselves less integrated and consequently decide to leave school early.

In short, dropouts have reported a number of different reasons for leaving school early and usually they occur in combination. The decision to leave school generally starts early and increases with time. These reasons can be different for different social groups and within these, for different gender and races. The factors pointed out by dropouts can be grouped into two major categories: 1 - exogenous or outside school, which comprises economic, individual and family-related reasons; 2 - endogenous or within-school reasons. While some researchers mentioned the exogenous reasons as the main ones, others found within school as the main factors for students leaving school early. As the results of any research can vary according to the population, data gathering techniques used and the dropout definition adopted, one cannot accept any result as definite.

Although the above related studies refer to school and places other than Brazil, the same situations and conclusions are likely to be found in Brazilian schools. However, as Brazilian schools have their own peculiarities, it is indispensable to know a little more about them.
1.2 - Education in Brazil

To understand the present Brazilian situation it is necessary to know a little about its socio-economic and political history. Some brief historical information regarding the evolution of the educational system may also provide essential insights for the full understanding of dropout and participation.

With 8.5 thousand square kilometres Brazil is one of the largest countries in the world. Its population is more than 144 million inhabitants which represents half of the population in South America and it is characterised by a large and growing number of young people who challenge both the educational and employment system. In 1988, the income per person was US$ 2,160 (UK equivalent US$ 12,010) yet the poorest 20% had 2.4% of household income (UK equivalent 5.8%) while the richest 20% had 62.6% (UK equivalent 39.5%). The big gap between these two groups is reflected in its infant mortality - 61 per 1,000 (UK: 9) and population per doctor - 1,080 (UK: 870), according to recent (1988) data presented by MacDonald (1991).

From the 1920s, when the modernisation process started, the Brazilian economy shifted from an agriculture-based economy to an industrial one. Industrial development provoked a massive and steady rural exodus, which has been so intense that while in 1950 70% of the population lived in the country, today 72% live in the cities. The industrial development and the consequent rural migration have accentuated the already existing urban problems. The number of people excluded from the formal labour market has increased drastically and has led to swollen shanty towns. The policy of very low wages and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a very few has accentuated the deep social contrasts. The average level of wages is among the lowest in the world. The official minimum wage until the beginning of 1990 was around US$ 40.00 a month and according to Gatti (1989), 9% of the population earns less than the minimum wage per month. On the other hand, there is a huge difference between the lowest and the highest wage. As pointed out by Arruda (1988), in 1985 the highest wage band for income tax purpose was "1,084 minimum wages upwards". However, only little more than 10% of the economically active population earned more than five times the minimum wage. So, in spite of being the eighth largest economy, more than 20% of the population live in miserable conditions. If on one hand the authorities recognise that the 'social debt' is big and needs to be addressed, on the other hand the possibility of expansion and improvement of the social services has been further reduced by the increasing turmoil in the Brazilian economy which is mainly due to the weight of foreign debt and the mismanagement of military and civil governments.

During its almost 500 years of history, Brazil has passed through a number of different periods. Based on Freitag's (1978) classification, we are going to divide Brazil's history into three distinct periods corresponding to three specific economic models.

The first period, which comprises the Colonial, Imperial and First Republic Periods (1500-1930), is characterised as agricultural and exporting. Economic activity was concentrated in the primary sector. As a colony of Portugal, Brazil had a dependent economy, whose major function was to provide raw materials for the metropolis. Brazilian society during the colonial period was
dominated at the international level by the metropolis, and within the country, by ‘donos de engenho’ (sugar-mill planters) who held the economic and political power. Brazilian society was highly structured and up to May 1888 most of the work force were slaves. The Church, through its role in education, helped the ruling class to guarantee the relations of production and the dominant ideology. In this way, it also guaranteed its power in both civil and political society. Education was available for only a small minority belonging to the higher classes that formed the rural oligarchy. In fact, towards the end of this period, nearly 85% of the free population was illiterate and nearly all slaves were illiterate too. The State was not responsible for education and most of the schools were under the administration of the ‘Jesuits’ – a Catholic Priest’s Congregation. The school system was characterised as a dual system: one for the elite and other for the ‘savages’ and lower classes. In fact, during the colonial period, Jesuit schools carried out a great role in domesticate and pacifying native Indians for working in the Portuguese plantations as cheap labour.

During the Empire (1808-1899) and First Republic (1899-1930) the social structure remained almost the same. However, some changes can be pointed out. With the banishment of the Jesuits from Brazil, the Church lost much of its power. The immigrants’ labour replaced the slaves’ labour and exercised some pressure towards the expansion of the education. With the transference of the Royal Family from Portugal to Brazil (1808), the state’s educational policy started with the organisation of military schools, technical schools and academies. A few higher schools were established in the biggest urban centres such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Salvador and Porto Alegre. These schools attended to the pressure on the part of the lower upper and middle classes that could not afford to send their children to Europe for higher education. By the early twentieth century primary and secondary vocational schools had expanded, mainly in the south, where the European immigrants’ work force settled. Academic secondary school and higher education were restricted to the elite. Schools were copies of European ones, and so, the curriculum reflected the needs of the elite rather than the Brazilian reality.

After the World War I Brazil intensified its financial and commercial business with United States to the detriment of its previous relations with Britain. With the economic influences imposed by the United States came also cultural and educational changes. As a consequence the New School Movement, based on Dewey and Kilpatrick started in Brazil (Guirardelli Jr., 1990).

The second period (1930-early 1960s) was characterised by the substitution of imports and can be subdivided into two phases. The first, comprises the period from 1930 to 1945. This period was economically characterised by the decline of the rural (mainly the coffee planters) oligarchy due to the agricultural super-production and by the rising of an industrial sector and its urban-industrial bourgeoisie. The industrialisation impelled the urbanisation. Labour legislation for the urban areas was created, providing, to the urban workers, a higher salary and a better standard of living than workers in the countryside. Rural-urban migration was motivated mainly by the difference in salaries between the city and the countryside. The rise of large urban masses inspired populism as a political model. The increased urbanisation promoted
also an overall re-structuring of state power in both political and civil society, helped by the 'Estado Novo' (New State) established, in 1934, by Vargas's dictatorial style.

For the very first time in Brazilian history, in 1930 was established the Education and Health Ministry. This was followed by the establishment of the first Brazilian universities, organised by the union of a series of isolated institutions. By law, primary school (four grades) was to be 'compulsory' and 'free of charge'.

As the middle class had adopted the upper class prejudice against manual labour, the 1937 new Constitution (Art. 129) solved this problem creating technical-vocational schooling for the 'less favoured' classes and established the obligation of industries and unions to create vocational schools, in its own sector, for the children of its workers and members. This obligation influenced the organisation of SENAI - Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (National Service of Industrial Training) set up in 1942 and SENAC - Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (National Service of Commercial Training) founded in 1946, both of them supported by industry and commerce. In this way, the attempt was made to ensure the adequately trained working force required by the new economic model.

For political reasons the State started to control the educational system, and the Church began to have less influence on it. However, according to Davico (1982), in 1949 only a third of the children from 7 to 9 years old were enrolled in school. Vargas also used his centralised school system as a means of developing national sentiments. All instruction should be given in Portuguese as a way of accelerating the 'Brazilianization' of European immigrants and their descendants (Rasche, 1979).

The educational system of the 'Estado Novo', remains as a dual system with two kinds of middle schooling: one academic for the elite and the ascending new bourgeoisie, and one technical-vocational for the working class. In this way, the state not only used the educational system as a political tool to manipulate the lower classes, but also assured the new kind of working force and conditions for a better working productivity.

In 1945 Vargas was deposed by the military. A new period, called 'populist democracy' started and lasted till 1964.

The second phase in the substitution of importations' period (1945-early 1960s) was characterised by the acceleration and diversification of this process through foreign money (loans and investments). However, economic growth did not bring better social participation in the profits from technological progress. On the contrary, workers had their salaries cut down due to a policy of restraint which aimed both to expand capitalisation and to tackle increasing inflation. On the other hand, one third of the total income was concentrated on the hands of 5% of the population. According to Cardoso (1975) this was possibly due to a repressive state's policy which prevented people's participation through unions or popular movements. People were excluded from political decisions which were taken by military and technical
bureaucrats, helped by enterprise groups. The lack of articulation of forces and interests between different classes contributed to the disintegration of Brazilian society. This situation, plus the fact that the alliance that sustained the populist government reached its limits, led to the 1964 crisis.

The difference of interest between classes was also felt in the educational field. The 1946 Constitution stated the need for a new law and direction for schooling in Brazil. Although a bill was introduced to the Deputies Chamber in 1948, the definitive law (LDB) was approved only in 1961, 13 years later, and not without reflecting the conflicts and contradictions existing within the society.

During the passage of the law, two groups with distinct interests lobbied in defence of the school. The group which defended the official or public school launched, in 1959 the 'Manifesto dos Educadores' (Educators' Manifesto) and in 1961, the same group launched a national campaign in favour of the state sector. Trying to attend the interests of both groups, the law did not satisfy either.

After so many years of discussions and reformulations, when the new educational law (LDB) was approved, in 1961, it was already out of date, especially when it is appreciated that it started to be implemented, in schools, only at the beginning of the 1970s decade (Freitag, 1978). Still, according to Freitag, at the end of 1961, it was already possible to foresee a new tendency in the economy, which would motivate changes in the organisation of power at the political level and, certainly, would lead to a reformulation in educational policy, aiming to reach civil society.

Although with some populist elements such as abolition of the dual system and the extension of primary schooling from 4 to 8 grades (7-14 years), the new law could be characterised as elitist due to its protection of the private sector through financial and technical help. Despite the 'compulsoriness', 'gratuitousness' and the 'obligation' to be offered by official sector, public schools were not able to absorb all enrolments at the primary school level. Apart from this, most of the public schools had a lower level of quality. Hence, the search for a private primary school remained, mainly among the higher and middle classes.

With free, compulsory primary school provision, the private sector transferred its concentration to academic secondary schools (9-11 grades), to 'supplementary' and to a higher education. Although this sector was receiving financial help through student grants, students who could not afford to pay the fees and/or part of the educational costs could not proceed with their studies.

Although LDB stated that 'education is a right and duty of everybody' (Art. 2) and the 8 grades of compulsory schooling was a goal intended to be reached only in 1980, its impracticability was already known at the time it was planned. In 1964, only two-thirds of children in 7-14 years age group were in a school. From 5 million children not yet schooled, 3.3 million had never been to school. From 1,000 students enrolled in the 1st grade in 1960, only 466 reached the 2nd grade, 239 the 4th grade, 132 the 1st grade of Gymnasium
(corresponding to the 5th grade) and only 56 started the University in 1973. In 1972 there was still a lack of schools for 4.4 million of children in the 7-14 years age group (Freitag, 1978). Apart from the lack of schools, many children were not at school because of several within-school difficulties such as inadequate curriculum, teachers' poor qualifications and lack of resources. Distances between school and home, lack of transport, lack of minimal financial resources for transportation and/or clothes, the need to work to help family income, bad nutrition, late starting, etc., were also causes for not being in school (Freitag, 1978; Davico, 1982).

Traditionally Brazil has been politically conservative. Socialist and Marxist ideas are relatively recent. Although the first socialist ideas were introduced in Brazil by the European immigrants by the end of the last century, only in the inter-war period did these ideas reach a small group of the middle class. After the second world war and more specifically in 1945, with the overthrown of Vargas' dictatorship, Marxist ideas started to be adopted by some universities and studies of Brazilian society from this perspective started to be published by São Paulo University. The Communist Party was founded, supported not only by the working class but also by some of the middle class and intellectuals. The Communist Party offered, through its committees, courses for children and adults. Although the Communists did not see education as the key for the solution of Brazilian's problems, they believed that an effective democracy could not happen without the eradication of illiteracy and the raising of the standard of the people's culture (Guirardelli Jr., 1990). Although the legalisation of Communist Party lasted only 2 years, its ideas and activities influenced many movements and contributed to Brazilian democratisation.

In the early 1960s Brazil was governed by a populist president with a nationalist orientation. In this period, some left-wing intellectuals were in a high position in the government and Marxist ideas started to spread. At the same time the 'Movimento Educacional de Base' - MEB (Basic Education Movement), organised by the progressivist sector of the Catholic Church and financed by the government, launched a programme to eradicate illiteracy. This programme was based on Paulo Freire’s methods. According to Freire (1970; 1972; 1974), education is not a neutral process. It can be either an instrument of conformity or an act of creation and re-creation, where the learners develop a consciousness about their reality and the way to transform it.

The 'Movimento de Cultura Popular' - MCP (Popular Cultural Movement), also supported by the Catholic Church, was very important in the political formation of the masses as well as the formation of a national culture. The MEB and MCP movements, together with the Popular Cultural Centres, were strongly supported by students, mainly from the universities.

The above mentioned movements helped to strengthen the power of ordinary people. People were campaigning for a solution to their problems and the left wing sector was agitating for fundamental reforms such as financial, monetary, agrarian, educational, etc., with the aim of democratising the profits from the development process (Guirardelli Jr., 1990). The possibility of a socialist or a popular democracy frightened the bourgeoisie, and provoked the
1964 coup d'état as 'necessary to ensure development and national security'.

The third period (1964 upward) was characterised, in the economic field, by wealth concentration and exportation and in the political field, by a dictatorship that lasted for nearly 25 years.

The economic characteristics of this period were mainly a consequence of the large investment by multinational companies, through the setting up of their branches in Brazil. These industries adopted a high technology, which increased productivity but at the same time required only a small number of workers. The surplus in the work force allowed wages to be kept very low, and contributed to wealth concentration.

The need to pay royalties for imported technology and profit transference, helped to increase the external debt, already huge due to loans. This increased the dissatisfaction of the group which defended the nationalisation of the Brazilian industry. With the policy of income concentration, buying power was also concentrated in the hands of a few. On the other hand, the aim of expanding the internal market collided with the policy of keeping wages frozen. In order to solve this paradox, a new wage policy was set up, which froze the wages of the lower class workers but preserved an intermediate class with high incomes, so capable of consuming the products manufactured. Consequently, it became also necessary to control the political movements of the workers and masses who were demanding for a share of the market (Freitag, 1978).

The new economic situation needed a reorganisation in political and civil society. The nationalist-developmental ideology was replaced by the ideology of 'development with safety'.

Uneasy with people's dissatisfaction and worried by the students' and intellectuals' threats to the present political system, the new government formulated, in 1964, the law 4.464, which dismantled the UNE - National Students Union.

In 1968, a law (Lei 5.540) reorganised the University system. This had been preceded by a study organised by a commission comprised of five Americans and two Brazilians. Based on the existing agreement between NEC (Education and Culture Ministry) and USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the university was designed to apply the three basic rules of business: efficiency, productivity and rationality.

The ideology of democratisation spread before 1964 motivated, in the lower and middle classes, the desire for social advancement and educational aspirations as a way of achieving it. However, the existing educational structure with its highly selective 'vestibular' - university entrance test - made the achievement of this possibility extremely difficult.

On the other hand, deprived of the economic tools for social change, the lower and middle classes greatly increased the pressure for a place in the higher education system between 1964 to 1968, the period when there was a high concentration of income and capital due to the economical policies adopted by the
new government. The demand for a higher education increased in such a way that the increasing number of enrolment places was not enough. This led to a 'crisis in the university'.

As observed by Foracchi (in Freitag, 1978) in some research undertaken with students in São Paulo, what really motivated them to their political activities was their class uncertainty. Unable to see the possibility of success and participation in the existing class structure, students became the ideological spokespersons of a struggle in favour of the oppressed. However, as soon as they managed to get into the labour market and were assured of both a promising career and a privileged place, they left the class struggle.

Even so, to the new political system, the students' dissatisfaction and their consequent political activities meant a national security threat. As a way to stop any threat, the government launched a Decree-law (477), which gave to the universities the power to expel students, teachers and staff involved in activities considered dangerous to national security. With this measure, the government managed to extinguished all manifestations of dissatisfaction. Another way to 'control' students was the introduction, at all three levels of schooling, of the subject Moral and Civic Education, through a Decree-law in 1969.

The private sector helped the government in the solution of the high demand for a university degree. As a way to solve the problem of an exceeding number in the 'vestibular' without expanding the official sector, the government authorised many private isolated institutes. Enrolments exploded from 150 thousand in 1965 to 1,350 thousand in 1980 (Schwartzman, 1988). However, according to Guirardelli Jr., the military dictatorship solved the problem of the democratisation of higher degree schooling, by allowing the organisation of courses "of dubious moral suitability" (Guirardelli Jr., 1990: 175).

Many of these institutions gave classes only in the evenings, and several of them were authorised to give 'weekend' and 'holidays' courses in order to attend to the needs of those who were working and who lived quite far from these institutions. In a general way, these courses were in the easier and/or cheapest areas of Social Science, such as Philosophy, Pedagogy, Language, History, etc. There is no need to say that many, if not most of the students who frequented these courses, were more interested in a diploma than in the content of the courses. Placing so many school leavers in the labour market, the private sector also had a key role in the formation of a 'reserve army' needed to keep salaries low and to help maintain income concentration.

While in the first and secondary school levels the best quality courses were generally offered by the private sector, at the university level it was the reverse (Schwartzman, 1988). The best courses were, and still are, offered by the official sector. With the official sector offering the better and the most expensive courses, and approving almost only those who could afford to pay for a 'good' (= private) primary and secondary school courses, an informal dual system was introduced. A better private primary and secondary school for the rich and a poor school for the deprived. A good and official (= free of fees) higher education for the well off and a poor and private (= payable) courses
for the dispossessed. However, in recent years, the middle class which always preferred the private sector has been forced to switch to public schools, because it can no longer afford to pay the fees (Ray, 1990).

As a consequence of its quality, with few exceptions, the official sector produced the human resources for the modern sectors of the expanding economy while the private sector attended the traditional courses.

As another way of reducing the increasing demand for a university degree and, at the same time, of guaranteeing a place in the labour market, the government launched, in 1972, a new educational law (Lei 5.692) which transformed all secondary school courses to vocational ones (Silva, 1990). However the bad quality of the most of these courses and the pressure for academic courses which could prepare for the 'vestibular' - university entrance test, led to a modification of this regulation. Since 1982, through the Law 7044/82, the vocational courses in secondary education have no longer been compulsory (Kuenzer, 1988a; Silva 1990).

A hidden function of the 1972 reform was its contribution to the reproduction of the social classes. Offering a vocational course, the school contributed to guide lower class secondary school leavers into the labour market. In this way, it did not only limit the demand of the lower classes for a higher degree, but also helped the national economy by reproducing a labour force structure offering a great deal of cheap labour.

MOBRAL (Brazilian Illiteracy Movement) - a national campaign against illiteracy, was also used, by the military government, as an ideological tool. With the manifest aim of combating illiteracy, it had the latent function of inculcating in the working class capitalist values, and offering to the national economy a cheap but more productive work force. The same can be said of the 'Supplementary courses' - a kind of 'second chance' adult education at the level of primary and secondary education, offered to those who had had no opportunity to take these courses at the normal course/age time.

The 1964 coup d'etat inaugurated an authoritarian regime which kept the state under military control for two decades. This regime established an economic and political model which reduced political participation and impoverished the Brazilian population more than ever before. Political repression sought to eliminate any form of opposition in all sectors. Marxist literature was withdrawn from libraries and bookshop shelves and their dissemination by any means was forbidden. Popular programmes were eliminated, student organisations were closed and political enquiries were initiated against students, teachers, civil servants and universities administrators. Many leaders and intellectuals were fired or expelled from academic institutions. Others were imprisoned or exiled. The student movement, one of the main forces of resistance was disbanded in 1968-1969.

In the mid-70s an amnesty for political crimes was decreed and after 1974 students started to reorganise. In 1975 the policy of 'abertura' (opening up) was started, that is, a slow and tightly controlled transfer of power from the military to civilians. The transmission culminated in March 1990 with the
At the beginning of the 1970s, the consideration of the French literature about education (Baudelot and Establet, 1971; Althusser, 1972; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Snyders, 1981), started to influence the educational debate, but the conditions for a real discussion started only at the end of 1970s with the beginning of political liberation in the authoritarian regime. Later, the ideas of Gramsci (1976, 1978b, 1978c, 1989) and Giroux (1981; 1983a) helped to overcome the weaknesses of the reproductive approach of the French intellectuals. Although much had been done to improve the Brazilian educational situation, many problems remained.

The 1971 law (Lei 5,692) aimed to provide a free and compulsory education from 7 to 14 years; this corresponds to the eight classes of primary education. However, according to Haussaan and Haar (in Ray, 1990), this aim proved to be an illusion. In fact, compared with developed countries and other countries from Latin America, Brazil has one of the lowest levels of school enrolment (Rosemberg, 1989). In 1985 approximately 26 million people were illiterate, and among the 7-14 years old, 32% were illiterate (Cardoso, 1989). According to Mello (1989) in the same year 7 million children in the 7-14 years age group did not attend school, although theoretically there were enough places (23 million) to accommodate all of the 7-17 years old population (22 million). However, as result of the great number of students who failed, 30% of the primary school students were more than 14 years old (Mello, 1989; Silva, 1989). The first three classes consist of 60% of the students and are responsible for 73% of the total number of failures (Silva, 1989). In 1982 50% of the students enrolled in the first class (7 years old or more) dropped out (Mello, 1989). In 1987, only 25% of those who were 10 years old or more had completed the first grade (Gatti, 1989). Only 10% of those who completed primary education proceeded to secondary education where 50% of the schools belonged to the private system (Rosemberg, 1989; Warde, 1989), although both primary and secondary education are the responsibility of the state. Although only 10% of the students were in secondary schools, 53% of them are in evening classes (Silva, 1990). This is justified by the fact that 45.4% of these students come from a family which earns five or less minimum wages - too little to sustain a family - and consequently their contribution should be vital (Carvalho, 1986; Rosemberg, 1989; Silva, 1990).

If on the one hand the problem of basic education (lack of schools and low quality of education) in Brazil is a question of scarce resources, on the other it reveals the lack of support from the Brazilian authorities. As pointed out by Plank,

> Despite the manifest failures of the basic educational system and the widely recognised need for reform, the federal government allocates more than one-half of its educational revenues to post-secondary education, and an increasing share of state revenues supports rapidly expanding state universities (Plank, 1990: 544).

The responsibility for the administration and financing of education is divided between federal, state, local (municipal) and private agencies. However, a
large proportion of public revenues are transferred to the private sector in the form of "student scholarships, direct subventions, and agreements to 'purchase' places in private schools for public school students" (Plank, 1990: 551). Yet, authority over educational policy is largely retained at the federal level.

There is a huge difference in enrolment rates across and within regions. They are relatively high in the wealthy states of the South and South-East but much lower in the North-East. The wealthy states have also a lower rate of school failure and dropout while these rates increase considerably in the poorer states and/or regions (Brandão et al. 1982; Davico, 1982; Plank, 1990).

The lack of training courses at the beginning of industrial development and the quality of these courses at the present time, led to the organisation of a system of training of labour supported by industry (Guirardelli Jr., 1990). Brandão (cited by Salgado, 1988) pointed out that, except in some special cases, industry gave no value to qualifications received in the educational system. The importance of the industry's own training can be clearly seen in the present economic situation. Due to the economic plan launched by the new government in the middle of March 1990, many industries stopped their production totally for several months because of the lack of money and demand in the market. However, industrial employers continued to pay workers during this time in order to keep their specialised labour. In fact it is cheaper for industry to pay workers for several months even though they are not working, than it is to train new workers when the economy picked up again.

1.2.2 — Educational Failure and Dropping Out
The Brazilian literature about school failure, and more specifically about dropout, is limited, both in quantity and quality, compared to the North American and European ones. The evidence is also restricted to a few regional areas. But despite the fact that Brazil is characterised by strong regional disparities, the reasons for school failure are the same in the different regions although the intensity can vary from one region to another. In spite of these limitations, considering the relevance of the Brazilian understanding about these problems, we are going to present the main types of explanation, paying particular attention to research findings.

The lack of critical analysis or theoretical reflexivity in the analysis of the causes of the problems, found in much of the educational literature, is due to two main reasons: first, the positivist epistemological and methodological tradition, which was adopted by most of the researchers, and second, the repression suffered by Brazilian intellectuals for nearly two decades - from the 1964 coup d'etat until the end of 1970s when the 'abertura', that is, the process of transition from the military dictatorship to the present elected President, started.

In the Brazilian literature about school failure, we can clearly distinguish two different perspectives: one locates the reasons outside the school, the other locates them inside the school. While the former was stressed in earlier
researches, more recent research has concentrated on the latter set of reasons. Although in the present study I intend to work more specifically with the inside or within-school reasons, both kind of research findings will be presented since: a) it is necessary to know all dropouts reasons in order to understand the present school situation; b) students usually dropout for more than one reason which can be include both inside and outside school factors.

Those who located the reasons for dropout outside the school believed that many school problems had their causes in the social, political and economic structures. School failure, in this case, was also seen as intentional. From this perspective, education was seen as an apparatus of social discrimination which reinforced marginality (Saviani, 1984) since the school had the function of maintaining and reproducing the social order. Althusser’s (1972) and Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) theories, as well as the Bowles and Gintis (1976) research *Schooling in Capitalist America*, have influenced these researchers who believe that the school has the function of reproducing the existing relations of production. So, selection and exclusion is necessary to maintain the present Brazilian capitalist system (Popovic, 1981).

Among the outside-school reasons, the economic situation is one of the most frequently mentioned. Economic reasons, such low family income, affect many students and this is particularly true in the suburbs and rural areas. According to Fukui et al. (1982), Ferreira (1983) and Ribeiro (1990), the need for the child to work was one of the main reasons for students leaving school early. Many students try to conciliate school and work studying in evening courses. However, the difficulties of reconciling school and work timetables - both very rigid - lead many of these students to drop out (Carvalho, 1986) since they do not have time to prepare their lessons (Ribeiro, 1990) and consequently have low marks what usually lead to failure. The distance between school, work and home and the lack of family support were also pointed out as reasons for leaving school early (Carvalho, 1986).

Apart from the need to help with the family income, the cost of education is an economic factor too. Although public schools are free of direct charge, indirect costs such as school materials, special clothes and transport can be too high for some families. Apart from this, Maciel (1983) pointed out that the lack of money to buy school materials directly affects school performance among the poor. Several researchers (Ferrari, 1975; Bonamigo and Pena Firme, 1980; Verhine and Melo, 1988) found a strong relationship between family socio-economic status and student performance. Wolf (1978) also observed a relationship between parents’ academic interest and children’s academic performance.

Another outside-school reason for school failure is the biological conditions of the poorest, which directly affects their school performance. Not having had a proper meal, the physical and mental development of poor children is affected. This interferes with their ability to concentrate on classroom activities as observed by Cunha (1975), Silva et al. (1979), Carvalho (1983) and Ribeiro (1990). However, Gatti (1981), researching the causes for school failure in the first grade, did not find a relationship between failure and physical variables. To her, the real cause is their low socio-economic condi-
tion. In any case, it is quite evident that many children come to school without having had a proper meal. In order to alleviate this problem the school offers free lunches and, it is very well known by teachers and administrators that, in many cases, the only thing that attracts poor students to school is this free lunch, which, in some cases, is the only meal they can afford. In its effort to give a proper meal to students, the government spends a considerable amount of money. According to an annual report from the government (in Plank, 1990), in 1977 the amount spent on school lunches was almost three times larger than that spent on books and materials together. However, this does not mean that all students have a free meal throughout the school year. Often, the supplies arrive at some schools at the end of the year, if they arrive at all (Plank, 1990). Political, bureaucratic and moral questions are the reasons for this problem since many politicians use the school meal as a way of bargaining for votes and on the other hand, it is not rare for school meals end up in the hands of farmers, who use them to feed their animals.

The intra-school causes of school failure can be related to institutional practices, to teachers or to students. Among the institutional reasons, several factors are pointed out, such as school culture, inadequate school curriculum, lack of integration among different subjects, a lack of human and material resources, inadequate teaching methods, school bureaucracy, the increasing differentiation of the pedagogical task, and the large number of students per classroom group (Mello, 1979, 1982; Gatti, 1981; Davico, 1982; Rangel et al. 1985; Maciel 1985; Feldens and Duncan 1988; Ribeiro, 1990).

School reproduces the social order mainly by imposing the dominant class culture. Lower class culture is not taken into consideration (Faraço, 1972; Rasche, 1979; Freire, 1985; Moraes, 1989; Ribeiro, 1990). In fact, it is seen as unworthy and needing to be replaced. Consequently, lower class students encounter in school an environment different from their own.

The result of the imposition of a strange culture can be clearly seen in research entitled In Life Then, in School Zero undertaken by Carraher et al. (1982). Trying to understand the difficulty of some poor primary school students in São Paulo in learning the four mathematical functions in school, the authors observed these students in their daily lives. Working as sellers in market streets, as newspaper sellers, as car washers and so on, these students dealt with the four mathematical functions without any mistakes. However, in school, they had great difficulty in understanding the mathematical operations. There is no doubt that this is an example of the dichotomy between theory and practice existing in school and how school rejects the experience and culture of the lower classes. It also shows the teacher/school pedagogic failure in transferring the practical experiences of the students into the mathematical operations. On the contrary, they transform the concrete experience of the students to a school abstraction.

In other research about the determinants of school success among the poor and not-poor, Gatti (1981) found that although the poorest students, that is, those who had the most disadvantaged backgrounds, tended to have the lowest end-of-term grades, they did not always have the lowest score in regular tests. Carraher and Schliemann (1983), comparing children's performance in
public and private schools, found that the difference in the pass and failure rates among these two different types of school was not explained by differences in the levels of student competence, since students from both schools got similar scores on the same battery of tests applied as part of the research. The researches of Gatti (1981) and Carraher and Schlieman (1983) may demonstrate that the lower school achievement and grades of the poorest may be a consequence of an alien environment (culture) rather than a question of competence.

In a comparative study with 155 educators from North and South of Brazil, undertaken with the purpose of investigating intra-school factors which may contribute to repeating and dropout from the first four grades in public schools, Davico (1982) observed the following intra-school factors: teachers' absenteeism; teachers' methodology; poor teacher training and selection; teacher working conditions allied with their socioeconomic status; school curriculum and policy; lack of school-family-community interaction; limited government educational resources and policy; lack of school resources; poor communication among the different hierarchical levels in the school system; and a climate of apathy among school staff generally. Although Davico's research aimed to study the intra-school factors, she also pointed out some extra-school considerations. Among the family-related factors she observed the lack of family support, such as parental neglect, working parents, broken homes, family mobility, and lack of home provision of school materials. She also observed a relationship between families with poor socio-economic conditions and children with low motivation and intellectual capacity due to malnutrition and cultural deprivation. Although Davico's findings were related to grades one to four, this is much the same for other grades and levels.

School and real life are dissociated and students' life experiences are not taken into account by school programmes (Faraco, 1972; Rasche, 1979; Baeta et al., 1982; Carraher et al., 1982; Carraher and Schliemann, 1983; Rangel et al., 1985; Moraes, 1989; Ribeiro, 1990). For Rangel et al. (1985) students are kept back and drop out because they do not find in school what they wanted or what their parents were expecting. In fact, according to Rasche (1979) and Feldens and Duncan (1988), formal education in Brazil is more concerned with institutional school life than with the social context of students and teachers. Students from the lower classes feel themselves alienated since the school culture is that of the middle class.

In research undertaken by Davico in the North and South of Brazil, 49 per cent of teachers from schools with a high rate of repeat and dropout "agree that an elitist school system is justified, and 10.2 per cent strongly agree". In school with low repeat and dropout rates the teachers believe the same: 23.8 per cent agree and 9.5 per cent strongly agree (Davico, 1990: 111). Although Gramsci (1976) insisted that working class children should have the same kind of school as the ruling class, this does not simply mean the adoption of an elitist curriculum. On the contrary, it signifies allowing the working class to appropriate critically the ruling class's own history and culture as a tool to develop working class consciousness and the consequent counter-hegemony. However, the adoption of an elitist view without any criticism possibly influences the teaching activities and affects negatively the lowest classes. On
the other hand, as Franco et al. (1984) observed, teachers from public schools do not know how to deal with the shortage of students from the lowest classes. Freire (1972; 1974; 1985) stressed the need to take students' actual reality as the starting point, and Scheibe (1982) calls teachers' attention to care for the real instead of the ideal.

Students from lower classes also learn to value middle class culture and have higher aspirations that most of the time they cannot fulfil. This is more accentuated in the rural areas where, besides the curriculum, the academic semester and class time also do not attend to the particular needs of those who live there (Shrader, 1973; Chesterfield and Schutz, 1977). According to Miskier (1971) it is in these areas where the failure and dropout rates are generally the highest.

Lack of co-ordination and teacher integration in school were also pointed out as a cause for school failure (Almeida, 1986; Carvalho, 1989). It is very common that in the same school, the various teachers of inter-related subjects or even the same subject, do not know each other's schemes. Even when there is more than one teacher teaching the same subject for different classes of the same grade, they do not know the plan, approach or teaching methodology of each other. As teachers have a relative discretion concerning the syllabus and are quite free in relation to their approach, at the end of the year, different classes of the same grade, may have developed a quite different kind and level of knowledge. If on the one hand this procedure does not interfere in the final evaluation, since each teacher prepares her/his own test, on the other hand, it creates difficulties for the following grade teacher because of the lack of a coherent curriculum. As Carvalho (1989) pointed out, there is not, in the public schools, an administration which has a global vision of the process and aims of schooling and Silva (1981), analysing the school administration in Santa Catarina, observed that headteachers have no participation in the educational decision-making at a regional or state level. At school level, they have little, if any, participation in the planning of school activities due to the fact that in a general way, their role is more concerned with personnel, finance and material administration rather than with the pedagogical one. So, every teacher is concerned only with her/his subject and classes, without knowing what is going on with other teachers and leaving the philosophical questions to the central offices. This leads to a situation where

The final result is teachers, specialists and staff, each one acting in a different direction, without a clear aim, as if in a production process where one was working in the production of a TVs, another in the production of sausage cans, a third was believed to be building chairs, etc. (Carvalho, 1989: 67).

Lack of material conditions and technical resources are also frequently pointed out as reasons for the low quality of schooling that consequently leads to school failure (Picanço, 1982; Rangel et al., 1985; Carvalho, 1989). As a considerable number of children cannot afford to buy school materials, the government set up a programme to provide books to poor schools and students. However, this programme has been a target of many criticisms. The books are
often of low material and content quality and not appropriate for some specific groups or regions. Frequently, they arrive at the end of the school year, if they arrive at all (Plank, 1990).

The institutional practice of streaming students, that is separating those with the same grades, into different homogeneous groups, often based on background characteristics, can help teachers in their teaching activities but affects considerably the students with lower socio-economic status, since they are often labelled as underachievers and so classified as a lower quality group. Unfortunately this practice is quite common in most Brazilian schools and undoubtedly lower class students suffer the consequences.

Among teacher-related factors, teachers' lack of qualifications is considered one of the main factors for school failure. According to data from MEC (Ministry of Education and Culture), in 1982, only 60% of secondary school teachers had a graduate course and 11% had only the secondary school certificate (Gatti, 1989). Related to teacher qualifications is the question of teacher allocation. Ferrari (1975) observed that new teachers in a school are generally those who have to take the classes considered most difficult, and so rejected by the other teachers. Another teacher-related factor is the frequent failure to turn up and the frequent change of teachers during the academic year (Carvalho, 1986). Many teachers are so over-loaded, working in three sessions, that frequently they fail to turn up either because they need some time to solve particular problems or because they are sick as a consequence of their tiredness. As these are usually unplanned, most often there is insufficient time to re-schedule the timetable in order to avoid students staying without a class and so running free in the school yard, disturbing other classes. On the other hand, if a teacher needs sick leave, s/he has an substitute only if her/his leave is for more than two weeks. This means that during this time students have no classes in that teacher's subject.

Related to teachers' qualifications and frequently mentioned as a reason for the high rate of school failure, is the low quality of the teacher training courses (Ferrari, 1975; Ribeiro, 1970; Baeta et al., 1982; Nello, 1982; Maciel, 1985; Rangel et al., 1985; Feldens, 1986; Gatti, 1987; Carvalho, 1989; Davico, 1990; Ribeiro, 1990). According to Schwartzman (1988: 110) most of the public school teachers "get their degree in a private and less prestigious higher education". In research undertaken with teachers from primary and secondary public schools, teachers showed their dissatisfaction with their graduate school and expressed the need for constant up-dating (Picango, 1982). However, the need expressed was almost totally restricted to technical aspects, ignoring the fact that in order to help in the real solution of the public school's problems, they need a broader vision which, necessarily, includes other perspectives such as philosophy, economy, politics, sociology, etc. In discussing the question of teaching training and competence, Araújo Filho (1987) as well as Nello (1982), emphasised the need for a technical-political competence. The need for a political education of the teachers was also emphasised by Ribeiro (1987). This lack of interest in a more comprehensive understanding contributes to Luckesi's (1990) observation that in a general way, teaching activities have been practised without an analysis of their relevance, significance and purpose.
The quality of teachers has become more serious with the quick expansion of the school system as well as the demand for new kinds of worker skills. However, according to Feldens and Duncan (1988), teachers have not received adequate training to deal with the present context of Brazilian schooling. Although this lack of quality was been criticized for a long time, only after the First Brazilian Education Seminar held in 1978 did teacher training courses begin to be reformed effectively at the university level (Gadotti, 1983).

Another reason, frequently stressed for school failure, is the heavy workload that many teachers have in order to manage their economic responsibilities (Baeta et al., 1982; Mello, 1982; Picanço, 1982; Verhine and Melo, 1988). The lowering of their salaries has forced them to work longer hours than ever and the consequent lack of time impels them to execute the tasks bureaucratically in the classroom (Baeta et al., 1982). As observed by Mello (1982), for 75% of the teachers from her sample their salary was their only source of income to support their family. Sometimes teachers' salaries are so low that they have to work three daily sessions in order to increase their income. In fact, the socio-economic status of teachers has decreased so much that Gatti (1987) and Feldens and Duncan (1988) have observed that teachers consider themselves and their work in low regard. There is no social reward for the teacher's career and their organisation in the form of an association, syndicate, or statute is precarious (Franco et al., 1984; Gatti, 1987). According to Araújo Filho (1987), the low level of teachers' salaries has contributed to their attraction to the less qualified candidates only and Gatti (1989) reveals that since the middle 70s the enrolment in teaching training courses has diminished considerably since other areas of work are more economically compensative. Even at the university level, where teachers earn more than in primary and secondary schools, the salary is increasingly considered to be a disincentive and stimulates the dropping out to other activities in the private sector.

The lack of adequate teacher training, the poor work resources and the heavy workload contribute to teachers' lack of interest and enthusiasm in their performance, which, in its turn, contributes to low performance and a low quality of education. This is aggravated by frequent teachers' failure to give classes (Carvalho, 1986) and student absenteeism.

Teacher prejudices or negative teacher expectations were also observed in Brazilian schools as factors which contribute to poor student performance and lead to school dropout (Cunha, 1975; Mello, 1979; Gatti, 1981; Baeta et al., 1982; Picanço, 1982; Brandão et al., 1982).

Although teacher-related reasons make a huge contribution to school failure, when discussing school failure, most of the teachers tend to 'blame the victims' (Rasche, 1979; Mello, 1982; Picanço, 1982; Scheibe, 1982; Davico, 1990). However, according to Freire, this kind of conclusion reveals that these teachers are not yet able to understand the ideology existing in the educational act. For him, once one accepts the political dimension of education, s/he cannot accept "the dominant class's conclusion: that the dropouts are to be blamed." (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 123).

In research undertaken with teachers in São Paulo, Mello (1982) observed that
even when asked to answer objective, closed questions, teachers tended to emphasize outside-school reasons such as economic and family-related. Although one cannot deny the effects of outside-school factors which are mainly related to economic conditions, Davico (1990) observed that the tendency to avoid professional responsibility may perpetuate the school inefficiencies.

Students' lack of interest in school activities and lack of time to prepare the lessons is frequently mentioned as a reason for school failure. However, one cannot forget that these are more consequences than real causes. The lack of time to study is usually a consequence of the need to work in order to contribute to the family income. The lack of interest in school activities may be related to personal traits or individual or family problems. However, most of the time it is linked with school culture. Imposing the dominant class culture, school do not to attend to the interests of lower class students who in turn feel themselves alienated and consequently have a low performance.

In sum, it seems clear that both external and internal factors affect the quality of education. External or outside-school factors are most commonly related to economic conditions and their consequences such as the need to work, the lack of money to support the indirect cost of schooling, and malnutrition, which in their turn affect school performance. Parents’ expectations and culture and lack of support are also frequently related to school performance, bringing disadvantages to the poorest since school culture is based on the middle class one.

How much each of these factors influences any particular school or student depends on the socio-economic status of both the region where the school is located and the student. Yet, it must be remembered that the same educational system that serves many Brazilians very badly, serves others relatively well due to the dual system (public and private) and regional disparities.

Since the present research was undertaken in Santa Catarina, it is necessary to know its own peculiarities in order to better understand the final results. So, in the next section we will consider the educational context there.

1.2.2 - Education in Santa Catarina

Although most of the facts described in the previous section also apply to the educational situation in Santa Catarina, there are, in this State, some specific facts that is necessary to know in to order understand the question of dropout and participation there. So, in this section we will outline the educational context in Santa Catarina, emphasising the situation of the secondary school, and the movement for the 'Democratisation of Education in Santa Catarina'.

The expansion of education at all three educational levels that happened in the whole country in recent decades happened in Santa Catarina too. This big expansion was followed by a deterioration in the quality of education offered. In order to cope with the high demand, schools started to offer an additional session. In some cases an evening session was added. In others, where there
already were three sessions; these were shortened and a fourth was added.

According to Kock (1989), the big expansion in the second and third levels occurred during the 1970s, when the enrolment in these levels increased more than 100 per cent, while the increase in the first level was only 40 per cent. Despite this increase, figures reported by Scheibe et al. (1989) revealed that in 1984, from every one thousand young in the secondary school age (15-18), only 24 were enrolled in a school.

As public schools were not able to absorb all the additional enrolments and because the government was transferring large amounts of public money to the private sector, secondary school courses were concentrated in the private sector. However, the biggest student concentration is in the public sector, since it has more sessions and a larger number of students per class. Secondary school students are concentrated in the evenings. According to Scheibe et al. (1989), in 1985, 54 per cent of the students enrolled at this level were studying in the evening. Morning and afternoon sessions were attended mainly by children of the bourgeoisie and qualified skilled workers while the evening sessions were attended by those of semi-skilled or unskilled workers. Many of the evening students were working 30 or more hours per week.

The increasing number of classes created the need for teachers. The lack of qualified teachers motivated the establishment of a project called 'short graduation', where those who had a secondary school diploma in teaching could take a graduating degree, in a concentrated scheme, which used to last approximately one year. With this degree, teachers were authorised to teach for the four last grades of primary education and for the secondary one. This project was funded by the government and lasted for only a short time.

The need for qualified teachers remained. But, on the other hand, the limited number of places in the graduation courses and the tight 'vestibular' - university entrance test, were a restriction. Without an interest in expanding the public tertiary level, the government encouraged the creation of many isolated private institutions. As these institutions were attended mainly by those who were working, several of them gave classes only in evenings. In order to attend those who were either living or working far from any of these institutions, some of them offered weekend or holiday courses. With both time and resources limitations, the quality of these courses was very low. It is also true that many students who attended these courses were interested more in a formal qualification than in the course content.

In recent research undertaken by Scheibe et al. (1989), teachers expressed a desire to improve their performance and complained about the lack of opportunities for updating their qualifications, but, at the same time, showed no concern with the lack of books or other didactic resources. According to the researchers, this was a sign of their low concern with contemporary topics and pedagogic innovations. In other research Kock (1989) observed that teachers tended to blame both students and educational authorities for the low quality of education. Only very few teachers admitted that they also contributed to this condition, and, in a general way they did not link school problems with the issues of class and politics.
The process of educational democratisation expressed by the increasing opportunity to achieve a diploma was not followed by an increase in quality. On the contrary, the increase in enrolments was accompanied by a decrease in the quality of schooling. Without a greater financial investment and with a larger number of students and sessions, school material conditions and teaching resources deteriorated catastrophically and were roundly criticised by the educational community.

Apart from the above reasons, low salaries and a lack of competence from the Secretary of Education in the resolution of administrative and technical-pedagogic problems in the schools were also indicated by teachers, as contributing for the low quality of education and the high number of failures and dropouts.

The economic situation of teachers in Santa Catarina did not diverge from those in the rest of the country. In their research, Scheibe et al. (1989) observed that almost half of the teachers had another job not related to teaching, such as bank clerk, pharmacy attendant, small business person, retired, etc. In these cases, their main income was not from their teaching activity and almost all of them were teaching in the evening session.

In relation to political participation, public schools offered more opportunities for collective discussion about the schools' problems. However, teachers' political consciousness and participation were still at a low level (Kock, 1989; Scheibe et al. 1989). Although political movements have increased in recent years, they are almost exclusively restricted to the demand for better salaries. As Scheibe et al. pointed out:

Secondary school teachers seem to concentrate their attention on the salary related issue. Above all, they feel themselves exploited, badly paid and socially discriminated against. This salary-related issue is so strong at this historical moment, that all other big problems related to this level of teaching became minimised (Scheibe et al., 1989: 83)

In analysing teachers' class consciousness, Scheibe et al. state that there are two different categories: one, more conservative, composed of teachers who came from the lowest classes and who have acquired some status; and another, more politically mobilised, composed of those who become proletarian, and who because of circumstances have lost status (Scheibe and al., 1989). Even though more politically mobilised, the second group's concern is still bounded to their economic situation.

Both Demo (1986) at a national and Scheibe et al. (1989) at Santa Catarina level, observed that the class union and the political party organisations are still weak. Affiliations to these organisation are small and usually only formal. Although there are some working unions very well organised and tertiary level teachers have a strong organisation, Demo's (1986) and Scheibe et al.'s (1989) observation is true in relation to both most of the workers at a national level and to the primary and secondary school teachers in Santa
Catarina.
The policy of high wealth concentration that took place, in Brazil, during the military regime, and more specifically during 1970s, affected Santa Catarina too. As a consequence, the educational system was not able to retain students in schools. This led to increasing illiteracy and proved the failure of the educational policy. In spite of the fact that many students belonged to the lowest classes, had poor economic conditions, and that many of them were working, school curriculum and values remained based on middle class culture and material conditions. In this way, the elitist system remained, but now, the lowest classes were kept out of school not only because of the lack of places, but mainly because of its quality.

Although following the national movement, the Movement for Educational Democratisation in Santa Catarina has its own peculiar characteristics. Among others, the most significant were the Progressive Evaluation System and Participative Planning.

The First State Educational Plan (PEE 1969-1980) established the Progressive Evaluation System which aimed to promote students progressively, according to their own capacities. Since student failure would thereby be eliminated, the next grade’s teachers should use appropriate methods in order to recover students with learning difficulties. The plan also recommended a constant retrieval either during or after class activities. When considered indispensable, it should be done in a special class, during one year, after the fourth and eight grades. The lack of material conditions, teaching training, and technical-pedagogic support, nevertheless restrained the opportunities for a constant and effective retrieval. Because of the lack of structural conditions, the second form of retrieval was not always possible, but even when it was viable, the results achieved were very poor - as were the conditions. The lack of material and human conditions for the effective development of the Progressive Evaluation System transformed it into an Automatic Progressiveness System, that is, children would be promoted to next grade regardless of their achievement.

The main function of this measure was to eliminate the large student failure rate that was occurring in all primary schools, but particularly from the first to second grade. Avoiding the need to keep students in the same grade for several years, the school could both attend to the demand and accept more students for the first grade and fill the subsequent ones. In this way, school productivity would be improved and educational opportunities democratised. Adopting this measure, the State would solve the problem of social and economic costs. However, the quality of education was deeply damaged. Several students reached the eighth grade (i.e. after 8 compulsory years) without being able to read and write properly. Some of them were literally illiterate. Consequently, they had not achieved the knowledge required both to be accepted in the secondary school and to enter into the labour market.

Despite the increase in school places and the elimination of school failure, the problem of school attendance was not solved. Dropout was not eliminated and because of lack of interest or economic conditions, many school-aged
children remained out of school. The low quality of education generated by
the plan's conditions displeased both parents and some teachers.

Another measure to the democratisation of schooling in Santa Catarina was the
expansion of secondary schools. This expansion was guaranteed by the Second
State Educational Plan (1973-1976). However, displeased they were with the
low quality of education, the school communities started to ask for changes in
the educational system. This pressure took place first, through the Participa­
tive Planning process which was promoted by the state, in 1982 and later, by
the collective elaboration of the Third State Educational Plan (1984-
1987).

The Participative Planning, also known as 'Democratisation of Education in
Santa Catarina', was developed, during 1982, under the co-ordination of ACAFE
(Santa Catarina Association of Educational Establishments), Secretary of
Education and UFSC (Federal University of Santa Catarina). The aim of this
project was the identification of educational problems at the regional level
and the cataloguing of the measures for solving them. The justification for
this measure, expressed in the basic document for this project, was that "the
re-democratisation of the country requires a greater measure of participation
by people in both the decision-making and the execution of the social poli­
cies" (Amorim et al., 1985: 18).

This participative process was an outcome from the national political 'opening
up' (abertura) process, as well as the result of teacher pressure in their
national movement in defence of educational democratisation. On the other
hand, the Ministry of Education, through a specific publication, encouraged
people to participate in the decision-making process (Brasil, 1980). Another
factor that contributed to this process was the Government's interest in the
outcome and expectation of political dividends.

The participative process involved the participation of approximately 25
thousand people, most of them teachers from primary and secondary schools,
through local, regional and state activities, which consisted of meetings and
debates in every school, and congresses and seminars at municipal, regional
and state levels. Educators, mainly those from the public sector, actively
engaged themselves in the elaboration of the Educational Plan, since they
truly believed in the possibility of coping with changes through participa­
tion. However, when the communities started to mobilise themselves for partici­
ipation through their schools and other representative organisations, the
Secretary of Education felt itself threatened and recommended the Educational
Units of Regional Coordination - UCREs, to exercise their authority in order
to control the process on the schools levels (Amorim et al., 1985).

Amorim et al. (1985) noted, too, that in most cases, the regional committees
were composed only of representatives of the UCREs and the private graduation
institution(s) belonged to ACAFE. Since these institutions co-ordinated the
process, participation was also, to a certain extent, controlled. As it was
the school administrators who chose the school representatives for the region­
al meetings, there was no guarantee that there was no bias in this selection.
Another criticism pointed out by Amorim et al. (1985) concerned the fact that in some places, teachers showed strong reluctance to participate, since they identified in the project an electoral strategy on the part of the state.

Despite its weaknesses, the process of democratisation of education in Santa Catarina in the 1980s was a participative process and intended to identify not only the school's problems but also the willingness of the school community and its proposals to solve the problems. Even been a project set up by the State apparatus and with an electoral intention, the results of the Participatory Planning were not considered for the establishment of the educational policies by the new elected candidate - Esperidião Amin - who immediately patronised a new process of consultation as the ground for the elaboration of the 1984-1987 State Educational Plan (Kock, 1989).

It was not without a huge campaign that educators managed to see some outcomes of the democratisation process transformed into law. In this way, the Progressive Evaluation System was eliminated; it was established the election of primary and secondary schools' administrators; and it was created the School Consultative Board. Although the Plan was approved by the State Board of Education the mobilisation was not enough to guarantee its practice (Kock, 1989).

With the inauguration of a new Governor, in 1987, with the exception of the progressive system, all other outcomes from the democratisation movement were either reduced or dismissed.

In an attempt to explain the reasons why marginalisation occurs in school, different answers have been given depending on the theory on which the analysis was based. Basically, the theories which explain the questions of social order and marginality can be divided into two groups or approaches: consensus and conflict (Dahrendorf, 1970; Dawe, 1970). These two approaches are going to be presented in the next section though the emphasis will be in the latter one.

1.3 - Educational Theories

Two main theories try to explain the problem of marginality in society and school. The consensus or structural functionalist approach states that society is a structure or framework of parts which are closely linked together. For the most part this structure is seen as relatively harmonious, because there is seen to be general consensus about the usefulness of the existing patterns and education is regarded as a necessary tool for social equalisation and the overcoming of marginality.

Within the conflict approach, on the other hand, the Marxian state that the mode of social life is based on the mode of production. There are, in society, basic contradictions between the forces and relations of production and consequently fundamental conflicts of interest between the social groups involved in the process of production. The relationship between social classes is seen as a struggle where the lower class try to get power through the redistribu-
tion of advantages and scarce items (Meighan, 1981). From this perspective education is seen as a tool of social discrimination and reinforces marginality since the school has the function of maintaining and reproducing the social order.

Structural functionalism, with its presupposition of collective or shared norms, appears increasingly unable to explain the diversity of values, social conflict, ideological pluralism and levels of social disturbance that have increased in recent decades (Barton et al., 1980). So, several researchers have adopted a conflict or Marxist perspective as being the most useful way to understand, research and criticise educational provision.

Marx's writings have been subject to more than one interpretation and some of them are in conflict. In education, we can identify two sorts of interpretations with some divergences within them. One emphasises reproduction (Althusser, 1972; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977); the other stresses the possibility of resistance (Willis, 1977; Apple, 1979, 1982a, 1982b; Giroux, 1983a, 1983b).

For Althusser (1972) the school, or more precisely the educational Ideological State Apparatus, helps the state to maintain the existing relations of production through the reproduction of both the skills and rules of the labour force and the relations of production. He affirms that the state ensures its power through two apparatuses: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which includes education.

Submission to the ruling class ideology is the aim of the ISAs. However, it is the educational ISA which in capitalist society plays the most important part and it does this through both the transmission of the capitalist social relations and the reproduction of the attitudes and behaviour required in the division of labour. School teaches workers to accept the ruling ideology and to be submissive to their exploiters. It also teaches the agents of exploitation and repression how to ensure the reproduction of the capitalist system. The school achieves this aim by the existence of different levels of schooling with different contents in each. The school environment also helps to reproduce the dominant ideology. In this case, rituals, routines, social practice, and even the school building design help to reinforce the social division of labour. 'Cooling out' students from school is also a way of fulfilling its allocating function.

In sum, the educational system or the educational Ideological State Apparatus, rather than being a tool of social equalisation, is a mechanism built by the ruling class to secure and perpetuate their interests.

Bowles and Gintis in Schooling in Capitalist America (1976) state that there is a strong correspondence between the social relations of capitalist production and social relations in education. That is, the school system is a mirror for the reproduction of the values, norms, and skills that characterise the labour market in a capitalist system. This 'correspondence principle' is the basis for understanding the working of the educational system.
Schools, through their knowledge and social relations inculcate in students the attitudes, values, and skills necessary to accept and perpetuate the existing socio-economic and political relations. This aim is achieved mainly by the form in which a content is given rather than by the content itself. So, the 'hidden curriculum' performs a major role in developing in students the norms of hard-work, passivity, and acceptance necessary in the workforce. They also argued that the system of merits and rewards allied in schools contributed to the reproduction of social inequalities.

The acquisition of knowledge is similar to productive work: fragmented, differentiated and not under the control of the workers. Education can be seen as an important tool in the preparation of individuals for their role in the labour force. It does this both by developing the skills and attitudes that workers need in order to be fully representative in work, and by helping to perpetuate the prevailing social, political and economic conditions.

Bowles and Gintis presented a parallel between the characteristics of school knowledge, mainly those developed by the hidden curriculum, and the characteristics required in a capitalistic labour market. For them, the labour market requires uncritical, passive and docile workers. This is developed in school by the system of evaluation, since grades awarded are related more to personality characteristics than to academic achievement. The acceptance of the hierarchical system in work and the lack of control over production is developed in school by its hierarchical organisation and students' lack of participation in school decisions. Since work in a capitalistic society is alienating and unsatisfactory, workers need to see compensation in external motivation such as salary. Much the same occurs in school where students do not feel themselves emotionally involved in school work and so need to look for external rewards such as qualifications and the expectation of a better job at the end of the course. The fragmentation and divisions existing in the workplace are also anticipated in school through the fragmentation of the school curriculum.

Another aspect pointed out by Bowles and Gintis was related to the reserve army of skilled workers. The surplus of skilled workers formed by the school increases competitiveness and so lowers wages, which meets the interests of the employers. According to them, a worker's position in the labour market depends more on his race, social class and gender than on this academic qualifications.

Although Bowles and Gintis's work made a great contribution to the view of the schooling process within the Marxist theory of education they have been the subject of many criticisms. Most of these are concerned with the fact that they overemphasised the correspondence principle and failed to provide evidence to support their argument. For Arnot and Whitty (1982) they failed to explain several contradictions within the school and the conflict between the school and the economy. MacDonald's (1980) observation that most of the industrialised, urbanised, capitalistic societies have the most 'archaic' educational systems put Bowles and Gintis's correspondence principle in question. For Moore (1988), the educational and occupational systems are distinctive and have their own intrinsic principles and possibilities. Cole (1988) argues that
Bowles and Gintis's view about man is much too passive. Cole's criticism is ratified by Willis (1977), who showed that the 'lads' were not so passive to the school culture but on the contrary constructed their own counter-school culture.

Another aspect of Bowles and Gintis's theory that has been criticised is related to gender and race. Wolpe (1989) reminds us that Bowles and Gintis gave more consideration to the influence of the family than the school in girls' lives but did not offer an account of why girls are relatively unaffected by their schooling. Joseph (1988) criticised Bowles and Gintis on the grounds that they did not consider adequately the racial dimensions and pointed out that the absence of a sharp focus on this issue inhibited required social change. Apple (1988) recommended a parallel position in the analysis of schooling ideology, where class, race and sex should be considered equally. Bowles and Gintis were also criticised for having embraced the philosophy of liberalism and for having disregarded the role of the state in the maintenance of the social system (Freeman-Noir et al., 1988; Sharp, 1985).

In sum, Bowles and Gintis's work, both by itself and through its criticism, helped to advance in Marxist educational theory and in this sense its value cannot be denied.

Bourdieu and Passeron's theory is developed in Reproduction: In Education, Society and Culture (1977). Their basic point is that all society is structured as a system of material power relations between groups and classes. The school helps to maintain the power relations in society, since the major role of the educational system is the cultural reproduction of the culture of the dominant class. This class, possessing the power, imposes meaning in a way that appears legitimate. Those who resist the dominant culture, values and beliefs are considered as culturally deprived or mentally deficient and are pushed out of the school system. Domination may occur either in an explicit way by the exercise of pure repression, where material power appears in the shape of material violence or by the disguise of material domination, where only symbolic violence appears. When symbolic power is used, the dominated people are deceived in relation to the true basis of their domination, which is the material force. They are persuaded or convinced that they are less competent and that this is the reason that they have an inferior position in society.

For Bourdieu and Passeron all pedagogic relationships are 'symbolic violence'. The school helps to maintain the power relations in the society, since the major role of the educational system is the cultural reproduction of the culture of the dominant class. This class, having the power, imposes meaning in a way that appears legitimate. It imposes its culture as worthy and as having universal validity, which must therefore be the basis for knowledge in the educational system. However, elaborated inside a specific group, the dominant class, and having the intention of attending to its specific interests, this knowledge transmits a dominant ideology and consequently is arbitrary.

The reproduction of school failure and school marginalisation is the real
purpose of the school which is to maintain the relationship between social class and school performance. This 'social function' of elimination is accomplished by examination failure and by self-elimination. Due to their relative lack of the dominant culture or 'cultural capital', lower class pupils are more likely to fail examinations and this prevents them from entering higher education. However, their decision to vacate the system of their own volition accounts for a higher proportion of elimination. Bourdieu and Passeron regard this decision as 'reasonable' and 'realistic'. Working-class students know what are their chances and their attitudes towards education are shaped by 'objective conditions'. For each social stratum there is a future objectively determined by objective conditions. That is, there is an opportunity system. Through the evaluation of their fellows, the lower class students consider their possibility of success and failure and then select their future. As the objective conditions determine at the same time both their aspirations and the level at which they can be satisfied, there is no dissatisfaction.

As with Bowles and Gintis (1976), Bourdieu and Passeron give more emphasis to the form and style of schooling than to the school content as a way of reproducing the social order.

Besides their emphasis on the cultural aspect, Bourdieu and Passeron rejected the notion that school is simply a mirror of the dominant society. For them, schools are relatively autonomous institutions that are only indirectly influenced by the more powerful economic and political institutions. This relative autonomy of the educational system

... enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, i.e., to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:178).

In sum, the reproductive thesis emphasises three points. First, the school reproduces the class system by providing different classes with the knowledge and skills they need to occupy their respective places in a labour market stratified by class, race and gender. Second, the school reproduces the dominant culture and its interests by imposing the knowledge, values and language of the ruling class. Third, the school functions as a state apparatus which helps to maintain the existing ideology and economic fundamentals that assure the state's political power.

Despite the fact that the above theories, particularly that of Bourdieu and Passeron, have been considered useful for the analysis and understanding of the political nature of schooling and its relation to the dominant ideology, they have been criticised by more recent educators such as Apple, Giroux and others who stressed that reproduction theory did not provide a comprehensive critical view of schooling.

Although what was said about reproduction cannot be denied in a general sense, reproduction theories such as Althusser (1972), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) are quite radical in some of their positions. The cited theories have overemphasised the economic and/or cultural factors and
did not consider the role of politics in the determination of social relations. They also overlooked the counterhegemonic movements within the school, ignoring the importance of human agency and the notion of resistance. Contradictions and struggles that exist in school were not taken into account and the issue power/knowledge was rarely, if ever, discussed. They presented the school as totally and exclusively operating in the interests of the ruling class. This strong determinism seems to close any possibility of change in the school and in social classes. Bourdieu and Passeron, particularly, seem to deny the class struggle when they state that the working class is satisfied with its fate as it was based in 'objective conditions'. To Giroux

Reproduction theorists have over emphasised the idea of domination in their analysis and have failed to provide any major insights into how teachers, students, and other human agents come together within specific historical and social contexts in order to both make and reproduce the conditions of their existence... The idea that people do make history, including its constraints, has been neglected (Giroux, 1983a: 259).

Although reproduction theory is based on Marxist theory, criticism of it is also based on the same theory, since Marx and Engels also viewed any given society as a historical product of the struggle of one class against another (Engels, in Marx and Engels, 1969: 94). As with any institution of the superstructure, education is also a place of class struggle. Reproducing the capitalist mode of production, education also reproduces the contradictions inherent in that model. So, recent Marxist analyses have considered education not only as a mechanism for reproduction but also as a place of resistance (Willis, 1977; Apple 1979, 1982a, 1982b; Giroux 1983a; 1983b). They recognised the effect of class culture in the way students make sense of and respond to ideologies and school culture. They reviewed education and in particular the role of the hidden curriculum and pointed out that school is not only a place of social control but also for ideological and political struggle.

From the analysis and criticism of reproduction theory emerged a new theory, labelled as resistance theory, which emphasised the notion of conflict, struggle, and resistance. Combining ethnographic studies with more recent cultural studies, these theorists apprehended the dialectic existing in social and cultural relations and restored the dialectical notion of human agency. Domination is considered as a process which is neither static nor complete. So, the oppressed are not seen as passive in relation to the domination. Intention, consciousness, and common sense are central categories in resistance theory. Power is not seen as one-dimensional; it is exercised by domination as well as by resistance.

Resistance theory rejects the traditional explanation of school failure and oppositional behaviour based on functionalism and educational psychology and redefines the causes and meanings of these facts through a framework of political science and sociology. Resistance

redefines the causes and meaning of oppositional behaviour by arguing that it has little to do with deviance and learned helplessness,
but a great deal to do with moral and political indignation (Giroux, 1983a: 289).

Resistance theorists go further and give an additional explanation about the consequences of some forms of resistance.

They point not only to the role that students play in challenging the most oppressive aspects of schools but also to the ways in which students actively participate through oppositional behaviour in a logic that very often consigns them to a position of class subordination and political defeat (Aronowitz and Giroux 1985: 71).

Willis (1977), in his ethnographic study in an English secondary school, demonstrated that some form of resistance contributed to such subordination and political defeat. In resisting the ruling class ideology they confined themselves to a working class job which limited their chances of reconstructing a new society.

In resistance theory, since schools are not homogeneous institutions but are characterised by different school knowledge, ideologies, organisational styles and classroom social relations, they also diverge in their relationship to the dominant society. So, while some schools support, others challenge the dominant ideology.

In Learning to Labour, Willis (1977) presents the school as a tool for reinforcing the dominant ideology and so the inequality of the students. However, unlike Althusser (1972), Bowles and Gintis (1977), and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), he states that the dominant ideology of schooling does not penetrate passively into the children of all social classes. His study focuses on the way the school prepares for the workforce but he demonstrates that school is not so successful in this task as previous research had suggested. He observed the existence of conflicts within the educational system and showed that schools are not intentionally dependent upon the economy.

According to Willis, the school reproduces the sort of labour force required by capitalism but not directly or intentionally. Students behave at school and choose manual work more on the grounds of their own class culture than as a result of school constraints. The 'lads' in his research had their own counter-school culture which was opposed to the values defended by the school. In fact, Willis found a strong similarity between the counter-school culture and the shop-floor culture. He concluded that the 'lads' had learned about the shop-floor culture through their parents, brothers and friends and transferred this culture to school because of the lack of relevance of the school culture to their future job.

The 'lads' showed resistance to the school culture in several ways such as; feeling themselves superior to and despising both their teachers and the 'conformist' students; giving little or no value to the school academic work; and having no interest in gaining qualifications. According to Willis, the 'lads' showed some 'penetration' of the school ideology. They recognised that the capitalist system was not fairly meritocratic and rejected the belief that
hard work could bring worthwhile rewards. They knew that the jobs likely to be available to them required little skill. If on the one hand they knew there was the possibility of moving into clerical work, on the other hand they believed that the small amount of extra money earned in this kind of job was not worth the effort required to get it.

Willis concluded that if on the one hand the 'lads', in part, understood their own alienation and exploitation, they did not have an overall picture of how capitalist system exploited them. Further, their own rejection of school credentials, intellectual knowledge and their refusal to compete for grades inserted them into a pattern of school failure and trapped them to their insertion into a system of exploitation and a future as manual working class.

Demonstrating the existence of a counterculture in school, Willis shows clearly that students, and so classes, are not totally submissive to the dominant ideology. They are also influenced by their own class culture. Consequently there is a space for class struggle.

Like Willis (1977), Apple emphasises the aspect of resistance existing in education. The focus of Apple's (1979) research is how the hidden curriculum embodies and reproduces the interests of the dominant group. He sees the school as an agent of cultural and ideological hegemony since the curriculum reflects the perspectives and beliefs of the ruling class and reveals how notions of resistance and struggle are ignored by school books and teachers. According to him, the increasing use of prepackaged curriculum materials is removing conception and critique from the pedagogical process and both de-empowers and de-skills teachers. In Apple words

Skills that teachers used to need, that were deemed essential to the craft of working with children ... are no longer necessary. With the large-scale influx of prepackaged material, planning is separated from execution. The planning is done at the level of production of both the rules for use of the material and the material itself. The execution is carried out by teachers. In the process, what were previously considered valuable skills slowly atrophy because they are less often required (Apple, 1982a: 146).

According to Apple "if everything is predetermined, there is no longer any pressing need for teacher interaction" (1982a: 148) which he argues, represents a new form of control over teachers. However, for him, most of system of controls embodies contradictions within itself. Thus, school can also be a place of resistance.

He reminds that the "continuing struggle for democratic and economic rights" carried on by minority groups is an example of the possibilities of concrete actions which can be taken in order to transform the present reality (Apple, 1979: 160).

Giroux (1983b), in his turn, does not deny the fact that schools are a place for cultural, ideological and economic reproduction, but he also highlights the relative independence that schools have from the capitalist market economy
and the existence of oppositional behaviour in school. He stresses the importance of attending to these oppositional behaviours since

Some acts of resistance reveal quite visibly their radical potential, while others are rather ambiguous; still others may reveal nothing more than an affinity for the logic of domination and destruction. (Giroux, 1983a: 290).

For him, to grasp the real intention of oppositional behaviour is not easy since it will neither be automatically revealed nor are individuals always able to explain their reasons. Furthermore interpretations can be distorted.

Giroux (1983a, 1983b) shows the link between the theory of resistance and a radical pedagogy, since both of them intend to politicise students for the struggle for a better life for all. He stresses the political and strategic need to distinguish between education and schooling:

Schooling as we use the term takes place within institutions that are directly or indirectly linked to the State through public funding or state certification requirements. Institutions that operate within the sphere of schooling embody the legitimating ideologies of the dominant society (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985: 131).

Education is much more broadly defined, and used in this context takes place outside of established institutions and spheres. In a radical sense, education represents a collectively produced set of experiences organized around issues and concerns that allow for a critical understanding of everyday oppression as well as the dynamics involved in constructing alternative political cultures. As the embodiment of an ideal, it refers to forms of learning and action based on a commitment to the elimination of class, racial and gender oppression. As a mode of intellectual development and growth, its focus is political in the broadest sense in that it functions to create organic intellectuals, and to develop a notion of active citizenry... (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985: 132).

Radical educators should be transformative intellectuals. So, they should not confine themselves to school or schooling activities but they have to establish organic connections, that is, to involve themselves with broader educational issues which happen outside school and aim to challenge the capitalist hegemony. In doing so, they can question and strongly influence school policy.

A radical educator should value the students' own experiences and culture, and bring them to school knowledge and classroom social practice. S/he has to translate pedagogical moments into a political process which helps students to challenge their domination and oppression.

To modern Marxists, education has an important role in setting up the cultural and ideological conditions necessary to change the social system. To reach this it is necessary to develop a class consciousness and to establish a new
Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, stressed the importance of culture and thought in bringing about a new hegemony. As a politician, he defended the socialisation of academic knowledge as a way to promote social transformation. In doing so, he gave a political importance to school and schooling. In fact, for him, a pedagogic action is also a political one, and vice-versa. Bringing politics and education together, he made a great contribution to understanding the role of teachers and schools in the transformation of our society.

Although he defended Marxist principles in a general way and so did not deny the importance of the economic infrastructure, he rejected the economic determinism stressed by Marx and emphasised the influence of ideas and the active role of the human being in the process of history. According to Gramsci, human beings are influenced by culture and consequently can change their history. However, the transformation of society largely depends on the education of the 'subaltern' or working class.

The concept of hegemony is central in Gramsci's social theory. Although the notion of hegemony is complex (Entwistle, 1979) it is necessary to understand it in order to understand Gramsci's conception of the function of education. This concept was used mainly in a broader sense, applied to relationships between groups or classes. Gramsci defined hegemony as the ruling class's capacity of imposing its political and ideological beliefs through consent. Hegemony works when the subaltern classes accept the political and moral values of the bourgeoisie class as if these could not be different (Entwistle, 1979). It is not reproduced by physical force but established through consent and acquiescence and mediated via cultural institutions such as the family, church, school, etc. In short, it is exercised by intellectual and moral persuasion. The maintenance of hegemony largely depends on education since "Every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship" (Gramsci, 1971: 350).

According to Gramsci, one's consciousness is not 'individual' but reflects social and cultural relations (Gramsci, 1971) as well as the history of these relations, that is, the sum up of all past (Gramsci, 1978a). Yet, a ruling class hegemony can never be complete or total, firstly because classes are divided within themselves. Hegemony is only possible when different groups of the same class have some sort of alliance and in Gramsci's words, form an historical block. Second, in order to be able to rule by consent, the state makes some concessions to the subaltern class. Third, individuals possess a dual or contradictory consciousness. For Gramsci, consciousness is not formed only by the ideas of the dominant class but also by their experiences. So, up to certain point, the subaltern classes are able to compare the social order and their own interests and see that some changes are necessary.

According to Gramsci, the consciousness of a subaltern class is produced by a combination of good and bad sense, "a contradictory realm of ideas and behaviour in which elements of accommodation and resistance exist in an unsteady state of tension" (Giroux, 1983a: 151) which can lead to radical changes.
For Gramsci all hegemonic relationships are necessarily pedagogic relationships (Gramsci, 1971; 19395 and vice-versa. Thus, since the hegemonic relationship is pedagogic, it depends on education to maintain itself. The maintenance of a hegemony requires an educative process in order to justify and legitimise it (Jesus, 1989). However, education can legitimise as well as contest the dominant ideology.

Gramsci defended the inseparability of educational and political activities. For him, the possibility of social change largely depended on the education of the subaltern or working class. In order to achieve a political revolution it was necessary to motivate a profound change in the consciousness of the masses, which are formed by the working class. The consciousness of the working class leads to the new cultural climate necessary for political and social transformation.

Gramsci (1971) conceived schooling as a way of acquiring a cognitive 'baggage' which is an arm in the development of a working class consciousness and the consequent counter-hegemony. The school curriculum should provide the ability to understand reality as well as the way to transform it. For Gramsci, every language is determined by a conception of the world, and culture and linguistic domination implies cultural domination. So he stressed the importance, for working class children, of having both a complete mastery of language in order to understand the elements of a conception of the world in it, and a high standard of literacy in order to understand the major currents of thought which dominate history (Gramsci, 1971). Although he criticised the lack of unity between school and life, he insisted that working class children should not only have the same kind of school as the ruling class in order to appropriate critically their own history, experience, and culture. For him, the accuracy of one's opinion depends on his broader and well based education (Joll, 1979).

Gramsci's conception of schooling and the curriculum was conservative in the sense that he valued the traditional humanistic model of education. His reason for defending this kind of school probably lies in the fact that he saw the hegemonic function of the school as being linked more to its organisation than to the curriculum. Although he recognised the role of the curriculum in helping to maintain the hegemony and criticised the fact that schools did not consider the culture of the subaltern classes, he insisted in a unique type of school where both oligarchic and subaltern classes had the same kind of education. However, this does not mean that all students will have the same capacity in school. He acknowledged the effect of different backgrounds and that some homes offered a more favourable environment for academic activities than others.

Undoubtedly the child of a traditional intellectual family acquires this psycho-physical adaptation more easily. Before he ever enters the classroom he has numerous advantages over his comrades, and is already in possession of attitudes learnt from his family environment.... This is why people think that the difficulty of study conceals some 'trick' which handicaps them - that is, when they do not simply believe that they are stupid by nature (Gramsci,
Students from the subaltern classes have difficulties to overcome and this has to be achieved mainly by both students' hard work and teachers' understanding of the cultural differences existing among students.

For Gramsci (1971), conflict is inherent in every educational process since students are not just passive or 'mechanical receiver' but they structure and use knowledge in a way that suits their own purposes. Students are not passive, a bucket to be filled. They do not simply internalise the dogmas of their parents and teachers but also, and not infrequently, reject their values and ideologies in a way which inevitably generates opposition. This is the way that the new generation brings about changes.

Although Gramsci was aware of the social function of grades and marks and the possible misuse of them, he recognised that evaluation is intrinsic to the function of the school and that marks are a way to see how a student is getting on. However, marks also have an instrumental function such as classifying students by their academic performance.

Although he defended a universal secondary school for all, he realised the danger that this could bring since "Wider participation in secondary education brings with it a tendency to ease off the discipline of studies, and to ask for 'relaxation'" (Gramsci, 1971: 42).

As Entwistle (1979) remind us, Gramsci was committed to a notion of hard-working students and active teacher. This commitment originated a strong criticism about the quality of teaching and recommendations for improvement. According to him, improvements in teaching would be reached by an improvement in teacher education. In relation to teacher education, he considered that teachers should be more aware of "the nature and philosophical content of their task" (Gramsci, 1971: 35) and the world of the students. They also should be educated not only by academic formation but also by their contact with students:

The relationship between teachers and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is also a pupil and every pupil a teacher (Gramsci, 1978a: 37).

Education should be a dialectical process where the relationship between teachers and students is active and reciprocal and the fact that teachers are also learners does not invalidate their authority.

With regard to authority, Gramsci recommended that it must be neither arbitrary nor repressive and should be exercised with love. In a letter to a relative, where he was discussing the education of a child, he recommended the use of authority which comes from affection and family life, applying pressure on her (his niece) in affectionable and loving fashion but nevertheless rigidly and inflexibly firm... (Gramsci, 1979: 162).
Gramsci also recommended the recruitment of a new kind of teacher as a way of improving the quality of teaching. This new kind of teacher should be an 'organic' intellectual, that is, an intellectual who is committed to a particular social group, in this case committed to the subaltern classes and the development of a counter-hegemony.

In Gramsci's conception, everyone is intellectual although not everyone performs the function of the intellectual (Gramsci 1971). Everyone has his own philosophy, his specific way of thinking about the world and his daily experiences. However, there are two distinct ways of thinking about reality: the popular and the scientific philosophy. Although Gramsci recognised the difficulty of separating these two forms of philosophy, in a didactic way, he did distinguished between them.

Popular philosophy, or 'common sense', is a view of the world which is characterised by a limited mode of self-consciousness, the existence of superstition, folklore, contradictions, and incoherence. It is fragmented, non-critical and produced in an non-systematic way. So, it lacks the critical dimension required to solve its contradictions. However, it cannot be despised since it is the basis of good sense. It can enrich itself with scientific and philosophical conceptions and be elevated to good sense when the critical and systematisation processes are introduced. According to Giroux (1983a) it must be viewed within an historical context and recognising that social relations are socially constructed.

Scientific philosophy or 'good sense' is characterised by the logical coherence of the ideas and the absence of superstition and folklore. In Gramsci's words it is "a state of mind in which common sense is purged of its superstition and folklore and given a 'coherent unity' through exposure to philosophers" (1971: 354).

For Gramsci there is no pure common or good sense:

Every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense', which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man. Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'common sense': this is the document of its historical effectiveness (Gramsci, 1971: 326).

The aim of the school is to change children's common sense to good sense and to produce an intellectual elite. In other words, they must be moved from the spontaneous and unconscious way of thinking, to the systematic, coherent and critical way (Gramsci, 1971).

Gramsci used the concept of intellectual in a broader sense:

By 'intellectuals' must be understood not those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an organisational function in a wider sense - whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of
political administration (Gramsci, 1971: 97).

He characterised an intellectual by both his place and function in social relations and by his contemporaneity. So, organic refers to a place, that is, the socio-political location of the intellectual.

Gramsci emphasises the role of state in the reproduction of the hegemony. He divides the state into two specific areas: the political and the civil society. Political society comprises the administrative, law, and other institutions whose functions are based on the logic of force and oppression. Civil society comprises the private and public institutions that rely upon meanings, symbols, and ideas to preserve the ruling class ideology such as church, family, school, trade union, etc. The modern state is characterised by the existence of force and coercion on the side of the rulers, and persuasion and consent on the side of the ruled. The domination of one class over another does not depend on economic or physical power only, but rather on hegemony.

Although Gramsci saw the school as a way of developing the struggle for change, he believed that it must be accompanied by other counter-hegemonic struggles. He emphasised the collective work in the process of historical change (Gramsci, 1970a). He also believed that the creation of a new hegemonic culture could not be spontaneous, but rather needed the organisation and leadership of the organic intellectuals. These organic intellectuals had the function of elaborating the conceptual and philosophical aspects of the relationship between theory and practice (Gramsci, 1971). In his own words,

Critical understanding of oneself, therefore, comes through the struggle of political "hegemonies" (...). Critical self-consciousness signifies historically and politically the creation of intellectual cadres: a human mass does not "distinguish" itself and does not become independent "by itself", without organising itself (in a broad sense) and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is, without organisers and leaders, without the theoretical aspect of theory-practice (...). But this process of the creation of intellectuals is a long and difficult one, full of contradictions of advances and retreats, of disbanding and regrouping, in which the "fidelity" of the mass (...) is sometimes put to a severe test (Gramsci, 1970: 67-8).

Gramsci emphasised the importance and significance that political parties have in the development of intellectuals although he also stated that "schools are the instruments for producing intellectuals at various levels (Gramsci, 1970: 123).

Like Gramsci, Freire (1970; 1972; 1985) believes that changes in the political, cultural and economic area bring changes in the relations of power. For both writers, human beings can change reality through the development of class consciousness and education plays an important role in the development of this consciousness. However, education can reach this aim only through an active and dialectical process. So, both writers place education within the political sphere.
Freire, like Gramsci, sees education as a political act and vice-versa and credits an educational role to the political party. For him,

From the political point of view, it is impossible to deny the political nature of the educational process as it is to deny the educational character of the political act. This does not mean, however, that the political nature of the educational process and the educational character of the political act drain the understanding of that process and this act. Just as a neutral education that claims to be at the service of humanity, of human beings in general, is impossible, so is a political practice devoid of educational meaning. But in this sense, all political parties are also always educators, and, as such, their political purpose is to win or lose souls as they denounce and issue statements (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 38).

The central concept in Freire theory is 'conscientisation', that is, the development in the individuals of a critical view of the society and the awareness of their capacity to change society. In Freire's words, it represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural by-product of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort, based on favourable historical conditions (Freire, 1976: 19).

To him, conscientisation is not a mechanistic process, which depends only on economic conditions, but must be developed through the educational process. In the process of the development of consciousness, educators must recognise that rather than 'given', the world is dynamically 'in the making' (Freire, 1985: 106). However, he recognises the existence of structural determinants.

In analysing Freire’s pedagogy and particularly his concept of consciousness, Shor (1993) presents three different stages to which critical consciousness is reached. In the lowest level or 'intransitive thought', people live fatalistically, believing that their fate is out of their hands. They feel disempowered and do not think their action can change reality. In a second stage or 'semi-intransitive' level, people exercise some thought and action for change. They are partly empowered yet still treat problems in isolation, that is, one at a time, rather than seeing them as a part of a whole system. The highest level or 'critical transitivity' people have a critical consciousness and so think holistically and critically about their conditions. They see themselves making the changes needed, transforming the reality. They feel themselves empowered to think and to act on the existing conditions and relate those conditions to a larger context of power in society.

Education as a tool for developing a critical consciousness must be a dialogic process. Dialogue, in Freire’s conception, is a challenge to existing domination. In dialogue, group leader and group members related to each other as subjects, that is, in horizontal relationships where the group leader learns from group members and vice-versa. It is an encounter on an equal basis, a
joint enquiry and exchange of information where the main goal is to discover reality together, to unmask the false myths. So the relationship between teacher and students must be democratic.

For Freire, dialogic process is understood as a social process, in which teachers and students are at the same time both educators and learners:

... with such a way of understanding dialogue, the object to be known is not an exclusive possession of one of the subjects doing the knowing, one of the people in the dialogue. In our case of education, knowledge of the object to be known is not the sole possession of the teacher, who gives knowledge to the students in a gracious gesture. Instead of this cordial gift of information to students, the object to be known mediates the two cognitive subjects. In other words, the object to be known is put on the table between the two subjects of knowing. They meet around it and through it for mutual inquiry (Freire and Shor, 1987: 99).

In a dialogue process, the object is discussed socially and historically, and learning occurs within a conversation rather than a top-to-down instruction. Although teachers have had prior contact with the object, this does not mean that they have extinguished all dimensions in knowing that object. There is, always, something new to be learnt. However, this does not mean that teachers and students are 'equal' and that teachers must deny what they know. On the contrary, they must demonstrate their competence to the students. Educators and students continue to be different. Nevertheless, a democratic or 'liberating' teacher cannot allow this necessary difference to become 'antagonistic' (Freire and Shor, 1987: 92).

Dialogue implies absence of authoritarianism what means a constant tension in the relation between authority and liberty. Consequently, anyone involved in a dialogic setting has the right of not speaking, even because pressure to speak creates a false democracy. On the other hand, one must keep in mind that students' silence is a consequence of the culture of silence.

For Freire, the 'culture of silence' is the kind of cultural domination where the oppressors overwhelm the oppressed with their values and norms. Dominated or oppressed classes internalise the ruling class ideology, the ideas propagated by the ruling class through the social relations of production. This hegemonic (Gramsci) or cultural (Freire) subordination is accepted naturally by the dominated classes. However, in spite of the domination of the ruling class ideology, dominated people can develop a critical consciousness and achieve a critical distance from hegemonic or cultural domination. Education must help the working class achieve a critical consciousness and develop a counter-hegemony. It also must organise people in order to achieve economic and political power.

In a cultural domination, the oppressed internalise the oppressor 'myths' and so feel themselves ignorant, inferior and dependent to the culture of the oppressor. They accept the imposed norms and values as superior to their own. School, in a general way, exerts a cultural domination or invasion since
Teachers impose their culture and thought in a way that students lose their own culture and start to see reality through the eyes of the invaders, that is, the teachers. Teachers should develop forms of knowledge and classroom practices that validate the students' own experiences and culture.

They need to use their students' cultural universe as a point of departure, enabling students to recognise themselves as possessing a specific and important cultural identity (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 127).

For Freire, both the form and content of school knowledge and the kind of relationships existent in school are parts of a critical pedagogy, struggle over what counts as legitimate culture and forms of empowerment. He also stressed the value of self-discipline in studying and emphasised that rather than an easy task, it requires hard work and persistence (Freire, 1972).

Freire's philosophical and epistemological position is that there is an "indispensable unity between subjectivity and objectivity in the fact of knowing. Reality is never just simply the objective datum, the concrete fact, but it is also man's perception of it" (Freire, 1985: 51). With this idea, he calls attention to both the active role of man in the process of knowing and the capacity of people to change themselves and the world.

Praxis is the central concept of Freire's epistemology. He views praxis or social practice as the source and objective of knowledge and as a way of expressing the link between theory and practice. For him, knowledge must be based on practical action and reflection.

The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action. For the learner to know what he did not know before, he must engage in an authentic process of abstraction by means of which he can reflect on the action-object whole, or, more generally, on forms of orientation in the world (Freire, 1970: 31).

However, knowledge and praxis are determined by the socio-political context:

...knowledge is always a process, and results from the conscious action (practice) of human beings on the objective reality which, in turn, conditions them (Freire, 1978: 89).

Freire (1970), like Gramsci (1971), emphasises the social character of language. For both authors, people's language largely depends on their existential experience and reflects class relationships and ideologies.

Freire's experience and theory is related more to adult education, where, to him, it is the real lever for transformation (Freire and Shor, 1987: 130). This place exists also inside the school. However, it is more limited since a single group cannot change reality.
To change the concrete conditions of reality means a tremendous political practice, which demands mobilisation, organisation of the people, programs, all these things which are not organised just inside the schools, which cannot be organised just inside a classroom or a school (Freire and Shor, 1987: 134).

Only political action in society can make social transformation, not critical study in the classroom. The structure of society, like the capitalist mode of production, have to be changed for society to be transformed (Freire and Shor, 1987: 175).

However, for Freire, this does not mean that work in school is not worthwhile. On the contrary, Shor (Freire and Shor, 1987: 138) remembers that work in school can help to detect problems in school, and Freire points out that it "must be respected for contributing to social transformation" (Freire and Shor, 1987: 131).

Not only do Freire and Gramsci have many common points, but, where they differ, they complement rather than contradict each other. Both reject economic determinism and stress the importance of ideas and action in bringing about a new hegemony and transforming the reality; emphasise the social character of language; see consciousness as a result of social and cultural relations; defend the inseparability of educational and political activities; criticise the lack of unity between school and life; condemn the fact that schools do not consider the culture of subaltern or oppressed; see education as a tool both to maintain and transform the reality; value and recommend a hard-work for student and an active and critical role for teachers; see man as not just a passive or mechanical receiver but as an active person who structures and uses knowledge in a way that suits their own purposes. But while Gramsci defends an elitist curriculum, Freire emphasises the importance of considering the students' own culture; sees education as a dialectical process and the relationship between teachers and students as reciprocal in a way that every student is also a teacher and every teacher has to learn with their students; values authority, which on the other hand, must be neither arbitrary nor repressive; gives a political importance to school and school knowledge, although Gramsci gives more emphasis to teachers and school knowledge as an instrument to transform society. Both recommends a new kind of teacher, an intellectual committed to a subaltern or oppressed group and the development of a counter-hegemony (Gramsci) or critical consciousness (Freire). They also recommend that the struggle for change developed in school must be accompanied by other counter-hegemonic struggles; emphasise the collective work in the process of historical change and see the importance of intellectual and political party in organising it.

As we have shown in previous pages, dropout is one of the most important problems in Brazilian schools. In spite of the existence of a lot of research concerning this question, further studies are required. These studies must be undertaken within both a new conception of school and education and a new methodological approach. In these studies, school must be considered not only as a place for reproduction (Althusser, 1972; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), but also a place for resistance (Willis, 1977; Apple, 1979, 1982a, 1982b; Giroux, 1983a, 1983b).
Although the resistance or counterculture can naturally appear in school, this is more an exception than a rule. So, 'resistance' must be mobilised through the pedagogical process. In order to reach this aim, Freire’s and Gramsci’s ideas are fundamental: Freire, because of his ideas themselves and his knowledge about Brazilian reality; Gramsci, because of his points in common with and his complementing Freire’s work. Yet, the ideas of other resistance theorists cannot be overlooked.

Gramsci (1971; 1978) and Freire (1970; 1972; 1985; 1987) among others, see education as a way of developing consciousness and creating a counter-hegemony or a counterculture. It must be a process which motivates political and social struggle to change the existing reality. Organic intellectuals (Gramsci) and/or critical teachers (Freire) have a great responsibility in achieving this aim, which requires a dialogue or problem-solving process.

In this approach, education and epistemology are very interrelated since both deal with knowledge. The philosophical and epistemological fundamentals of this approach state that the human being is active and reality is not a 'given'. Man’s activity is present in the process of knowing and in his capacity to change. So he can change himself and the world.

Praxis or social practice must be the source and objective of knowledge as well as the criterion of its correctness. So education must be a social activity.

For dialogue to be a method of true knowledge, the knowing subject must approach reality scientifically in order to reach the dialectical process existing in reality (Freire, 1985: 55).

In sum, in this approach, education, action and the process of knowing are interrelated. So, any research carried on within this approach must also involve education and action, as justified by Freire:

If I perceive the reality as the dialectical relationship between subject and object, then I have to use methods for investigation which involve the people of the area being studied as researchers; they should take part in the investigation themselves and not serve as a passive objects of the study (Freire, cited by Gaventa, 1988: 19).

Participatory research is a new methodological approach which integrates these three activities since rather than a simple process of generating knowledge, participatory research is seen also as an educational process (raising consciousness) and an action for transformation.
2 - CRITIQUE OF TRADITIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODS

2.1 - Shortcomings and Limitations of Traditional Social Science Methods

Human beings have always been interested in studying the phenomena of nature. This is indeed a human characteristic and so common behaviour. The human being is always observing what is going on in his world. From his observations he makes comparisons, hypotheses and assumptions, analyses phenomena and draws conclusions. In this way he produces knowledge. However, knowledge produced by human beings is classified in different ways depending on how or by whom it is produced. When it is produced by the "common" people through their day-to-day experiences, it is classified as "popular" knowledge. If however it is produced by the scientist, that is by a person who has a higher educational level, and through the use of complex research techniques and methods, it is considered "scientific". Scientific knowledge is also considered to have a higher status as it is generated under the rigour of scientific method. However, the differences between these two kinds or levels of knowledge do not end in this simple comparison since they have many other differences and similarities.

Most of our present social science knowledge was produced within the traditional paradigm based on a positivist and functionalist model of science. This model is based on several assumptions such as:

a) it is based on the model created by physics and natural science. So, social facts should be treated as 'things';
b) it makes a dichotomy between the subject and the object of study and also between theory and practice;
c) it lays emphasis on the rigour of the method based on the principles of neutrality, objectivity and rationality. Therefore, knowledge is said to be neutral, pure and universally true;
d) it emphasises the use of quantitative techniques.

However, this kind of knowledge has been the focus of many criticisms in recent decades. The limitations of the traditional model's grasp of social reality have been pointed out by authors such as Kopnin (1972), Silverman (1972), Walsh (1972), Smart (1976), Feyerabend (1977) Erasmie (1980) and Oliveira and Oliveira (1981), among others. To them the natural science method is not able to grasp the internal dynamism of social questions. The human and social sciences deal with persons and social phenomena which are dynamic and therefore cannot be studied with the same methodology elaborated to study static objects.

The traditional paradigm attempts to study people and social phenomena using
the methods of natural science, which means that the facts of the social world should be seen as 'things', in the same way as the objects and events of the natural world. It starts the process of knowledge production with an hypothesis, which must be confirmed through confrontation between the theoretical framework and empirical data.

Although according to Erasmie (1980) social facts are determined by the consciousness of individuals, the traditional approach studies facts as if they were only an external process. Being external to the individual, they can be studied 'objectively', as external things. However, Rist (apud Walker, 1984) criticises this model on the ground that it supposes social reality to be a collection of 'things' existing both outside the researcher and independent of her/his experiences as well as definable and amenable to quantification. Apart from this, as it looks at only a small number of variables it cannot grasp the complexity of the situation and consequently the conclusions have severe limitations (Erasmie, 1980) since social science deals with people who are dynamic and possess consciousness. So, social science requires a specific method, which can grasp the dynamism of social phenomena.

Reality is not always transparent or manifested since the appearance and the essence of the phenomena do not coincide. Reality is dialectic and so cannot be studied by the traditional model. Being dialectic, the study of reality requires a method which can grasp the reality as a whole. A particular phenomenon must be seen as part of a whole reality which is not just a set of relationships, facts and processes, but also its genesis and structure (Kosik, 1976). Concerned with this peculiarity, Fals Borda (1983) has criticised the presupposition that the same concept of causality can be applied in both the natural and social sciences. For him, within the positivist perspective it is not possible to study social movements because it reduces the complexity and the dynamics of social reality and isolates the social facts from social and economic problems (Fals Borda, 1983). Any fact gains truth and validity only when it is not separated from the whole reality, of which it is a part and from which it receives its influences. In sum, the partial and abstract insight of the social phenomenon usually disguises the existing differences, makes them homogeneous and eliminates the conflicts helping to preserve the status quo.

The traditional model of science starts the process of knowledge production with an hypothesis, which is based on theories already existing. These theories guide all research. If on the one hand the already existing theories facilitate the research process, on the other hand they also bring some limitations. According to Kuhn (1962) in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, normal science is characterised by a commitment to a scientific paradigm, that is, a theory and framework within which a group of scientists operate. Based on a set of beliefs about what the natural world is composed of, a paradigm determines what sort of questions are relevant, what sort of procedures should be followed and what counts as a true knowledge.

Within the traditional or positivist model, science must be undertaken only by highly qualified people. However, with rare exceptions, the highly qualified people belong to the ruling class or were educated within its ideology. In
this way and as any research must be undertaken within a paradigm, research tends to be undertaken in the interests of the social group to which the researcher belongs. This helps to maintain the status quo (Demo, 1984a). According to Vio Grossi (1984) the illusion that investigation has to be rigorous, scientifically infallible and consequently has to be done only by small group of highly qualified people was created in order to hide the link between science and the ruling class.

As Demo and Vio Grossi, many other authors (Feyrabend, 1977; Thiolent, 1981; Fals Borda, 1981; Hall, 1981; Vio Grossi, 1984) have criticised the engagement of scientists with the ruling class and their help in the maintenance of the status quo. In this way, it is not surprising that for Hall (1979), the results of research undertaken from the traditional perspective have provided few solutions to pressing social problems.

The dichotomy between subject and object is another traditional characteristic strongly criticised. The traditional model regards researched people as only a passive source of information. It neglects the capacity of people to participate. People are regarded as a source of information but are considered unable either to analyse their problems or to modify their reality. This is probably mainly because according to Hall (1975) and Kassan (1981), traditional researchers see some researched groups as marginal or incapable of articulating their own needs. In this way, the responsibility for the research process concerns the specialist only, since s/he is in possession of the tools to elaborate an objective and true knowledge.

In dichotomising the relation between subject and object scientists establish the unilateral control by the researcher over the entire research process and treat people as objects who only respond to the researcher’s questions (Tandon, 1981b). This procedure is justified by the claims of objectivity and validity which try to mask political and ideological questions. In doing so they also defend the existence of different levels of knowledge, considering as valid only that produced by scientists and not recognising popular knowledge.

The interpretation of reality by the lay person is considered by this school to be both deficient and inadequate (Smart, 1976). However, this fact exposes the classist and anti-democratic character of traditional science which reveals the compromises of science with the dominant class (Hall, 1975; Tandon, 1981b). These compromises are expressed both by the social class of the scientist and by the products of science, which have, to a considerable extent, served to maintain the status quo while the problems of the great mass of people have not been solved. According to Hall, those most familiar with the problems and whose daily existence is affected by poor health, poor nutrition, low levels of production or past failures of educational provision are effectively taken out of the active process of making the changes which might lead to improvements. Control is left to those who by definition and levels of training are outside the experiences within which change is sought (Hall, 1975: 27).
As between subject and object, theory and practice are also seen as independent by the traditional model. However, theory and practice cannot be separated in any science as practice is one criterion of theory validation. For Demo (1984a) theory without practice cannot be considered theory. Practice is the real way of knowing because through it one can check the knowledge produced and generate new knowledge. In social science the dialectic between theory and practice is a fundamental condition of research and the transformation of social reality. It is a very important methodological element in the knowledge process both as a tool to validate theory and as a form to assume that research must be an interference in social reality (Demo, 1984a). It is also important as a way of revealing the ideological option chosen by the researcher.

Erasme (1980) and Silva e Silva (1986) have condemned the separation between theory and practice where it leads to a poor utilisation of the results if it is considered to be in the interests of the investigated groups.

The claims of neutrality, objectivity and rationality have also received a lot of criticism, mainly because these presuppositions lead to a simplification of social reality.

Halloran (1974) denies the possibility of undertaking neutral research in social science and emphasises that research is a form of social control and 'neutral' enquiries have served to maintain the status quo. For Freire (1978) any issue is historical and involves orientation in terms of values. So, proclaimed neutrality is always hidden option and science's proclaimed neutrality is only a myth necessary to the maintenance of the ruling class. According to Thiolent (1981), any research procedure involves theoretical and practical presuppositions which are in accordance with the researcher's socio-political interests. So, neutrality is either false or does not exist.

In sum, by declaring itself neutral or value-free, traditional science is both failing to consider the subjectivity of the researcher as well as hiding his engagement with ruling class ideology.

For Berlo, it is paramount that scientists recognise the natural presence of subjectivity, as

The scientist's own values inherently are partial determinants of his work, the types of behaviours he chooses to study. In that sense, it is absurd to argue that scientific activity is value-free, or should be... The observer is part of any observation. That statement should lead the scientist to protect his observation as much as possible from his own biases, but it should not cause him to rule out his own experiences and introspective ideas from his conceptual framing of constructs and hypotheses (Berlo, quoted by Beltran, 1976).

The possibility of objectivity in social science has also been criticised on the ground that defending objectivity through the rigorous use of scientific
method, science is also defending the supremacy of scientific knowledge as a final truth (Silva e Silva, 1986). For Thiolent (1981) objectivity is relative since social knowledge always consists of successive approximations and relates to the perspectives of maintenance or transformation. Objectivity and rationality also reveal the anti-historical and anti-dialectical character of the classical procedures. According to Fals Borda (1983) social scientists tend to put law and concepts in absolute terms when they do not take any account of the historical context of knowledge.

Demo (1984a) for instance, does not accept the claim of scientific objectivity on the grounds that social science is intrinsically ideological. For him ideology exists in the reality itself because it is inevitably historical and political. On the other hand, knowledge is produced by human beings who are influenced by their social, political and cultural situation within society. Therefore it cannot be pure, value-free or final truth. On the contrary, truth is always relative because knowledge is an unfinished process influenced by both the historical context and research subjectivity.

The traditional model of science emphasises the use of quantitative techniques on the ground that they guarantee the necessary neutrality and objectivity required by the scientific quality of knowledge.

Among the quantitative techniques, questionnaires is one of the most frequently used by traditional science. However, to Thiolent (1981) the methodological approach which grants a privilege to techniques which measure individual opinions and attitudes gathered through questionnaires, leads to a weak and insignificant result and makes few contributions to social science. Thiolent (1981) also criticises the anti-historical and anti-dialectical character of any other procedures which aim to catch social reality through an instantaneous "picture" from public opinion surveys without taking into consideration the social structure and movements. To him, social representation is reduced to an atomic, individualist and psychological view when constructed with data gathered through public opinion research.

In analysing this aspect, Erasmie (1980) observed that while stressing empirical methods and techniques, the traditional approach is able to reach only the external appearances of phenomena and fails to reach internal ones, that is, the essence or intrinsic characteristics of the social questions. To Hall (1975), extracting information from individuals in isolation and aggregating this into a single set of figures reduces the complexity and richness of human experience.

Traditional researchers claim that those objects not amenable to rigorous measurement do not belong to the domain of science, but to the 'subjective' territory where personal impressions and preferences are placed and consequently where no reliable and valid generalisations can be obtained. These researchers believe it is possible to be 'objective' as they are able to detach themselves completely from their own values when doing research (Boltran, 1976). This belief has been seriously criticised and new attitudes have been assumed not only in the Third World (Freire, 1978; Brandão, 1981; Tandon, 1981b; De Vries, 1981 among others) but also in Europe (Halloran, 1974; Orifice, 1981, 1983) and in the United States (Horowitz, 1982).
Within the new approach to knowledge production, knowledge validation cannot be based only on the criteria of neutrality, objectivity and consequent scientific truth. According to De Vries (1981) the most important criterion is the judgment of exploited people. In this sense Hall (1979: 393) pointed out that social scientists "have not reduced the gaps in wealth between nations nor those between the peasant and working class and the ruling class". It is not necessary to say that while the question of wealth remains, the questions of education, shelter, etc. also remain.

Concerning the claim that only highly qualified people are able to produce scientific and so, valid knowledge, in several studies (Brandão, 1981; Gaventa, 1981; Kanhare, 1981) people have demonstrated their capacity to investigate their own reality. Hall (1984) pointed out that in evaluating the results of literacy programmes carried out with UNESCO/UNDP support, many persons without training were recruited in the area to work in research and evaluation units. These persons not only proved capable of carrying out their task but, in some cases, they also proved to be better than those who had formal qualifications.

In most cases it was found that, after some experience, these untrained individuals have been able to carry out their work in a perfectly satisfactory way. In some cases these persons have proven to be much better than their colleagues with formal qualifications, especially in terms of working with local people or explaining why certain statistical results have emerged (Hall, 1984: 293).

On the other hand, many qualified researchers produce knowledge with several weaknesses at least, in relation with people's needs. Socialised into value premises of neutrality and objectivity, researchers consider themselves above ideological positions and make no attempt to remove ideology from their work. They are used to showing "what is" and "how it is" but rarely "why it is" and "what it should be" because this may expose the research ideology and constrain them to take a position.

Hall (1975) considered that traditional survey research over-simplified social reality and was therefore inaccurate, often alienating, dominating and oppressive, and did not provide any easy link to possible subsequent action. Brown (1983) criticised both the way in which traditional research seeks to build general laws which explains social phenomena across all classes, and the attempt to ensure the validity of its findings by the use of a rigorous methodology and neutrality, thereby reducing the ambiguity of the conclusions or the relevance of different explanations.

Dominant research methods used in universities and other institutions produce analyses which are descriptive, non-explanatory, technical politically sterilised and ahistorical (Kassan, 1981). Qualitative aspects have been sacrificed to facilitate elaborated quantifications, statistical analysis and computerisation. The language used to disseminate its results is "scientific" and therefore not understood by common people.
Two basic purposes motivate most social research carried out particularly in the Third World. Firstly, there is a government interest and the needs of administrators and policy makers for information to make decisions, at both the national and international levels. At the national level, there is the task of attempting to 'solve' the problems concerned with inequality and distribution; at the international level, inter-governmental agencies attempt to offer solutions to these issues. The second purpose is related to the interest of social scientists in seeing knowledge as a commodity. So research and the production of knowledge is a way to earn money, mainly by the publication of results through journals, books, seminars and conferences. However, those who originally gave the information are alienated from the results, that is, the researched do not buy the results nor are they disseminated to them in other ways (Hall, 1979).

Traditional research very often is carried out as a mere academic exercise. It has exploited the people without changing their poor living conditions, particularly in Third World countries. Frequently this kind of research has been used as an imperialist weapon in the sense that the social investigation of an anti-revolutionary character was undertaken which largely promoted the diffusion of the ideology of the United States as a model of society, in opposition to the socialist model. In Latin America a good example of this kind of research was the 'Project Camelot' (Horowitz, 1967; Dahrendorf, 1968). Actually, in Latin America the number of studies undertaken about oppressed people such as native people, slum groups, big city periphery inhabitants, industrial workers, students, etc., rose greatly in recent decades, with the intention of creating institutions and mechanisms of social control (Oliveira and Oliveira, 1981).

2.2 - The Emergence of a New Methodology

Many criticisms of the limitations of the positivist and functionalist model in social science have been made by researchers who have found these paradigms inadequate and insufficient as well as oppressive. These criticisms generated a search for a new paradigm which overcame the deficiencies of the traditional model.

Although the 1960s decade is commonly pointed out as the starting point of new paradigms, their roots can be found in the early works of Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1947).

Phenomenological sociology and Marxist analysis are considered by Smart (1976) the two main contributors in the promotion of a new methodological paradigm, although, as the same author has pointed out, both of them have their limitations.

Phenomenological sociology came to light with the work of Husserl, Schutz and Merleau-Ponty. This school criticised positivism for adopting the methods used in natural science in the study of social phenomena (Walsh, 1972).
phenomenologists this assumption is unjustified as social phenomena have qualitative differences from natural phenomena. Social phenomena have intrinsic meaning structures which provide the scientist "with more freedom to observe and construct explanations external to and independent of the particular phenomena under investigation" (Smart, 1976: 74).

According to Smart (1976) the phenomenologists tried to show the existence of common-sense assumptions in scientific accounts and elaborate an adequate methodology to study the social world. In doing so, they provided a theoretical de-reification of sociology and the social world. They also outlined

the necessity of the sociologist proceeding beyond a mere reinterpretation and elaboration of everyday typifications towards an understanding of the intersubjective process of meaning construction (Smart, 1976: 5).

Phenomenologists reject the natural science paradigm which states that the social world is objective and independent of the interpretative procedure of his members. On the contrary, they stress the subjectivity of the social world, which depends on the activity, interpretation and intention of the human observer. To them, objectivity is reached through subjectivity, that is, through several subjective studies. They also stress the role of language in the interpretation of the social world. Phenomenologists also showed a great preoccupation with 'everyday life'. To them, the bases for any inquiry is the understanding of everyday life.

The great strength of the phenomenological approach was the distinction it made between the natural and social worlds and the attempt to elaborate an adequate methodology for the study of social phenomena which emphasised individual experience. However this approach was criticised as offering only a limited understanding of everyday life and for failing to provide any discussion of power. To Smart (1976) as well as Feyerabend (1977), this paradigm helped in the maintenance of the status quo.

While in United States and Europe the phenomenological paradigm was widely disseminated and well accepted, Third World Countries continued to search for an approach more appropriate for their own reality.

To Gouldner (1971) the search for alternatives has come from the failure of many social scientists in relation to the positivist model to offer a theory of social change (Gouldner, 1971). New approaches such as phenomenology and ethnomethodology also did not help to change reality.

Another contribution to the search has emerged from the frustration of many educators and social scientists with the continuing failure of development programmes in the Third World. Valuable contributions also come from educators and others seeking concrete ways of being engaged in education and action which worked explicitly on behalf of oppressed and marginalised people (Tandon, 1981b; Hall, 1984; Van Dijk, 1984).

Researchers, particularly in the Third World, were disenchanted with research
which purported to produce objective knowledge about people and social conditions while using methods which distorted that very reality. The Third World has plenty of examples of 'city-based' highly trained researchers sending out questionnaires and interviewers with the aim of describing the situation of oppressed people. To Hall (1984) these questionnaires designed in the city by outsiders with a purpose which people had not understood or asked for, were then taken away and 'analysed' to be used in planning documents, for individual career development, or even abandoned. This kind of 'detached' work created major distortions and misconceptions about the nature of the people who have practical not hypothetical needs. Neither the work, nor the analysis, nor the use of the results was based on the direct involvement of the people concerned. These kinds of research did not produce any tangible results of direct benefit for the people.

At the same time that there was a continuing failure of 'detached' research there was an increasing trend of successful development efforts initiated and organised by ordinary or common people mainly in the Third World. In these experiences a new way of working with the people was introduced, which attempted to investigate through the activities done together by researcher and the people. In this new approach people participated in the data gathering and interpretation, thereby allowing them more control in decision-making. According to Tandon (1981b: 20) such successful research in many instances by poor, illiterate and rural people, "underscores the 'correctness' of their knowledge and paradigm for development and change". These successful experiences were undertaken for the people and with the people and the researched people were involved in all or a great part of the process. These experiences were based on the presupposition that knowledge generated collectively was a useful and necessary tool to lead the group to their liberation from their oppressed condition. Hall (1975) states that research must be justified not only as an intellectual or academic exercise. It is important that the community or people researched gain not only from the results of the research, but also from the process itself. So they become more able to articulate their own problems and to initiate processes to find solutions.

Lewin (1947), Swantz (1975) and Vio Grossi (1981, 1984) also stress the importance of the research team in contributing to the practical solution of problems. According to these authors, when researchers and researched work together, there is a better working atmosphere which provides a closer involvement between the community and outside members and therefore a better outcome. Hall (1975) regards the collective mode of knowledge production as more 'scientific' because it produces a more complex and therefore a more accurate picture of reality.

Using three concepts - alienation, social change and research cycle - Rowan (1981) compared the old and new paradigm and showed the existing differences between them. Alienation in research occurs when a person is treated as a fragment, as static, as a subject and for someone else's interest. Alienation can occur in different forms. Based on Marx, Rowan (1981) presents four forms: alienation from the product; alienation from work; alienation from other people; and alienation from self. Although any form of social research can embody some level of alienation, there are some differences between them. To
him, the new paradigms are less alienating than the old ones. In a list of nineteen styles of research, Rowan classified participatory research as being the one which have the lowest level of alienation.

To Rowan (1981) the new paradigms of social science are more concerned with social change and to him, the new research approach "changes the world in a three ways; it makes a difference to the researcher; it makes a difference to those who come to know about the research; and it makes a difference to whatever is studied" (Rowan, 1981: 96-7).

While in the old paradigms all research steps and decisions are taken by the researcher (with the possible help of some academic colleagues), in the new paradigms, decisions are taking with people who participate in the whole process.

In the search to find a new research approach which could overcome the weaknesses of the traditional paradigm, several methodological approaches emerged: Thematic Investigation; Action-Investigation; Action Research; Militant-Investigation; Participatory Research; etc. Of these, Action Research and Participatory Research have been applied most commonly in the Third World countries.

Although all these new approaches arose from experiences with people and with the aim of producing knowledge collectively through the involvement of the researched in the knowledge process, they differ in terms of the concepts they employ and the methodology they use. Since Action Research, based on the phenomenological paradigm, and Participatory Research, based on Marxist approaches, were the most frequently applied approaches, the general characteristics of each of them will be identified and contrasted.

2.2.1 — Action Research
In the 1940s Kurt Lewin suggested a new approach in applied social science, which consisted in studying things through changing them and observing the effects. He proposed in his approach simultaneously to solve social problems and to generate new knowledge through cycles of analysis, fact finding, conceptualisation, planning, implementation and evaluation. He characterised his approach as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social actions" (Lewin, quoted by Susman and Evered, 1978: 586-587).

One of the most commonly used definitions of action research in contemporary literature is that present by Rapoport (1970: 499).

Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.

A third aim in action research, pointed out by Susman and Evered (1978: 588),
is "to develop the self-help competencies of people facing problems".

The aims of action research presented above emphasise the importance of generating knowledge through collaboration between researchers and clients and the development of clients' self-competencies.

Linking action and research or in other words, theory and practice, Lewin emphasises the importance of generating knowledge through collaboration between researchers and clients and the development of clients' self-competencies. Lewin's preoccupation in solving immediately critical social issues rose from the fact that traditional science was not helping to solve these problems (Gusman and Evered, 1978).

Action research is usually identified as having the following characteristics:

1 - It is naturalistic research that contrasts sharply with the traditional model (Whyte and al. 1991). In action research the natural setting and consequently natural social behaviour is part of the research problem (Moser 1981). This approach requires the participation of the people researched in different activities such as discussions and actions (Moser, 1981; Whyte, 1991; Whyte and al. 1991). Participation, in its turn, becomes "a process of socialisation; the researcher tries to grasp the system of relevance which guides the daily life of the people" (Moser, 1981: 39).

2 - It uses the holistic approach. Since action research stresses the necessity of coping with social settings in their totality and adopts the assumption that reality is multi-dimensional it also has to use a variety of methods in order to disclose the multiple truths of the problem studied (Moser, 1981; Whyte et al. 1991).

3 - It aims to orientate the day-to-day activities in order to motivate participation and pursue both truth and the search for solutions to concrete problems (Moser, 1981; Whyte et al. 1991).

4 - It is dialogical research. People being studied are involved in the process of argumentation and interpretation of their reality.

5 - It emphasises consensus (Karlsen, 1991) and participation is a tool to strengthen it (Walton and Gaffney, 1991).

Gusman and Evered (1978) pointed out six characteristics of action research which emphasise and complement those presented above. They are:

1 - Action research deals with practical concepts of people and aims to orient them towards the creation of a more desirable future. As it is future-oriented, it is closely linked to planning processes.

2 - As a collaborative approach, the interdependence between the researcher and the client system is an essential feature. The needs and competence of both researcher and client, partially determine the research process.

3 - Action research hints at system development and the infrastructure of the system is the key instrument for both alleviating the immediate problem and generating new knowledge about system processes.

4 - Action research generates theory grounded in action. Theory provides a guide to the diagnoses and action in dealing with the problems of the actors.
5 - Action researchers recognise that as theory is based on action it is subject to re-examination and reformulation in every new research situation. They also recognise that the objectives, the problems and the research methodology must be generated from the process itself and that the consequences of the actions cannot previously be known.

6 - Action research considers the relationship between actors and their situation to be very important in the process of knowledge production.

According to Susman and Evered (1978) action research can be viewed as a cyclical process comprising five phases, which are: a) the identification and definition of the problem (diagnosing); b) action planning for solving a problem; c) selection of a course of action; d) evaluation of the consequences; e) the identification of general findings.

Action research expresses value in its definition: it values both useful knowledge and developmental change, and its researchers seek to promote the fulfilment of human potential, to solve the problems of individuals and/or institutions. It has been largely used by researchers in the industrial and organisational psychological area, although much work has been done in other social science areas such as clinical and social psychology, community action, management and educational organisation (Sanford, 1970; Susman and Evered, 1978).

Developed in the context of industrialised countries, action research shares ideological assumptions defended in these nations such as the centrality of individuals, efficient and effective task accomplishment, and consensus social theories marked by attention to common values, social integration and incremental social reform (Dahrendorf, 1959). Action research emphasises a re-educative, self-critical or self-help approach (Susman and Evered, 1978). The training and cultural context of action researchers encourages them to share ideological perspectives that emphasise individual, interpersonal and group levels of analysis as well as explanations and to plan change strategies that assume societal consensus about desirable outcomes (Brown and Tandon, 1983). While action research tends both to emphasise the immediate co-operative process and to neglect the linkage between the different social systems (Mosser, 1981), participatory research emphasises a long term participation and stress the interdependence of the different social systems.

According to Rapoport (1970: 499) action research seeks "joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework" and consequently encourages active client involvement in data collection and analysis. Common interests between researchers and system members makes mutual trust and the sharing of valid information possible. Consequently, action researchers emphasise an open relationship with clients making use of more qualitative research techniques such as participant observation and interviews (Brown and Tandon, 1983).

The research techniques adopted are varied and depend on the area in which research is done. Psychologists prefer questionnaires while applied anthropologists prefer direct observation and interview methods.
2.2.2 - Participatory Research

Participatory research emerged from work with oppressed people in the Third World. As we noted above, in Latin America Paulo Freire, among others, developed a new concept of knowledge and research through his work in adult education. In this work he developed a dialogic approach, which engaged individuals in critical analysis and organised actions to improve their situation (Freire, 1972, 1974, 1976; Freire and Shor, 1987). Studying students' reality, educators and students move towards a critical consciousness of the forces of oppression and the possibilities for liberation. At the same time, similar principles of inquiry have been developed in Africa and Asia (Hall, 1981; Tandon, 1981b; Brown, 1985).

In the first Participatory Research Network meeting in Toronto in 1977, participatory research was defined as:

a research process in which the community participates in the analysis of its own reality in order to promote a social transformation for the benefit of the participants, who are the oppressed. It is therefore a research, educational and action-oriented activity (Vio Grossi, 1981: 70).

Since then participatory research has most often been described as a three-pronged activity which integrates the research process (social investigation) with educational work through an action designed to deal with a specific problem (Hall, 1984).

The following characteristics are considered basic for participatory research:

1 - The problem originates in the community or workplace itself (Hall, 1979, 1981, 1984; Erasmie, 1980) and according to the International Forum on Participatory Research in Yugoslavia in 1980, it can cover both micro and macro activities.

2 - Research should involve people in the entire process beginning with the identification of the issues, through the discussion of how to get the information, to the analysis and use of the findings within the context of action (Hall, 1979, 1981, 1984; Erasmie, 1980; Reason, 1988a, 1988b). The distinction between subject and object disappears and those who participate are both co-researchers and co-subjects (Reason, 1988a). The involvement of the people in the entire research process is a way of both recognising popular knowledge as a basis for scientific knowledge and of eliminating the alienating, oppressive and dominant character of the traditional approach (Vio Grossi, 1984). It is also a means of demonstrating people's capacity and potential for producing knowledge and analysing it.

Although there is a great consensus about people's participation in the entire process, for researchers, as Demo (1984a), Brandão (1983) Le Boterf (1984) and Thiolent (1984) have shown, this is not really necessary or important since according to Brandão (1983) the most important aspect is the true commitment to solve the people's problems.

3 - The approach is problem-centered and research should result in some benefits for the community and people involved (Erasmie 1980; Kassan, 1981; Hall, 1984). In this approach it is very important to understand the
conditions which underlie the problem and solve it by transforming the conditions through action. Action should be the immediate and permanent result of the research process. It should be an action-reflection process (Vio Grossi, 1984).

4 - The focus of participatory research is on work with exploited or oppressed groups (Hall, 1979; Erasmie, 1980). The researcher assumes their ideological position, rejecting any claim of neutrality.

5 - In strengthening the awareness of people about their own abilities and resources, the researchers' support for mobilisation or organisation is central (Hall, 1979, 1981; Erasmie, 1980).

6 - It is a more scientific method of research (Hall, 1979; Erasmie, 1980) or at least knowledge is deepened, enriched and made more socially usable when it is produced collectively (Hall, 1984). According to Vio Grossi (1981: 71)

Participatory research adopts a relativist approach, and therefore emphasises the relevance of values and ideologies in the process of producing knowledge. In other words, if the degree of participation of the "researched" is increased, the research itself is enriched, because the people's perceptions are integrated into the analysis. The research becomes more scientific than before.

7 - The outside researcher must be committed to helping the people (Erasmie, 1980; Hall, 1981; Kassan, 1981; Van Dijk, 1984).

8 - Research is a process of the systematic creation of knowledge. Although generally it involves people who have been professionally trained, this may not be necessary (Hall, 1984). The 'researcher' can refer to persons involved in the community or workplace as well as those with specialised training.

9 - Research involves a combination of methods designed to facilitate the social, co-operative, or collective production of knowledge (Hall, 1984).

10 - Since it aims to raise the level of consciousness of the people involved, in relation to their own reality, research, learning and knowledge production are often aspects of the same intellectual process in the context of action (Hall, 1979, 1981, 1984; Vio Grossi, 1984; Reason, 1980a).

Participatory research has been mainly used in adult education programmes with the aim of improving people's consciousness in order to encourage actions for changing their reality. Although there are some examples of participatory research undertaken in developed countries such as England (Fletcher, 1988), Italy (Orefice, 1981; 1983) and America (Gaventa, 1981) most of this type of research has been undertaken in developing countries, where problems of adult education and social oppression are particularly acute (Brown and Tandon, 1983).

Participatory research, like action research, emphasises the value of popular knowledge and denies the relevance of more traditional science (Hall et al., 1982). Participatory research also places high value on developmental changes. Researchers in this tradition particularly emphasise research implications that enable the oppressed group to improve their lives. They also aim
for the equitable distribution of resources, empowering oppressed groups, increasing self-reliance and transforming social structures into more equitable societies (Freire, 1970; Hall, 1981).

Most of the time, participatory researchers are adult educators and community organisers and they tend to analyse problems in terms of community and social structures. The development of consciousness is strongly emphasised in this kind of work. It draws on the intellectual traditions of sociology, political science, and economics as well as on individual and group theory.

Participatory researchers have also been influenced by their cultural contexts. Working with poor and oppressed people in the Third World, they deal with problems concerned with resource inequities, community and people defence, and oppression. They conceive of the world in terms of conflict theories of society which emphasise fundamental differences of interest among social groups and the dynamics of oppression and change (Brown and Tandon, 1983; Hall, 1984). The ideology of participatory researchers emphasises large-scale structural forces, conflicts of interests, inequalities, and changes with the aim of reducing oppression.

As participatory research deals with specific realities it is not possible to have only one methodological orientation. In fact, there is as yet no consensus as to what constitutes the methodology in participatory research (Kassan, 1981). Each case study must have its own specific methodology, which is designed with the participants. However for some (Demo, 1984a, 1984b; Jara, 1984; Vio Grossi and Olaria, 1984), the dialectical approach is the most adequate for this kind of research. In this case, class analysis and class struggle are fundamental since

Every philosophy embodies a class outlook. ... just as one class differs from another class in its social role and in its contribution to the development of society, so one philosophy embodies positive achievements in comparison with another in the working out of the truth about the world and society (Cornforth, 1987).

According to Cornforth (1987) the philosophy which embodies the working class or underprivileged group is dialectical materialism. This philosophy is a theoretical instrument which assists the common people in their struggle to change the existing reality since it considers that:

1 - things do not exist independently, so they must be understood through their connection with, dependence on and determination by other things;

2 - things are always in movement. So, they must be considered not only through their independence, but also through their development, their coming into and going out of being;

3 - development is regarded as an onward and upward movement through a transition from quantitative to qualitative changes, from an old to a new qualitative state, from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher; and

4 - movement and changes result from the disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and the struggle of opposite tendencies existing on the basis of the contradictions (Cornforth, 1987: 70-71).
While for some researchers historical materialism must be the basis of participatory research, for others it must embrace a variety of analytic approaches. For the later, historical materialism has sometimes been an alienating, elitist endeavour. In any case the methodology adopted should not be dogmatic or impair knowledge production. Whichever methodology is used, it should lead to co-operative inquiry. Instead of doing research on people research should be done with people (Heron, 1981). In order to do this the researcher "should inquire through dialogue, interaction and co-operative endeavour, how they symbolise their experience of the world through scientific constructs and actions..." (Heron, 1981: 23).

"Dialogue" is one of the Freire's key concepts. It is a process of two-way intercommunication as well as inquiry and intervention. It is based on equal and democratic relationships and is counterposed to cultural invasion, that is, the imposition of the values, beliefs and ideology of an imperialistic culture on those who have been colonised and oppressed. It can be applicable at any level of relationships, from the individual or small-group to the institutional or societal levels. However, in a non-democratic setting or where there is a 'cultural invasion', dialogue can be hard to achieve, even when all parties have the best of intentions of achieving it. For Freire, like education, dialogue is not a neutral tool. When properly used it questions the nature of unequal relationships and it is the basic step for developing a critical consciousness and praxis. Freire argues that by dialogue the educator can enter the cultural world of the educatee and solve the problem of coding, that is, the way in which information is presented. Like teachers, researchers can enter into the researched's world and understand her/his cultural context by the use of dialogue (Freire, 1972; 1976; Freire and Shor, 1987).

"Problematisation" is a key tool in developing dialogue. Using the 'problematising' technique both teachers and researchers are able to raise problems, discuss them, raise consciousness and plan action. Although the problematisation is usually centered in a local or specific problem, for Hall (1984) and according to the dialectical approach, the analysis of local problems must be linked to larger structural issues and the total analysis shared with those at the local level.

According to Gramsci (1971) everyone is a philosopher. That is, there is a philosophy, a way of seeing the world in every person, independently of her/his academic background. Although it is an individual way of thinking about the world, it is also influenced by the views of others. In this way, popular knowledge or popular culture is prone to the hegemonic culture. This fact leads to an acquiescence since the individual's point of view of the world is partially determined by others with whom it is shared and accepted. This acquiescence, however, does not mean that human beings are not able to change the world. They are influenced by their cultural environment but at the same time their are able to transform it (Freire, 1970, 1974, 1976, 1985; Gramsci, 1971, 1978a).

Participatory research as well as other new approaches emphasises popular knowledge as the basis for and fundamental to scientific knowledge.
2.2.3 - Differences and Similarities Between Action Research and Participatory Research

The possibility of objective knowledge through value-free and ideology-free observation and analysis, was sustained by the positivist approach. However, the new methodological approaches in social science research deny this possibility, stating that objectivity in social science is impossible, particularly if those sciences purport to provide guidance to solve social problems (Diesing, 1982). The values and ideologies that researchers have exert powerful influences on the choices they make in the course of inquiry, beginning with the approach adopted.

Both action research and participatory research emerged from the search for a new methodological approach which could overcome the weaknesses of the traditional paradigm. Grounded in the same criticisms and having the same aim, both approaches have many common fundamentals although some differences have also been noted.

According to Whyte (1991) highly similar research processes are given different labels by different authors. In this way, what Costanza (1991), Pace and Argona (1991), Santos (1991), Whyte (1991) and others label 'participatory action research' can be identified as what Rapoport (1970), Susman and Evered (1978), and Moser (1981) label action research. For Torres, what Carr and Kemmis, Duke, and Hall and Kassan label as participatory action research can be identified as participatory research (Torres, 1992). On the other hand, what Torres (1992) labels as participatory action research is more identified as participatory research than what Rapoport (1970) and Susman and Evered label action research.

Because of their many common fundamentals and because researchers have been adapting both approaches to the requirements of their own specific research, it is a bit difficult to distinguish both approaches clearly. Even so, some differentiations have been pointed out mainly by Susman and Evered (1978) as well as by Brown and Tandon (1983). Because of a practical reason, that is, the attempt to identify better the methodological approach used in the present study, this differentiation will be pointed out.

Action research and participatory research share many values. They both: value useful knowledge that will have an immediate impact on social systems; adopt the view that reality is dialectic and multi-dimensional; reject the irrelevance of more traditional conceptions of social science research; emphasise the importance of developmental change as a consequence of inquiry; see theory and practice as interrelated and generate theory grounded in action; emphasise the collaboration between researcher and clients in the research process; consider the research methodology should be generated from the process itself; use the holistic approach; give emphasis to dialogue as a research technique; see knowledge-production as a process in continuing improvement and not as a finished truth. Action research emerged as a more appropriate alternative to other change-oriented inquiries (Susman and Evered, 1978) and participatory research stresses the conservative social implications of an overemphasis on social science rigour defended by positivists (Freire, 1970; Fals Borda, 1981).
Action researchers have argued that academically rigorous methodologies may undercut effective action and they consider problem solution as an important way of generating new knowledge (Susman and Evered, 1978). Participatory research attaches great importance to social changes and sees most traditional research as supporting the status quo.

Although action research and participatory research share similar general values, they differ in ideological beliefs about how these values may be attained. While action research emphasises consensus (Brown and Tandon, 1983; Karlsen, 1991) and uses participation as a tool to strengthen it (Malton and Gaffney, 1991), participatory research is based on conflict theory and aims to change the status quo through a fundamental transformation of society.

Participatory researchers assume that societal groups have conflicting interests and that differences between groups is a critical problem. Action researchers, on the other hand, assume a common interest in solving problems by analysis of individual, group, and organisational factors (Brown and Tandon, 1983). These differences lead to differences in the process of social science inquiry, such as the definition of problems, the collection and analysis of data and the utilisation of results.

The definition of the problem in action research as well as in participatory research is concerned with the commitment to the real problem of the actors or researched people. Unlike the traditional approach, both action and participatory research are concerned with the client interest. However, action research has been historically carried out within organisations, particularly in the private sector. The research problem in it is defined by managers and researchers together, with managers providing organisational authorities and financial resources and researchers collaborating with organisations in data collection and analysis on the basis of common goals and the use of sanctions and resources provided by co-operative authorities (Brown and Tandon, 1983). As the clients in participatory research are the exploited or oppressed people, the problem usually originates in the community or work place. Participatory researchers are more linked with adult education and community development programmes and emphasise the importance of working together with political parties. Participatory researchers use collaborative data collection and analysis like action research, but they use them to develop critical consciousness through education and action for transforming their reality (Freire, 1974). Since funds to support participatory research are seldom available, participatory research necessarily needs to use client resources.

The use of results is an important issue for researchers mainly in the new approaches which see the production of knowledge as being linked with problem solution. So action research as well as participatory research sees research as being linked with pragmatic results and involving many interests in utilisation decisions. Yet, action research seeks new knowledge and solutions that can be supported by consensus among actors (Brown and Tandon, 1983) while participatory research aims to change the status quo through the fundamental transformation of society (Hall, 1975, 1981; Vio Grossi, 1984).
Action research emphasises the interdependence between researchers and clients and co-operation between them from the definition of the problems until the problem solution designed to be accepted across the system. In participatory research, researchers and oppressed join in actions against existing authorities. While action research is based on consensus theories and works with the system, participatory research is based on conflict theories and often works against the system.

Although action research and participatory research have different ideologies, we cannot say that one of them is more valid or useful than other. Both approaches are valid and their application is related to the kind of problem and/or the political and cultural context. Action research is more appropriately adequate when distributions of resources and authority are accepted as legitimate, when the relevant parties accept researchers as credible, and when rewards are available for integrating problem solving and research (Brown and Tandon, 1983: 290).

The same authors suggest the use of participatory research when the legitimacy of power and resource distribution is questioned, when client groups are aware and mobilised to influence their situation, and when researchers are ideologically committed to social transformation (Brown and Tandon, 1983: 291).

Considering the socio-political and economical condition of Brazilian reality and the urgent need to change it, a participatory approach seems to be more appropriate.

2.3 - The Chosen Methodology

Brazilian history is characterised by exploitation and oppression of the people and the consequent concentration of resources in the hands of a few. In the recent history the twenty years of military dictatorship accentuated the policy of wealth concentration which left a small group of very wealthy people contrasting with a great number in abject poverty. As a consequence of this economic policy Brazil has one of the biggest gaps between the poorest and richest. For example, according to the Movement of Landless People, in 1984, "4 per cent of the people owned 67 per cent of the cultivable land, while 71 per cent of the people were squeezed on to 10.9 per cent of the land" (MacDonald, 1991: 3). Yet, this concentration does not occur only in land ownership but also in other economic sectors.

Considering Brazilian political and economical policy, it is not surprising that this fact has resulted in a large proportion of dissatisfied people who are not able to overcome their situation because of their economic and educational conditions. Given the deteriorating social and economic situation, the need and wish for change have been increasing. Movements for social change have arisen in several places. Nevertheless, these movements are still in a
few number and need to be reinforced in order to change the Brazilian present reality.

Gramsci (1971, 1976) and Freire (1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1985) among others, have stressed the importance of culture and thought in challenging the status quo and bringing about a new hegemony, that is, a new power relation. For both writers the individual has and active role in the process of knowing. So, it is possible to change reality through the development of class consciousness and education plays a paramount role in the development of this consciousness. However, most of knowledge produced in Brazil was generated within a positivist or functionalist methodological approach, which has reinforced the status quo. Consequently, schools in Brazil have adopted a liberal theory of education and therefore have contributed to the reproduction of the status quo.

A high level of repeaters and dropouts is one of the most important socio-educational problems in Brazil. On the other hand, there is, in the Brazilian literature, a lack of critical analysis or theoretical reflexivity about the reasons of these problems. This theoretical limitation is mainly due the fact that the studies undertaken were oriented by the positivist epistemological and methodological tradition. On the other hand the literature censorship and the repression suffered by Brazilian intellectuals for nearly twenty years (from 1964 until the beginning of 1980s) during the military dictatorship, cut back any Marxist ideas and progressive movements which started to spread among left-wing intellectuals. This fact not only damaged knowledge production but also determined the ideological formation of professionals, mainly those in the social science area.

Influenced by the left-wing movement which started to spread among the Brazilian intellectuals in the late 1950s, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, developed a new theory of education. This theory, elaborated with the intention of helping the oppressed in their struggle for a fairer society, sees education as a political act. So its central concern is 'conscientisation', which means the development, in individuals, of a critical view about the contradictions in the society and of awareness of their capacity to change society. For Freire, education means putting knowledge into practice through the combination of reflection and action, which he calls 'praxis'. In this 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire, 1972) or 'pedagogy for liberation' (Freire and Shor, 1987) dialogic process performs a significant role since it helps to understand the situation.

If on the one hand both authors - Gramsci and Freire - place an important role on education, on the other hand they recommend that the struggle for change developed in school must be accompanied by other kinds of outside-school social struggle. They also put emphasis on the collective work and the role of intellectuals and political party in the process of historical change.

For Freire, education and epistemology are interrelated since both of them deal with knowledge production. Praxis or social practice must be the aim and the criterion of a valid knowledge. So, in Freire's theory, education, action and the process of knowing are interrelated. He also sees reality as the dialectic relationship between subject and object.
Freire's pedagogical and epistemological points of view grounded the emergence of a new methodological approach in social research, viz. as participatory research. As described in a previous section (2.2.2), participatory research emerged from the work with oppressed people and integrates the research process with educational work and action for changing reality. Its focus is on work with exploited or oppressed people. It is a problem-centred approach and research should involve the researched people in the process and should result in some benefit to the people and/or community involved.

Given the present Brazilian context, and with the need and desire to change reality, there is no doubt that participatory research is a better approach for undertaking the present research than the use of traditional methodologies or even action research.
Participation has a fundamental role in participatory research. Without people's participation it is not possible to undertake research within this approach. Consequently, to know what participation is and how it can be achieved or improved is highly important to the participatory researcher.

'Participation' is a relatively new word in the research field. Not surprisingly, therefore, much of the literature in this subject comes from social or political theory or, more specifically, from the analysis of social order, democracy and modern approaches to planning for development.

Participation is essentially a political phenomenon and constitutes a basic issue in social policy. According to Giannoten and Mit (1982: 4) its objective is "to directly or indirectly influence the transformation of the social reality, in economic, political and social spheres". For Rousseau (1968), it is a fundamental ingredient for democracy and it is beneficial for the development of both the individual's potential and the society. It is through participation that a person learns to become a private and public citizen. It is also related to socio-economic issues since material necessities are no less important than political necessities (Demo, 1984a). It is also seen as an educational process, which can improve skills of self-expression, the development of a sense of effective tactics to confront and solve problems and an increased sense of personal efficacy (UNDESA, 1975).

Rousseau (1968) pointed out three functions of participation: 1 - to increase the individual's control over her/his life and environment; 2 - to allow collective decisions to be more acceptable; 3 - to increase the individual's feeling of belonging to a community.

To Demo (1982; 1984a) participation implies an historical process of conquering. It is never given or granted but achieved. Historically, oppressive processes have predominated. So participation arises only from the struggle against oppression and has to be conquered day by day because every participatory process tends to be transformed by the dominant order in force.

To UNDESA (1981: 8), participation can be initiated in three different ways: a) spontaneously - in a voluntary way, without external support. As it is based on a voluntary and spontaneous act, it is considered the ideal model and normally it is associated with non-governmental programmes (UNDESA, 1981). According to Oakley and Marsden (1984) this type of participation is the 'authentic' one, since it emerges as a result of some kind of bottom-up process and is based on distribution. For these authors this model emphasises education as conceived by Freire and the building-up of an organisational base as a way of motivating participation;
b) induced — when in a sponsored and officially endorsed way. It is the model more commonly used in developing countries, as it is frequently linked with government development programmes. This model is also frequently associated with adult education programmes sponsored by the government.

c) coerced, when compulsorily determined by some higher power. The quality of participation is defined by the degree of active involvement. Authentic participation requires involvement in all stages of the project, of all sectors existing in the area to be reached by the project. It also requires that people feel that they are acting as free agents rather than as a result of pressure, manipulation or imposition.

Participation is a multi-dimensional process and varies from one location to another, according to the specific circumstances. To UNDESA (1981), the level and quality of popular participation is greatly affected by the socio-economic, political, and administrative structures of a nation or population. So, even within a country, the level of participation varies in direct relation to the pattern of development of each specific area. According to Demo (1986) there is neither enough nor complete participation.

Participation at the local level is easier to promote and sustain over time. At the local level, the probability is that one will be dealing with problems of greater personal importance and, as people can perceive more directly the link between their actions and their concrete results, so they can draw more personal satisfaction from that participation (UNDESA, 1975).

3.1 - Conceptualisation

'Participation' has been an object of study by social psychologists, economists, sociologists and political scientists. However, there is neither a consistent definition of it nor a universally accepted one. Among different subjects or even within one, the term 'participation' can signify different things. According to Chell (1985) it is a complex concept since it consists of many interrelated elements such as influence, information-sharing, interaction and involvement.

Over time, it has been seen as:
- a multi-faceted process which affects different people in different ways (Tandon, 1981; Oakley and Marsden, 1984; Chell, 1985);
- a political notion (Vanderberger and Fear, apud Campbell, 1987) or a source to influence certain political attitudes (Finkel, 1985);
- a process with both costs and benefits to participants;
- a means to increase auto-promotion and auto-subsistence (Demo, 1986);
- a tool or means to promote development and social change (Vio Grossi, 1981; Giannoten and Wit, 1982; Oakley and Marsden, 1984) as well as a sense of collective responsibility (Matur and Tandon, 1986);
- an educational process (UNDESA, 1975; Matur and Tandon, 1986);
- a way to give higher confidence to participants in their own information and interpretation (Campbell, 1987);
- as possibly influencing the reaching of a set of goals higher than normally would be achieved and a higher level of goal acceptance (Campbell and Bin-
grich, 1986); as facilitating complicated task understanding and performance (Campbell and Gingrich, 1986); easy to manipulate (Campbell, 1987); it can also be oriented towards the maintenance of the status quo (UNDESA, 1975) and social control (Hunter, 1980); in some cases it has led to confusion and also abuse (Tandon, 1981a); an action against oppression and exploitation (Oakley and Marsden, 1984); serving to liberate as well as to domesticate (Kidd and Byram, 1982); a means to empowering people (Hain, 1980).

A considerable body of the literature on this subject is concerned with development programmes. Although popular participation is only one factor among those which influence development, it has seldom been analysed separately. Within the development literature, participation is seen as a tool in the development process, or more specifically as the 'collaboration' of the people in the tasks required by economic development. In this area it is conceptualised in relation to democracy, social change and economic growth. It also appears with the meaning of worker participation in the literature related to industrial relations.

In a psychological sense it signifies the interrelation between people to achieve specific goals or outcomes (Chell, 1985; Hirsch, 1987) and tends to be defined in terms of involvement and influence (Warr and Wall, apud Chell, 1985) or the amount of influence in decision-making (Wall and Lischerron, cited by Chell, 1985). In psychoanalysis it is seen as a way to improve understanding and effectiveness in treatment (Hirsch, 1987).

As most development programmes have been promoted by governments, in the development literature participation is frequently examined from the point of view of government intervention. To Oakley and Marsden (1984) terms such as 'mobilisation' and 'intervention' are used to identify the nature of participation.

In spite of the wide range of interpretations concerning the nature and content of participation, there is general agreement concerning the importance of participation in the promotion of development and the fair distribution of its benefits.

For some people, mainly government programme designers, participation is seen as a neutral act. To the participatory researcher and political activist, on the other hand, participation is seen as a political act. However, as a political act it can be used in both senses: either to preserve or to change the status quo.

As we have noted, the concept of participation has a wide range of interpretations and can mean different things to different people and it can be manipulated in a variety of forms. According to Hunter (1980) within a hierarchically structured organisation, participation usually means mere consultation rather than sharing in the decision making. Oakley and Marsden (1984) pointed out four broad categories or interpretations of participation:
1 - **Collaboration** - Participation means being informed of the basic decisions already taken by government bureaucrats. It is a passive form of participation. People can only endorse and collaborate with the decisions taken. In the broadest sense, participation means 'mobilisation' to modernisation and responsibility. The ideology implicit in this sense is the need to mobilise people for capital formation and so relieve scarce government resources. Examples of this kind of participation are the 'mutirões' promoted by Brazilian local governments, where residents in a poorer area in a city collaborate with workmen to pave their roads or to make other improvements. These 'mutirões', or forms of aid by the people, save the government expenditure. Besides being only a temporary 'mobilisation', this kind of participation has no lasting consequences.

2 - **Community Development** - Participation is limited to the tasks at hand, such as health programmes. The weakness of this model is that the experiences are limited to the task at hand and not to more fundamental questions. However, as it is commonly actively promoted, these experiences can be useful for future community participation.

3 - **Organisation** - Some form of organisational structure is seen as fundamental to ensure participation. To some, once such organisation is established, people automatically have a voice and can influence decision-making. However, a single organisation has often not been sufficient to promote people's participation. To ensure participation, the organisation has to emerge as a result of a process of participation. An example of organisation used to spearhead participation is the Bhoomi Sena movement in India. However the group recognised that organisation by itself was not enough to achieve its aim.

4 - **Empowering** - Participation can be a process of empowering, that is, it facilitates the access to and control of the resources necessary to protect livelihoods and destinies and to improve living conditions. Participation as some kind of political and economic achievement, is evident in much of the recent literature, which links the process of participation with economic and political structural changes.

The relation between participation and development is very clear in the literature. However, if on the one hand, not all programmes of development have involved participation, on the other hand, all programmes involving participation aimed to achieve development or social change. The relationship between participation and the acquisition of power is also clear in the literature. Participation is really meaningful only when it generates some direct access to decision-making and the determination of the problems and actions to be undertaken in order to reach the aims and solve the problems. To Oakley and Marsden (1984) the only way people achieve some influence upon development is if they achieve some kind of power and authority which allow them to influence events.

The achievement of power is a fundamental prerequisite of change. "Participation' to bring about structural change implies the taking of action, and this action can only be taken from a position of power" (Oakley and Marsden, 1984). Thus the Bhoomi Sena movement (Oakley and Marsden, 1984), for example, views participation as an action against oppression and exploitation.
Participation has been seen as both a means and as an end. As a means, it represents a tool or an input into a development programme. To Oakley and Marsden (1984) the two main vehicles which implement this notion are the community development programmes, which aim to prepare people to collaborate with government plans, and the establishment of formal organisations, where people can have some contact and voice in development programmes. As a means, participation has been regarded as a strategy to reform and improve a specific situation. Although some development was reached through this strategy, few programmes achieved meaningful participation.

Participation as a means is frequently linked to and requires to reduce social inequalities. This is usually against the interest of a different group and creates conflict situations. To disentangle this situation and reach the aim, it is necessary to create the conditions for a 'constructive conflict', where both groups accept the legitimacy of the conflict situation and represent their interests through organised groups. Without the recognition of a legitimate conflict situation by one group, there is no possibility of establishing the means by which conflicts can be resolved. On the other hand, the recognition of a legitimate conflict allows the creation of the necessary conditions in which conflicts can be contained and would reduce the need for a more radical and aggressive opposition (Thornley, 1977).

As an end, participation is the outcome or consequence of a process of empowering and liberating people. In spite of the fact that it is linked with the development process, there is no quantifiable goal. The main goal is the achievement of power and meaningful participation in the search for structural change. However, the 'end' is not easy to define in precise terms "since it is related to the quantitative processes of achieving power and the resulting ability to take independent action" (Oakley and Marsden, 1984).

3.2 - Constraints

To achieve popular participation is an important aim, mainly to those who understand participation as an end. However, according to Perse and Stiefel (apud Oakley and Marsden, 1984) authentic popular participation seldom occurs. Even though some people have participated in development projects, in many cases the overwhelming majority have not. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 1975) has reported that there is ample evidence that participation seldom occurs spontaneously in populations that have been excluded from the decision-making process.

A variety of variables are associated with participatory behaviour (Scanlan, 1986) and many obstacles conspire to make the achievement of popular participation difficult. For Oakley and Marsden (1984) the identification of obstacles is directly linked to the particular interpretation of participation adopted. For those who view participation as an 'means' the obstacles to its achievement are usually related to the operational procedures of the task undertaken. For those who view it as an 'end', the obstacles are associated more with structural and relational mechanisms of the development programmes, such as over-centralised planning, inadequate delivery mechanisms, lack of
local coordination, the inappropriateness of project technology, irrelevant project content, lack of local structure, etc.

Demographic factors, such as excessive concentration of population or dispersed and skewed patterns of settlement, constrain the participation of large sections of the population (UNDIESA, 1981). The fragmentation between one's place of work and place of residence is another factor which constrains participation (Cummings and Glaser, 1985; Scanlan, 1986). Other demographic factors such as age, sex and race are also frequently mentioned as inhibiting participation.

The question of culture is also frequently related to the obstacles to the achievement of authentic popular participation. Traditional modernisation theories referred to cultural and structural constraints such as traditional values and limited individual mobility, respectively. In most countries and even within a country, where the levels of education are low, there is often a tradition of non-participation. Brokensha (1974) observes that poor people are reluctant to participate "through suspicion, fear, ignorance or skepticism that political action could ever change things." Although Brokensha's statement is at least partially true, different theories offer different explanations for these obstacles. Modernisation theory explains the resistance of participation and change in terms of psychological mechanisms which define basic responses to a 'marginal' way of life. This theory, however, does not take into account the structural conditions which generate the so called 'culture of poverty'. Dependency theory, on the other hand, does not deny the difficulties in motivating certain groups to participation and change, but it takes into account situational or environmental influences on behaviour. So the explanation offered by this theory is based on the 'culture of silence', which states that these difficulties are a consequence of the historical condition of these groups, which is characterised by oppression and lack of opportunity to participate (Freire, 1985). An individual's previous history influences his/her values and behaviour so that it is necessary to consider the subjective values of any individual, in any particular class of events (Nischel, apud Chell, 1985).

The organisation of popular participation requires some leadership, which give some power to the leaders. However, the training of leaders is not always easy, mainly countries where political dictatorships were established. Within these political systems, the development of leadership outside the military or governmental staff is totally discouraged, as occurred in Brazil during the military dictatorship. On the other hand, the contest for leadership between different groups sometimes is also a constraint to full participation.

Participation is also a question of education and consciousness. In this way, a short-term programme can be efficient in reaching some specific and simple aim, but it is not so efficient in developing the skills necessary to deal with larger and more complex issues (UNDIESA, 1981). Programmes which require little expertise have often been more successful (Thornley, 1977; Crosby et al., 1986).

In the same way that participation depends on education and consciousness, it
contributes to consciousness and liberation. Yet, as Freire (1970) emphasises, this kind of liberation is a painful childbirth and it is not easy to achieve. According to Freire,

In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppressor, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition by itself for liberation; it must become the motiving force for liberating action (Freire, 1972: 25).

If on one hand the most oppressed people live in Third World countries where the disparities of wealth is the greatest, on the other hand, extreme social and economic disparities of wealth, income, status and power existing between different social classes, in general make it more difficult to achieve full participation because of the different interests existing between these groups. Brokensha (1974) suggests that one seldom can find a commonality of interest, even within groups with the same economic and ethnic status.

When economic wealth and political power are the monopoly of relatively few people or when they are rigidly controlled by the State, people have great difficulty in having their needs and interests accepted (UNDESA, 1981). In most Third World countries, the ideological values legitimating the dominant power also constitute an obstacle to the promotion of popular participation. The existence of deep divisions within society provoked by race, language, sex or age discrimination may also make it difficult to achieve popular participation.

Participation requires that people have to limit or abandon other activities. Active participation requires time to attend meetings and become informed about issues through reading and other means. The demands are greater on segments of society where there are low levels of education and a low capacity to obtain and process information. These difficulties constitute a challenge which is not always met. On the other hand, in rural areas, activities involving popular participation can become the major focus of social life in a community, so that participation in meetings or other activities are linked to leisure time activities.

Participation implies the acceptance of responsibility over the running of the project even when the individual's preferences were not chosen. For many people this responsibility is psychologically costly, as a decision on alternatives generates ambivalence and inner conflict, specially where the alternatives have mutually exclusive advantages (UNDESA, 1975). This psychological cost may constrain some people's participation.
Popular participation, can be said to be a dialectical process; it is influenced by, and at the same time it influences, development. Through popular participation, people can increase their power in shaping overall development strategies.

Popular participation is not easy to attain. Every community or group has its own specific questions which must be taken into account. Despite this, Crosby et al. (1986) have suggested six criteria for the improvement of citizen participation:

1. participation must represent the broader community and the way to select representatives must not be open to manipulation;
2. the process should promote a real participation in decision-making. To reach this aim, some criteria must be present: the hearing format (dialogue) must be properly structured to allow the attendance of those with different levels of education and interests; time must be allowed for the participants to learn the information and to reflect about the values and goals relevant to the decision; the size of the group must be appropriate; persons leading the group must give adequate attention to the participants' views and facilitate the discussion;
3. the procedures should be fair, which implies the need to give to the citizens the opportunity to deal with the important assumptions underlying any issue;
4. attention must be given to the cost-effectiveness of the process;
5. the method of participation must be flexible in order to be adaptable to different tasks and settings;
6. recommendations from the citizens' participation process must be followed up by appropriate public officials.

For Demo (1986), to achieve participation it is necessary to confront the question of power since participation is not the absence of power but a new form of power.

In the criteria suggested by these authors, questions can be raised in relation to the size of the group, the adequate recognition of the participants' views and the time. These questions are intrinsically inter-related. How can adequate consideration be given to all different views, in sufficient time to be adequately reflected on by the participants, in a representative group, without endless and overtiring meetings? The answer seems to be in small groups. However, how can one achieve representativeness of the broader public in a small group? Since each case has its specific issues it seem to us that there is no single answer. It is the responsibility of the leader or co-ordinator to chose the best strategy to satisfy all these criteria.

On a broader level than the authors above, the United Nations Department for International Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 1981) has suggested a set of general prerequisites for popular participation, which are:

1. the endorsement of a national policy;
2. a programme of popular participation must entail: a) the creation of an organisational base; b) the autonomy of citizen initiation in local
decision-making; c) an efficient network of information; d) material and technical support;

3 - the organisation of the people in groups and associations in order to avoid the danger of an 'ad hoc' venture or manipulation, because "popular participation is, as a rule, neither a self-initiating nor a self-sustaining process" (UNDIESA, 1981);

4 - the autonomy of the citizens in local decision-making allows local people to work towards goals that respond to their needs;

5 - a reciprocal network of information linking horizontal and vertical dimensions is very important and basically must involve:
   a) ideological or 'normative' information, which calls for a popular commitment to policies of change and development; b) technical information, which aids people to acquire the skills and competence necessary to handle development programmes; and c) managerial/administrative information, which helps the people to programme their day-to-day activities (UNDIESA, 1981: 6);

6 - full participation requires material support, mainly for people who lack the means to organise and sustain their activities. Technical participation must also be included.

In many cases, changes in local, regional or national structures of power are necessary to promote decentralisation and to allow people to participate. According to UNDESA (1975) in some countries basic reforms in social and economic structures may also be required.

If, on the one hand, preconditions must exist to allow participation, on the other hand, the establishment of these preconditions is not easy to achieve, mainly in the socio-political conditions existing in many Third World countries. To overcome this situation.

We must, therefore, consider a strategy that does not depend, for example, on bureaucratic decentralisation or legislation to encourage local organisations, but which attempts to achieve participation in the context of existing administrative frameworks... We must consider, therefore, how to bring about effective participation without waiting for the structural changes generally indicated as indispensable (Oakley and Marsden, 1984: 65).

According to Thornley (1977) and Demo (1986), political participation cannot be divorced from social policy questions or, in other words, from the effort of reducing social inequalities which, in their turn, are caused by the unequal distribution of income and power. The individual awareness about the need for structural change can be achieved only through emergent consciousness (Freire, 1970, 1980,1985), or according to Gramsci, the transformation of 'common sense' to a 'good sense' (Gramsci, 1971). Through the development of critical consciousness people learn about their own ability to take charge as the actor of the task and the possibilities of transforming the reality. Still according to Freire (1985), transformation in the infra-structure leads to transformation in the superstructure.
According to Mann, the required level of consciousness can be seen to develop in stages. First, the individual has to realise that the problem in question is not only of concern to her/him but it is held by many other people. Second, it needs to be aware that the solution of common problems is against the interest of others groups in society. Third, the last stage, "would arise through an awareness that such class opposition pervaded all aspects of the individual's social situation" and arises when "one conceives of an alternative social structure which one aims at achieving in a struggle against the opponent" (Mann, apud Thornley, 1977: 46). For Thornley (1977), participation and change are easier to achieve in small-scale projects that do not endanger the structural status quo. However, he also recalls that in order to achieve the maximum potential in raising consciousness and creating radical change through participation is not an easy task. In his words, "larger battles have to be fought" (p. 47).

The need to be familiar with the political and social structure in order to understand and struggle for change is also pointed out by Paulo Freire. According to him

Lacking structural perception, men attribute the source of their situation to something within themselves rather than to something in the objective reality (Freire, 1970: 36).

However, according to Freire, these kinds of ideas are easily detected in oppressed people. Besides showing a submissive character their speaking is also non-critical, contradictory and non-systematic. It represents, in Gramsci's (1971) theory, the 'common sense'.

In analysing participation in Brazil, Demo (1986) states that people's participation is restrained on one side by public agents - Church, university, state, etc. - which used participation in a way that led to imposition, alienation, etc. apart from being usually inept in the political sense. On the other hand and sometimes partially as a consequence of their participative experiences, people feel themselves groundless, oppressed, alienated and finding it difficult to organise themselves.

3.4 - Types of Popular Participation
Participation can take different forms and levels. It can be direct, involving face-to-face interaction, or indirect, involving representatives and/or channels of communication. Historically, the most usual form of participation has been indirect. To the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 1975) the efficiency of indirect participation depends on many factors such as: the method of selecting representatives; the availability of adequate channels for reaching decision-makers; the absence of structural constraints on participation; and the type of issues involved.

When people are actively involved in all parts of the process, participation is classified as active. When they only take part in some part, it is classified as passive. Although there is, in the literature about participation and
participatory research, a dearth of examples and/or analysis of actual experiences with participatory approach, some examples were shortly described. Most of these examples were usually linked with participatory research and were usually applied in Third World situations.

Campbell (1987), for example, has described a research project carried out with the intention of studying the impact of drought on the people in a community in Kenya. The Adult Literacy Team (ALT) was recognised by the author as a means of gaining acceptance in the area and a source of critical evaluation of the research and the adult literacy meeting was used as a means to subject the survey's findings to community comments and evaluation.

Oakley and Marsden (1984) described the Bhoomi Sena movement, undertaken by a tribal group of women in India, to illustrate that in order to achieve meaningful participation, it is necessary that the people involved understand the complex social and economic relations of which they are a part. The method used in Bhoomi Sena movement was based on Paulo Freire's work, which emphasises praxis, dialogue and collective reflection. One important instrument in this process was the 'shibir' or camp for collective reflection in which the participants used to share experiences and their perception of oppression before deciding upon collective action. In spite of material support, the role of outsider, as political and technical adviser, was very important. However, according to the authors, the outsider must not impose actions or offer ready-made solutions. He/she must have in mind that participation is not a form of controlled collaboration. His/her intervention must be the minimum possible while he/she must be ready to offer support and advice when required, especially when complex structural relationships are involved.

Another example of a project based on Paulo Freire's method was mentioned by MacDonald (1991). This project, developed with rubber-tappers in Brazil and initially funded by Oxfam, emphasised praxis, dialogue and collective reflection as a way to develop consciousness and change reality. One of the teacher's citations shows perfectly the outcomes of this kind of participation:

> People who couldn't count before can now do their sums and understand what's happening when they're trading. Besides that, it prepares people for struggles. It makes them more conscious of their rights and the need to organise (Agripino, cited by MacDonald, 1991: 16).

This kind of outcome is possible when Freire's method is used because through dialogue, action and reflection people learn in their relationship with others and with the world. In dialogue or group discussion group members and group leader learn with each other and relate to each other in an horizontal relationships. The main goal is to disclose reality together, and to unveil the false myths diffused by the ruling class ideology. It is an exchange of information or a participative inquiry between the leader and the members of the group (Freire, 1985). As Freire, Gramsci recommends discussion and joint criticism to improve collective competence (Gramsci, 1970).

Both Freire and Gramsci emphasise the role of intellectuals in bringing up
critical consciousness and a counter-hegemony. This is because

The active man of the mass works practically, but it does not have a clear theoretical consciousness of his action, which is also a knowledge of the world in so far as he changes it. Rather his theoretical consciousness may be historically opposed to his actions. We can almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness), one implicit in his action, which unites him with all his colleagues in the practical transformation of reality, and one superficially explicit or verbal which he has inherited from the past and which he accepts without criticism (Gramsci, 1970: 66).

Still according to Gramsci, this 'verbal' conception can influence man's moral behaviour up to a state of moral and political passivity. However, critical understanding of oneself and the situation can lead to political struggle, to the fighting for a new hegemony. Gramsci also emphasises the role of intellectuals in the elaboration of critical self consciousness and the creation of a new hegemony. For him,

a human mass does not "distinguish" itself and does not become independent "by itself", without organising itself (in a broad sense) and there is no organisation without intellectuals, that is, without organisers and leaders ... (Gramsci, 1970: 67).

However, for Gramsci, the creation of intellectuals is a difficult process, full of contradictions, advances and setbacks (Freire, 1970).

As Gramsci, Freire also mentions passivity as one of the main constraints for participation and change. According to him, this passivity is a consequence of the 'culture of silence', or the cultural domination imposed by the oppressor. In the culture of silence, "the masses are mute, that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformations of their society and therefore prohibited from being" (Freire, 1985). In this culture, the oppressed learns to internalise the dominant ideology and to believe in the myth that they are ignorant, inferior, unable to change things and worthless. Yet, as "consciousness is not a mirror of reality, not a mere reflection", transformation is possible (Freire, in Freire and Shor, 1987: 13), although, as Freire very well recalls, "Correcting one's earlier perception isn't always easy" (Freire, 1985: 16).

3.5 - Participation and Social Order
Participatory research differs from other research approaches with the participation of the researched in all or almost all parts of the research process. It also requires a very democratic relationship between the researcher and those she/he is researching.

In the present research, it is my intention to explore questions concerned with participation such as: the reasons, constraints, facilities and conse-
Participatory research is based on a Marxist approach to social order and consequently 'participation' must be understood within this framework. However, in order to understand participation in a non-democratic or non-egalitarian relationship such as that existing in a school, it is necessary also to know how other theories define and evaluate participation.

Different theoretical perspectives produce different positions for evaluating the results of participation. For Thornley

... the success or failure of participation in planning cannot be separated from the objectives of such participation. These objectives cannot be determined in the abstract but need to be placed within some broader context of social relations (1977: 5).

To understand participation in social relations we must locate participation in social order theory, since social order is understood as a process by which members of a social group interact in society to produce certain patterns which are conducive to stability or change.

Every theory about social order has implicitly a particular point of view about the role of participation in the maintenance or change of the social system and how participation contributes. It is our purpose to demonstrate this view in the present section. It is usual to distinguish two types of social systems theories: consensus and conflict (Dawe, 1970). This is not to say that there are no other theories or that they have necessarily incompatible elements, but rather to indicate two alternative explanations for social order: consensus or conflict.

Consensus theory is a form of functionalism and emphasises integration and stability. It states essentially that different viewpoints or interests are in harmony. Therefore, there is no necessity for radical changes. Stability is reached through shared culture, agreement on values and political organisation.

Most of this approach is based on Parsons (1966), who states that sociocultural systems are in equilibrium. Therefore, their function can be explained in terms of patterns of maintenance, adaptation, goal attainment, and integration.

For Parsons (1966) society is composed of individuals interacting on the basis of shared moral standards, which leads to a similar interpretation of the situation and consequently a stabilised system. This approach focuses the analysis of society on the socialisation process that contributes to the maintenance of the system. The social system consists of relatively stable and well-integrated structures of elements. Social change is seen as a normal process of adaptation within the pattern of the social structure. If the conditions which stabilise the system are disturbed, the process which controls the system must be brought under control and the system adjusted again.
According to Parsons, the social system is composed of several interdependent subsystems, each one fulfilling certain functions on behalf of the system as a whole. Although each subsystem is predominantly autonomous, it has a function in maintaining the overall social order. The interaction between subsystems contributes to the general cohesion of the social system. So no single factor can be responsible for promoting change. Consequently, the possibility of equilibrium is higher than the possibility of change. In other words, social change happens only in very exceptional circumstances.

Among the consensus theorists, Almond and Verba can be pointed to as representative, mainly because their book *The Civic Culture*, written in 1965, emphasised the question of participation. Almond and Verba located their work within Parsons' structural-functionalism approach, although they concentrated their analysis on the political subsystem. They viewed this subsystem as a self-contained area of activity while at the same time it is correlated with other subsystems. This specific condition is necessary to allow cultural and political development. The cohesion of the political subsystem is necessary for the stability of the societal system as a whole, and contributes to the consensus of values and norms among its members.

Almond and Verba (1965) attempted to explain social phenomena in terms of the role they played in the maintenance of the wider society. For these authors, although the different parts are never perfectly integrated, the social system can be kept in 'dynamic equilibrium' as a series of cyclical adjustments to external changes which tend to minimise the amount of change within the system itself, avoiding any sudden or revolutionary movement. The dominant tendency is towards stability through the mechanisms of adjustment and social control.

Almond and Verba's (1965) view about intensive involvement in politics is strongly opposed to Marx's view of increased class consciousness and conflict in society. To the former authors, social order is maintained through some higher attitudes of solidarity, based on non-partisan criteria.

The stability of British democracy is seen by these authors as an ideal. They see the particular attitude to the police, that is, the 'civic culture' as part of the overriding value-consensus in society. This civic culture contributes to contain any sudden social change.

The civic culture comprises three elements or levels of participation. They are:

a) *parochial culture*, that is, a lack of interest in participation in the political system caused by a lack of knowledge. At this level, traditional attitudes and behaviour predominate;

b) *subject culture*, when there is no expectation of taking an active role in political decisions, although there is knowledge about the political system. This level is characterised by a deferential and passive attitude;

c) *participant culture*, when there is an expectation that it is possible to participate in political activities.

To Almond and Verba (1965) it is necessary to have a balance between parochial, subject and participant cultures in order to preserve stability and avoid
sudden or extreme actions by elites or the general population. In order to preserve stability, participation should be limited. For these authors it is unhealthy for the system if too many people participate, since a higher level of participation leads to a mass movement or reduces the effectiveness of decision-making.

Non-participation is seen by the authors as having the function of maintaining the stability of the system. Apathy is needed in the civic culture as a way of maintaining a stable democracy. This apathy can only occur if political issues are considered unimportant by many people. Parochial and subject orientations contribute to modify the intensity of the individual's political involvement and activity. To these authors, political activity is of concern to only one section of the population, and is usually a not very important question. The citizens who should participate are the more educated, those with higher status and males.

Although only a certain section of the citizens is competent to participate, this cannot cause problems, because these people themselves are unstable and used to participating only in certain issues.

To these authors, the maintenance of the 'myth' of participation is very important. So, people have to believe that they could participate if they needed to, and the decision-makers have to believe in the 'myth' that people could participate if they disagreed with the decision being made. The reason that participation must be maintained as a myth is because of the impossibility of people participating in reality, given the impossibility of organising participation in practice, so that decisions always have to be taken by a small elite.

Almond and Verba have a very limited view of participation in decision-making. To them, only a small elite must be involved in this process, although the illusion about the possibility of participation must be maintained among the people. To attain this illusion or 'myth', education plays an important role. The limitation of participation to only a small elite has the function of contributing to the stability of the social system.

Most conflict approaches are based on Marxist theory and, contrary to the consensus approaches, emphasise dissent and change. For Marx, change is necessary in order to achieve a more democratic society. In his Theses on Feuerbach he stresses the need to change the world (Marx, in Marx and Engels, 1969). Conflict approaches state that in society there are a number of points of view that must be resolved. In the process some viewpoints or interests remain unsatisfied and provoke the necessary tension for subsequent action.

In this approach, conflict or dissent is located within the social structure. The reasons for social conflict are located in the divergent interests resulting from the unequal distribution of power between the capitalist, those who possess the means of production, and the have-nots, those who have to sell their labour power. As a result, society is seen as in a continuous struggle between groups with opposing goals and world views. Any existing social order
is a consequence of the conditions of social organisation rather than cultural integration. Equilibrium is seen as an unusual and short-lived phenomenon. For Marx, the equilibrium generated by the norms and the rules imposed by the ruling class must be only temporary.

For Marx, the economic foundation of the society is the very driving force for change. That is, changes in the economic structure lead to change in all the superstructure. Consequently the level of productive force in a given society conditions the level of culture, knowledge, ideology and laws.

The totality of production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which a legal and political superstructure arises and to which definite forms of the material means of life determine, in general, the social, political, and intellectual processes of life (Marx, 1973: 11).

Changes are generated through contradictions between the forces of production and the relations of productions, which form the mode of production, and constitute the society's economic structure. The forces of production comprise the sum of the material conditions of production: raw material, tools, technology, labour forces, etc. The relations of productions are the relations of human beings during the process of production, exchange and distribution of the material utilities in a society. The forces of production change quicker than the relations of production, provoking, consequently, a conflict between both of them. After a while, the conflict within a given mode of production becomes so great that a social revolution becomes inevitable. The class struggle, motivated by these contradictions is the main agent of change in modern industrial society.

In Marxist theory, the basis of all change is contradiction. However, contradictions are not necessarily antagonistic and changes can occur even where there are non-antagonistic contradictions, as shown in the quotation below:

Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute. But the way we set about solving contradictions, in other words, the forms of struggle, differ according to differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are marked by the existence of open antagonism, some are not. When we consider the concrete development of things, some contradictions which are originally non-antagonistic change and become antagonistic; some contradictions which are originally antagonistic, change and become non-antagonistic (Mao Tse-Tung, quoted by McLeish, 1969: 8).

Although changes can occur in different ways according to differences in the nature of contradictions, for the Marxist, class struggle is the most common way. However, for this to occur, the development of consciousness on the part of the oppressed class is also necessary. So change is a product of individual consciousness and action within the context of class interest and struggle, motivated by economic contradictions.

Marx's ideal society is the communist one. It is not our intention here to
discuss the advantages and the possibility of achieving this ideal, but rather to explore Marx's view on participation as a way to reaching a more democratic society.

In Marx's view, the consciousness by the individual that his/her participation forms part of class participation and so is very important, is an essential prerequisite for effectiveness in reaching a more democratic society. If a certain minimum level of consciousness is necessary in order to participate, participation, in its turn, increases class consciousness and leads to conflict. For this, certain necessary material conditions are required. These necessary socio-economic conditions occur through the development of capitalism with its consequent results such as improved communications between workers, the growth of urban areas and concentration of workers in workplaces and at least a basic level of education. Under such conditions working class participation can become a reality.

With better communication and better education, there will be better organisation of the suppressed class. Marx also believed that a class party was necessary to provide the essential organisation and theoretical perspective.

Marx advocated the Paris Commune as an example of organisation and political participation, as the commune was elected by universal suffrage and formed a body of delegates rather than representatives.

In sum, Marx's approach sees class interests as a reason for structural changes. For him, participation is an inherent aspect of class struggle which has an educational value and raises consciousness. He also sees the necessity of a class party to provide the organisation and theoretical framework. Marxist theories have been criticised on ethical, political, philosophical, historical and other grounds. However, in spite of these criticisms, it is considered the most useful approach by several authors (McLeish 1969).

My intention in the present research was to use participation as a way of improving students' critical consciousness (in Freire's sense). I also hoped that by improving students' critical consciousness they would be able to struggle for changing reality not only within the school but also in the broader society.

3.6 - Conclusion
Participation is a fundamental element in participatory research, the methodological approach chosen to undertake the present research.

Participation can be a means of achieving a specific aim or an end in itself. As a means, it characterised as a tool to directly or indirectly influence the transformation of social reality as well as a fundamental ingredient for democracy. It is also seen as an educational process for improving skills and critical consciousness. In the present research, I intent to use participation as a tactic to confront and solve within-school problems, more specifically, those related to the reasons for dropping out from a secondary school.
Participatory research is understood as a social investigation, education and action to change reality. Although some authors defend participation in the entire research process, others do not consider this to be necessary. According to Vio Grossi (1984), participation can take place from only a single moment or action in the research process up to participation in the entire research process.

Freire's methodology considers dialogue and collective reflection as a fundamental way to develop the necessary critical consciousness and change reality. In the present research, participation was restricted to the period of field work and was most significant through dialogue, as an educational act. At the same time, it was my intention to study observe reasons, constraints, facilities and consequences of participation.
PART II - METHOD OF STUDY
A high level of dropout is one of the most important socio-educational problems in Brazil. Although several researches have been carried out in this area, using traditional research methods, there is also a lack of studies which approach the problem from a different perspective and which lead to practical solutions. This recommendation has been made by researchers from both a developed country, such as the U.S. (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Rumberger, 1987; Tidwell, 1988) as well as from Brazil (Brandão et al., 1982).

Criticisms about traditional research approaches have increased in recent decades. Consequently there have emerged several new methodological approaches. Participatory research, where the aim is to change a specific situation, has been one of these new methodological approaches often applied in Third World countries.

Participatory research emerged from work with oppressed people in the Third World, and it has most often been described as a three-pronged activity which integrates the research process (social investigation), with educational work through an action designed to deal with a specific problem (Hall, 1984). In this process, the people under investigation participate in the analysis of their own reality in order to modify the situation for the benefit of themselves. It comprises a 'dialogical' approach, which engages individuals in critical analysis and organised action to improve their situation (Freire, 1974).

As participatory research aims to achieve the solution of specific problems, and as dropout is one of the most important socio-educational problems, it was decided to study questions about dropout using a participatory research approach.

Participatory research consists at the same time of research, education, and action to transform the existing reality. Although there is as yet no consensus as to what constitutes the methodology in participatory research (Kassan, 1981), and each study requires its own specific model, it is possible to identify a number of distinct steps, from the literature review about participatory research. These steps are concerned with: problem identification; choosing a group to work with; problem identification; theoretical and educational activities; actions to implement changes. It is opportune to recall both that the sequence of these steps may alter, and that they can appear more than once and in a different order.
4.1 - Problem Identification

In accordance with the fundamentals of both traditional and new paradigm of research, the researcher must commence the research from a concrete problem facing one group, the knowledge that they have about that specific question, their specific needs, their contradictions and so on.

The principles of the dialectic method and the need to reduce the high rate of dropout (Brandão et al., 1982; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986) oriented the choice of the problem. Both the lack of studies which specifically sought some resolution of the problem, and the characteristics of participatory research, determined the direction of the present research. Besides this, it was hoped that by studying their reality, educators and students would move towards a critical consciousness and so promote action to improve their own situation.

Previous research reports about dropout from secondary school have identified a range of reasons for dropping out. These reasons are frequently grouped into three major categories: economic factors, school experiences, and family reasons. Although these reasons are strongly inter-related, school-related factors, school experiences or 'internal causes' are frequently pointed to as the main reason for dropping out (Mann, 1986; McDill et al., 1985, 1986; Svec, 1986; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986).

Taking into account the time constraints on field work in the present research, it was proposed to study in particular questions relating to student experiences in school, which previous research had suggested was the most important factor in dropout.

A great deal of the literature on participatory research recommends that the issues to be investigated must be chosen or identified in collaboration with the group which is the focus of the research. On the other hand, some researchers such as Brandão (1983) and Demo (1984b), do not consider this to be important. Bearing in mind the views of these authors and the difficulties in contacting the research group while planning the study, it was decided to select the problem to investigate by myself. However, although the broad question to be investigated was proposed to the group by the researcher, the main 'internal' causes for dropping out, which were to be more directly researched, emerged from the analysis of the interviews during field work.

For Oliveira and Oliveira (1981) problem identification entails both the elaboration and verification of some questions which can be helped by different sources. In the present research the basic source for the question was the literature review about dropout. In this way, it was decided to study: 1 - the causes for dropping out, giving more emphasis to the school-related causes; and 2 - to promote actions to change the school-related reasons for dropping out. At the same time, it is my intention to explore questions concerning participation itself, such as: reasons, constraints, facilities and consequences.

It was decided to undertake an intensive study of one public school at the secondary level both because of the level of dropout at this stage (from 15 to 17 years or more) and on the assumption that one would be more likely to
obtain participation at this level than in a primary school. The choice of a public school was based on the fact that private schools do not have a high level of dropout.

The study of the school experience and reasons for dropping out requires not only working with students who dropped out but also the investigation of the school 'process' where they had studied. So, it was decided to focus the research on the dropout problem in one school in order to maximise the opportunities for studying the processes involved intensively. As the number of secondary school students in one school in Florianópolis can fluctuate from around 150 to around 1,500, it was decided to undertake the study in a medium-sized school, since participation has a fundamental role in participatory research and the possibility of achieving the active participation of students and dropouts is strongly related to the size of the group with which the researcher is working (Freire, 1974; Crosby et al. 1986).

4.2 - Choice of School

In the choice of the school several criteria were taken into account: a high level of dropout, the level of the course, the size and location of the school, and the teachers' commitment to address the school's problems.

For practical reasons it was necessary to select a school in an accessible location. The research was therefore undertaken in Florianópolis - capital of Santa Catarina State, where the researcher lives and works.

The choice of the group to work with in participatory research constitutes one of the most critical parts of the research, since it is necessary to meet certain conditions such as the participants' disposition to participate and their wish to change their reality. Some authors recommend work with some existing organised group, which facilitates participation (Bonilla et al., 1984). Although there was in school an organised group - the Students' Union - it was decided do not work directly through this group since in few weeks a new group would be elected. On the other hand, in many cases, if not the most, these organisations exist more formally than operatively.

Although the "Teachers' Association" exists at the State and local level, it is unusual to find a well organised teacher group in an individual school, even where several teachers belong to this association. Since there is no teachers' association in every school, it was decided to work in a school where there was at least a large number of teachers committed to addressing both students' and teachers' problems.

Santa Catarina State is divided into 14 local educational authorities - UCRE (Unidade de Coordenação Regional de Ensino). Before choosing the school to work with, permission to undertake the research was sought from the headteacher of the local educational authority - la UCRE, to which Florianópolis belongs. With his help I identified the list of Secondary Schools in Florianópolis, which had the highest rates of dropout. From these, and still with the assistance of the la UCRE headteacher, a shortlist of three schools was made,
from which it was proposed to select the research school. These three schools were chosen on the basis of the following criteria: size, location and teachers' commitment to addressing both students' and teachers' problems.

Following the assumptions of participatory research, in this present research the aim was to work closely with the administrative body, teachers' counsellor, students' counsellor, teachers, students, dropouts and parents in one school in Florianópolis in order to set up a knowledge base which was directed to the identification of the means and sources necessary to change the situation of high dropout. So, the next step was to contact some school members who worked with the three secondary school previously selected. I started contacting the administrative body of each these three schools to explain the aims of the research, the proposed methodology and to ask permission to undertake the research in her/his school, in the event that her/his school would be selected. At the same time I contacted the students' and/or teachers' counsellor, outlined the research aims and methodology and asked their collaboration in the event that their school would be selected. Special attention was paid to the clarification of both the critical and participatory role of all the people involved with the research. When I explained the proposed methodology, I made the effort to emphasise the researcher role in participatory research, stressing the commitment of the researcher to the people under study, which implied the rejection of any claims to a 'value-free' knowledge production.

In all three schools I obtained a favourable response. Both the administrative body and counsellor (s) of each school tried persuade me to undertake the research in their school since I represented one attempt to study one of the biggest problems in their school.

Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest that one is more likely to have access to the setting if s/he enters negotiation through connections. I did not use this 'device' to reach the schools. However, in each school I met at least one member of the administrative body or counsellor who had taken a course with me at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. This could have helped my access, but I truly believe that the more important fact in their willingness to collaborate was the subject and the nature of my research.

All three schools displayed all the characteristics required. However, the size of each one differed. School 'A' had only two courses distributed among thirteen classes - two in the afternoon period and eleven in the evening. School 'B' had three courses and school 'C' four. Consequently schools 'B' and 'C' had many more classes. The great number of courses, classes and students in schools 'B' and 'C' as well as the distribution of the courses over three sessions (morning, afternoon and evening) in the case of school 'B', could cause some difficulties in obtaining a effective participation since the size of the group is known to be an important factor in obtaining active participation. So, I decided to undertake the research in school 'A' in the hope that a smaller group would promote a bigger involvement and that consequently it would be possible to pursue the work more intensively and comprehensively. Actually, this decision was only provisional since the final decision depended on the students' and teachers' disposition to participate.
After having decided about the research school, I contacted the students and teachers. The contact with students was made through the school Students' Union, whose members welcomed the proposed research as well as the researcher. The reason why the students were contacted through their representatives was because this was the usual way of doing so, and because it would be easier to discuss the question with a small group. The contact with the teachers was made individually, since no teachers' meeting was proposed for some time. Since teachers come to school only on the days they have classes, and given the need to start the research promptly, only eleven (11) teachers from twenty eight (28) were contacted in two days (one evening and two afternoons). In these contacts I explained my proposal and asked for their collaboration. All teachers contacted showed a favourable disposition to collaborate. This fact encouraged me to spend no more time in trying to contact the remaining teachers. Although all teachers contacted agreed to participate, the disposition showed by the students was much more intense.

As both teachers and students in school 'A' agreed to participate, I decided to undertake the research in this school.

Oliveira and Oliveira (1981) suggest that it is very important that the researcher or outsider is not seen by the group as an 'intruder' but is accepted as s/he is - an 'outsider' who intends to work with and for them, and who sooner or later will leave them. In my contact with the school members I always made the effort to remember my 'outsider' or researcher condition, that is, that I would be working with them only some months (from Apr. to Dec., 1989) and that I expected that after that time, they would carry on the work by themselves.

4.3 - The School

Students are not placed in a vacuum. The school is part of the whole community and consequently suffers its influence. So, it is necessary to give to the readers the sense of the context in which the research school was placed by drawing a broad sketch of the school community and the school itself.

The structure of the Brazilian educational system comprises, in first instance, the Ministry of Education, which rules education at a Federal (country) level. At the second level there is the Secretary of Education, which deals with education at the State level. Within a state, the next level is that of the regional co-ordinators. In Santa Catarina state, where the present research was undertaken, there are 16 regional co-ordinators. The school where the research was undertaken belongs to the 1st. Unity of Regional Co-ordination of Schooling. The next and last institutional level is the school itself.

The structure of a school depends on its size. A very small and rural school can have only one teacher who performs the roles of headteacher, secretary, teacher, cook and cleaner. A large school can have a general headteacher and several headteachers according to the session, level or area. It can also have the subjects grouped or divided by departments and different tasks are execut-
ed by different people. The number of people in each category of school staff depends on the number of students and sessions.

The administrative body, compounded by the headteacher and the deputy are, usually, but not necessarily, members of the school staff. Before 1985 the administrative body of all public schools in Santa Catarina was appointed by the state governor. As the people appointed usually belong to the same political party as the governor, the appointments used to have a strong party political connotation. Those appointed used to stay in their position until a change of the governor, that is four years, or until a change in the political party in the government. In 1986, after the democratisation of schooling movement, the administrative body began to be elected by school staff, students and students' parents. However, at the beginning of 1987, after the inauguration of a new governor, the Movement for Educational Democratisation in Santa Catarina suffered a setback. The new governor did not accept that the administrative body could be elected, arguing that this was a position of trust. Hence, the person in charge should be chosen by himself. Consequently, the administrative bodies of all public (state) schools were dismissed and new ones were indicated. In many cases, the persons appointed were the same as had been elected some months previously. This was the case in the research school.

4.3.1 - Localisation, Material Condition and Environment

Florianópolis is the capital of Santa Catarina State. In spite of this condition it is not the biggest city of the State. Its importance is on the grounds of its political and cultural role. Politically, this is because all the main government secretariats and offices are located in it. Culturally, it is significant because it places the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and several courses of the University for the Development of Santa Catarina State (UDESC) apart from some of the best known private secondary schools and pre-vestibular courses.

Geographically the city is composed by shop and office buildings in the centre of the city and residential states and houses on the surroundings. The school is located between these two environments. The city is bounded on one side by the sea and on the other by hills where one can see the huge and richest houses and slums side by side.

The population of the city is mixed: white and middle class in the centre of the city and black and lower class on the outskirt. Occupationally, the majority of the residents of the city are civil servants and politicians. The majority of the blue-collar population live on the outskirts. Politically, the city is conservative although the left wing parties have been increasing lately. Economically it has no a big role since it is an administrative rather than an industrial or commercial city.

There are several secondary schools in the centre of the city which have evening classes. The research school was not the biggest one.
The research school was first opened in 1915 in the centre of Florianópolis. Up to 1983 it was only a primary school. In 1983, when the secondary school was opened, it was also transferred to another building, the former Faculty of Law, also in the centre of the city. The present building, as the previous, is an old one. As with most public schools, its fabric has been allowed to deteriorate. Therefore, its appearance as well as its conditions were not good. Because it was located in a highly valued area, there was a strong contrast between it and the surrounding buildings. Although students, teachers and staff were not satisfied with the material conditions of the school, they could do nothing or only very little, since they did not have the financial resources necessary for improvements.

There is not a monthly or yearly budget from the government for schools. When some money is provided, the amount is generally less than is necessary. To provide their own money, schools are allowed, through the parents' and teachers' association, to charge a small fee to students. Students who come from poor backgrounds are exempt from this fee. Since school 'A' was attended not only by students from the lower classes but also from the middle classes, the amount of money raised through fees was significant. This amount was complemented by the rent of a bar inside the school, and the rent of two garages existing on the edge of the school yard. Although the money raised by the school was considerable, it was far from enough for all its needs. The money raised through fees and rent was used for small repairs to the building and furniture, to complement the students' educational materials received from the government, and to supply books for the school library. In spite of the complaints of the students about their library, it is generally considered one of the best in public schools.

The school was medium-sized school and the school building was in the form of an 'U' with two floors. All the offices were located on the base of the building, that is, on the base of the 'U', and the classes in the lateral wings. The administrative office was located on the left side of the school entrance hall and all movement in the school could be seen from it.

Teachers had no place where they could prepare theirs classes without being disturbed. There were only two teachers' common rooms. One was in the basement, on the right side of the entrance hall, where teachers used to have a coffee and rest a little during the break time, and where they used to stay before the classes started or when they had a free period between classes. The other teacher room was located above this one and tended to be a little quieter.

There were twelve classrooms besides other installations. The number of classrooms was enough to accommodate all present students. However, there was a lack of room to accommodate the school counsellors properly. There was only one room for all of the student counsellors (primary and secondary school). So, there was no private place for the students' counsellor to attend to students who wished to discuss their personal problems. Most of the time consultations were carried out in the festivity room (theatre). Apart from being too busy, this room was badly aired and counsellors frequently suffered headache caused by both a musty smell from the room itself and a bad smell.
which came from the toilets. The administrative body office and the festivity room also were badly aired and one could feel oneself suffocated by the musty smell.

If on the one hand the number of classroom was sufficient, on the other hand their conditions were dreadful. Several windows did not open and/or did not close adequately. The desks, in general, were very scratched and many of them, as well as many chairs, needed to be repaired or not used at all. The poor condition of the desks and chairs did not motivate students to treat them with care. In most of the classrooms the lighting was very poor, since many lights did not work. Fatigue after a day's work, the often very boring classes, plus the lack of lightning motivated students to feel sleepy and even to fall asleep during the evening classes.

The lack of lighting in some areas of the patio plus the shadow of the trees, resulted in some quite dark places in the evenings, which encouraged the formation of truancy groups. It also encouraged the presence of outsiders and the formation of a drug-user group which used to meet under some trees, in a shadowy spot of the school yard. Drug use was so common that late in the year, a student saw a group injecting drug just outside the rear door of the school, during the class period.

Students were classified by grades and to be promoted to the next level they had to fulfil two prerequisites: to have, at least, 75% attendance in classes and to achieve, at least, grade 5 as a mean in each subject. Otherwise they would be kept down.

As in other secondary public schools, there was neither a remedial or dropout prevention programme nor any programme to increase the skills of students with learning difficulties.

4.3.2 - The Students

There were around 1,200 students in the school at the beginning of the year. They were distributed across three periods. The first four grades of primary school attended the school in the morning session (8:00 - 12:00), and the fifth to eight grades in the afternoon (13:30 - 17:30). Two classes of secondary school were attending in the afternoon, the remaining eleven went to school in the evenings - from 6:30 to 10:00. As usual in Brazil, the afternoon period comprised five classes of 45 minutes and the evening, five classes of 40 minutes. While the day sessions had 30 minutes interval between the second and third classes the evening session had only 15 minutes.

Although the school was located in a middle class neighbourhood it served both working and middle class. Those who attended the classes during the day lived near the school and many of them belonged to the middle class. However, large numbers of those who attended the school in the evenings, lived on the outskirts and belonged to the working class. As they worked in the city up to nearly the time the evening classes started, they had to study there instead of in their own community's school. Since many shops closed at 6:30 p.m., that
is, the same time that the first evening class started, those who worked were allowed to arrive a few minutes late.

4.3.3 - The Staff

The school staff was composed of teachers, administrative body, counsellors (teachers’ and students’), librarians, secretaries and servants (cooks and cleaners). Most of the staff and several teachers worked on both primary and secondary schools.

The administrative body was comprised of a headteacher and a deputy head. There was only one headteacher and one deputy head for both primary and secondary school, so to ensure attendance during all periods, they alternated their shifts. The headteacher was a teacher and the deputy head a school administrator, both from the school. Both had been elected for a four year period by students, teachers, parents and staff at the beginning of 1986. However, one year later, they, along all others in the same post, were dismissed by the newly elected Governor, on the grounds that such posts constituted a position of trust. As both headteacher and deputy belonged to the same party as the new Governor, they were indicated by him as the ‘new’ administrative body. As indicated, they would remain in charge until the beginning of 1991, when a new governor would be in charge. However, taking into account the programme and the commitments made by them at the time of their election, they both decided to leave their posts, by the beginning of 1990, at the end of their four-year term.

Although the administrative body’s actions and/or decisions depended in large measure on the orientations of both the local and state educational authorities, they had all the responsibilities of the decisions that took place in the school. The administrative body’s primary responsibility was with the day-to-day routine of the school. In this sense, they had to deal with both teachers and students. In relation to teachers they had to verify if all teachers were present and in case of someone failing to turn up they tried to reorganise the day schedule in order to avoid some classes remaining without teachers. In relation to students, they had the task of keeping the school quiet and student out of corridors and school yard even though they had the help of all the school staff in this task. Students disciplinarian issues were, in first instance, referred to their teacher. However, when teachers considered the problem more serious, the students were sent to the administrative body office. The students who were sent to them because of disciplinarian action rarely displayed hostility or resentment. They usually tried to be friendly and to dialogue with these students. However, in some cases, and because of his personal style, the deputy head was, sometimes, misinterpreted. Some students considered him a bit aggressive and bossy.

Both headteacher and deputy head were very aware of, and committed to tackling the problems of the school. However, the shortage of money and the lack of contribution of some teachers made it difficult or impossible to solve many problems.

Teachers were located to the school by competition, transfer from another
school or by inter-school exchange. Around sixty five teachers worked for this school. Of these, twenty eight worked in the secondary school. There were two librarians who between them covered all three sessions. Of the three student counsellors, two worked for the primary school and one for the secondary school. The social worker was in the service of the primary school only. As there was only one pedagogical adviser, he was in the service of all teachers. At the beginning of November, a psychologist started to work at the school, temporarily. Considering her experience in a previous job, he decided to work only for the school staff. All remaining workers (secretary, servant, etc.) were distributed across different shifts and attended both schools.

Among the teachers there were several 'substitutes'. A substitute is a teacher who replaced another teacher who is on a leave with permission because of her/his own or her/his family illness or other problems. A substitute can be either a graduate or undergraduate and s/he can substitute from two weeks up to a whole academic year. A substitute is contracted by the Secretary of Education only when the teacher's absence is over two weeks. In a shorter period, the students are given essays to replace both the classes and the content and wherever possible the day's schedule is reorganised in order to both allow students to finish the classes earlier and avoid noise and disturbance in school.

Teachers were not assessed and their wages depended on both their degree of education and their years of experience in the public school sector.

It is perhaps important to note that this school is considered one of the best and most progressive in the local authority (la. UCRE).

4.3.4 - The Secondary School
The secondary school is of quite recent origin and opened in 1983 with a "Data Processing" course. In 1985 a new course - "General Education" was set up. Secondary school comprises three grades but the Data Processing and General Education course start only in the second grade. The first grade is a basic one and so the schedule is the same for all courses. 446 students, 179 males and 272 females, enrolled themselves in this school, in 1989.

The "Data Processing" course prepares for employment and is taken equally by males and females (48% male and 52% female in 1989). On the other hand, the "General Education" course prepares students for 'vestibular', the University entrance test and is attended by more females (66% in 1989) as can be seen in Appendix A.

With normal progress, a student starts a secondary school at about 15 years old and finishes at 17-18 years. However, I found in this school, many students who were older than the average age. This was quite common since either some students interrupted their study between the primary and secondary school or they had failed several times. Since there was no failure in primary school until recently, cases of failure were mostly found in the secondary school. For example, I found one student taking the first grade for the fourth time.
Although this was an exceptional case, it was quite common to find students taking the same grade for the second time.

The average number of students was around 35 students per class although the tendency was to have more students in the first grade than in the third.

Most of the students who had evening classes worked during the day in a temporary or permanent job. Some of them lived near the school. However, others lived a distance from the school, up to 18-20 km. As there are secondary schools in every suburb, the reason for such distance was the students' job. Since in the suburbs there are either few available jobs or the wages are lower, students prefer to work and study in the city. The location of the school - in the centre of the city - facilitated this option.

Twenty-eight teachers taught in the secondary school. Although some teachers had been teaching for almost twenty-five years (time enough to retire) most of them were around 30 years old and quite new in their career. All the permanent (not substitute) teachers were graduates and some (6) were taking a 'specialisation' course. This is a post-graduation course for which no dissertation is required. For several reasons (health, vacation premium, and maternity) a few teachers were, for some time, on leave during the academic year. Their substitutes, in general, were graduate students.

4.3.5 - The Participants
As it was said earlier, in the present study, I worked with the administrative body, counsellors, teachers, students, dropouts and parents of one school in Florianópolis (Santa Catarina State in Brazil) from April 24th, to December 22th., 1989.

To assure the promised confidentiality all participants will be referred to as he, unless it is really necessary to know the gender. Another measure adopted is to use a code, composed of letter(s) and number, which identify the sort of participant and the order s/he was registered in my personal field diary.

Dropouts
The basic information in the study of the question of dropout was the dropouts' perception about their own problem. So the starting and main point of the data-gathering was to collect the points of view of dropouts about the question. This was done through interviews with them. Their names were obtained from the school annual reports and most of their addresses from the students' files.

Students, Teachers and Staff
Participatory research aims to study a specific problem in order to change it. In the present research I aimed to study the institutional reasons for dropping out in order to modify the situation for the benefit of the students. In this study institutional reasons relate to all aspects of the school and processes, in it including staff-student interaction, teaching styles, curricular content, peer group values and so on.
Students were involved in the present study in different ways. Firstly, all students were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix B) through which I intended to find out how they were coping with school and struggling to avoid dropout. After this, they participated in the analysis of the finding from the interviews and questionnaires. Finally, they participated in the attempt to modify the present institutional conditions.

Teachers, as well as the administrative body and counsellors who were working with secondary school, participated in both a meeting where I presented some partial results of the study and in other meetings where some institutional questions were discussed. Teachers were also asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix C) about reasons for students dropping out.

It is not possible to speak about participatory research without speaking of participant observation (Ezpeleta and Rockwell, 1986). So, in order to get supplementary information for a more comprehensive study, students, teachers, administrative body and counsellors were observed throughout the field work.

Parents
Only 10 parents participated in informal interviews where they presented their judgment about the school and the reasons, in their opinion, why they children dropped out.

4.4 - Data Gathering
Each methodological approach leads to a different picture of empirical reality since every data gathering technique is potentially biased and has specific to it certain limitations concerned its validity. On the other hand, no single method is always superior because each has its own special strengths and weaknesses (Denzin, 1978). Hence, I decided to undertake the present research using methodological triangulation.

One form of triangulation is the use of methodological variation. These can take two forms: within-method, when the investigator uses different varieties of the same method, eg., direct, indirect and participant observation, and between-methods, when the investigator uses more than one method. Although in the present research I used both forms, the second one was more stressed. So, data gathering was carried out using several techniques such as focused interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, meetings, and group discussions or dialogue. Several of these processes occurred simultaneously at different stages of the research. The complementary methods approach yielded more comprehensive data on the reasons for dropping out.

The strategy of using different sorts of informants - dropouts, continuing students, teachers, and parents - allowed the gathering of different perspectives and the capture of a more comprehensive and holistic picture.

The relationship and interaction with the informants might have affected the quality of the data. However because of the theme researched, which was of
great interest to all informants, there were no major problems concerned to
the interaction between the researcher and the informants/participants during
the research process. The only problem occurred during the teachers' strike.
As I supported the students in their demand to have their classes replaced,
several teachers interpreted my attitude as being against them and cooled, in
part, their relationship with me. As soon as the strike ended and teachers
returned to the classrooms the relationship improved again.

4.4.1 - Interviews with Dropouts
The interview is commonly defined as a conversation between a researcher and a
respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the
researcher's study. Interviewing dropouts was the basic starting point of
my work.

Interviews are generally classified according to their degree of standardisation,
which Denzin (1978: 113-16) suggests are:
1 - Schedule Standardised Interview - In this kind of interview questions are
previously elaborated and its wording and order must be exactly the same
for every respondent. It is assumed that each respondent will interact
with the interviewer in the same way, and will have the same understand-
ing of each question.
2 - Non-schedule Standardised Interview - It is also known as unstructured
schedule interview. Instead of questions asked in a fixed sequence, there
is a list of information required from each respondent.
3 - Nonstandardised Interview - In this form, also known as the unstructured
interview, there is no pre specified set of questions.

Merton et al. (1956) present another form, the focused interview, which is
closely related to the unstructured interview, but differs in the extent to
which the direction of the interview is controlled. It is used mainly when
certain types of information are desired from all respondents but the order
and the phrasing of the questions can be changed in order to fit the charac-
teristics of each respondent. Since questions can be rephrased and reordered
to convey meaning, it is easier to motivate the respondent's interest in
replying as well as to check their responses.

Considering the aim of the present study and the characteristics of the fo-
cused interview, I selected this form of interview to help in the data gather-
ing from dropouts and parents.

Instead of prefixed order and phrasing of the questions, focused or unstruc-
tured interviews used only a schedule or interview guide with a check-list of
topics to be covered. Five main areas were covered in the interviews with dropouts:
1 - Biographical data: name, year which dropped out, class, course.
2 - Main reason for dropping out.
3 - Other reasons which could have been important.
4 - Any other information given spontaneously. And
5 - Changes which could be done inside the school in order to avoid students
Although in most cases I had obtained the biographical data from the student's file, this question was asked for every respondent either in order to confirm or to get these data. The reasons for dropping out were usually grouped under three different categories: economic, domestic and personal, and institutional. In the present research I adopted this classification for didactic reasons.

Since the primary concern in the present research was with institutional reasons, interviews had different lengths, depending on the main reason presented. When the main reason was an economic or domestic one, interviews lasted only 10-15 minutes on average since there were no more questions to explore. However, when the reasons were institutional, interviews lasted up to almost one hour and a half (40-50 minutes on average) and I explored as much as possible about their school experiences.

The interview schedule was designed to facilitate a smooth flow of questioning from one topic to the next. The open-ended nature of the interview allowed freedom to the respondents and permitted them to give additional information. Whenever this happened, respondents were encouraged to continue. They never seemed reluctant to divulge information to a 'stranger'. On the contrary, sometimes they felt themselves so at ease that they spoke about their private lives. If on the one hand I did not initiate this topic, on the other, I tried not to interrupt them in order to not interfere with the interaction.

Most of the dropouts were interviewed only on a second contact. In spite of that, in the first contact a general idea about the study was given to them. Following Lofland and Lofland's (1984) recommendation, before starting the interview, I explained to the respondents why and how s/he came to be selected, the purpose and nature of the study, the topics to be covered and stressed the right to decline to answer the questions, and that there would not be a correct or wrong answer. In spite of this, some students expressed some apprehension about why they had been chosen. Most of them, however, did not care. Although in the first contact confidentiality was assured, later in the interview itself I again stressed that the names of the persons would be hidden in reporting my data. All students agreed to be tape recorded although in one case the respondent asked me to switch off the tape-recorder while he was giving some personal information. In spite of the personal nature of the information in this particular case, some notes about what could be concerned with the reasons for dropping out were taken, later at home, with care being taken not to disclose the private information.

As recommended by Lofland and Lofland (1984), I took notes during the interviews. These sparse notes referred to: (1) key names, words or sentences about which I intended to ask for clarification or further details; (2) new questions to ask; (3) linked the current talk with what had already been said by the present or other respondents; (4) to probe for more detailed responses.

The validity of the interview largely depends upon the kind of relationship established between the interviewer and the respondent (Ackroyd and Hughes,
Although for Denzin (1978) the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can be problematic, I did not have this experience. The fact that I was a teacher who was not officially linked with the research school, and that I wished to explore the students' point of view about dropout and was mainly concerned with institutional reasons, helped to establish a good rapport. In fact, I was perceived by the students as someone who was committed to doing something about their problems.

172 interviews were carried out as indicated in the table below:
- current year dropped out 142
- other years dropout 30

**TOTAL** 172

The first eight interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to have a more comprehensive idea about what and how dropouts replied. In the case of the other interviews, I took summary notes about what was said in general and made verbatim transcriptions only of some important points. To facilitate the subsequent analysis of the interviews, I highlighted with a coloured pencil the ideas to be analysed, noted in the margins contradictions in the information, concepts and ideas which occurred, and made notes about pauses, voice tone or other considerations that could reveal some significant meaning to the answer. At the end of every transcription I also made notes about methodological difficulties and/or success and my personal judgment about what had been said by the respondent.

4.4.2 - Interviews with Parents

The aim in interviewing parents was both to obtain the parents' point of view about the school and their dropout children, and to compare the parents' and children's points of view.

Interviews with parents were carried on during the day and generally in the parents' home. One exception was a mother who was interviewed at her work place, since as a maid she could afford some time in the afternoon before going home.

Although the purpose of the study was explained to the parents, some of them showed signs of concern and asked if there was no other special reason, apart from having dropped out, why their children had been selected. They were worried about what their children could have done at the school. In one case, where the student had dropped out in the current year, the parents did not yet know that their child had left the school. It was quite an embarrassing situation since the child was not at home at that moment and the mother did not believe the fact. On my return to the school I confirmed the fact with teachers and the school secretary and some days later when I contacted the mother again, she was now fully aware of the fact, though the reason given by her was quite different from that given by her child. Although the interview with the dropout was carried out after our first contact with his mother my relationship with him did not seem to have been compromised by this incident.
4.4.3 — Interviews with Teachers
Towards the end of the field work, five unstructured interviews were carried out with teachers in order to probe some issues observed in the participant observation or revealed by dropout and continuing students and to obtain some data I could not have gathered during my observations.

4.4.4 — Questionnaires
In order to supplement the information obtained from interviews with dropouts and with the intention of seeing how continuing students and teachers saw the question of dropout, continuing students and teachers were surveyed by means of the self-completion questionnaire (Appendix B and C). Their responses helped to identify different views about the dropout question. A total of 195 students responded the questionnaires, a response rate of 68%. Eighteen of the twenty eight teachers, answered the questionnaires, a response rate of 64%.

4.4.5 — Participant Observation
The focused interviews had provided general information about the institutional reasons for dropping out. Although many of the dropouts interviewed had left the school in the current year, their points of view did not give a comprehensive picture of the school processes. It was necessary, therefore, to complement the information we had by means of participant observation.

Participant observation combines a number of activities including looking, listening, watching, asking and interviewing (Ackryd and Hughes, 1981; Lofland and Lofland, 1984).

Gold (1977) identified four roles for the participant observer. They are:
1 - Complete Participant — The observer plays a participant role and pretends to become a fully-fledged member of the group studied. Her/his true identity and intention is not known by the group.
2 - Participant as Observer — The group studied is aware of the observer role and intention and about the relationship between the two parts. It is appropriate in studies where relationships have been developed over time.
3 - Observer as Participant — Where the researcher observes in a single visit.
4 - Complete Observer — Where there is no interaction between researcher and observer.

Since participant as observer seemed to be the one which would best provide the required data, I undertook the participant observation under this model. This technique really helped a great deal in checking and completing the information gathered through interviews. It was used during my living together in school, during school board meetings, informal meetings, parties in teachers' houses where I had been invited, and so on.

Participant observation started at the beginning of April and continued until...
December, 22nd, 1989. During this period I went to the school every day of the week except on very few occasions. Even when I decided not to hold meetings on Fridays, I used to go to school in order to observe what was happening. I usually arrived at the school around 6:00pm, when teachers and students were coming to the evening classes, but as numerous occasions I arrived at around 2:00pm in order to observe what was happening in the afternoon, to contact the administrative body and the counsellors, and to help with some school activities. For example, I offered my help in preparing the 'gincana' - a school competition with different sorts of tasks: academic, recreational and philanthropic.

The two first weeks spent in the school were used mainly in obtaining lists and addresses of dropouts. At the same time I started to interact with the students, teachers and staff, and develop what Olesen and Whittaker (1977: 383-4) call 'surface encounters' and 'proffering and inviting', that is, the two first phases in the field work interaction. More precisely, during this period I started contacting students, teachers and staff and expanding and clarifying the definition of myself as investigator and theirs as actors in the research and life roles. During this period I took only a few notes about people and their lives and professional roles. Not everyone was contacted in these two weeks, so, to some extent, these two initial phases continued for some months, especially as some teachers were very difficult to contact.

In the first weeks of participant observation the information gathered was mainly descriptive. As the time passed and I became more familiarised with the school and a growing trust was developed with the informants, the information collected became more detailed and more specific.

The main source of data in the participant observation was the students' counsellor office. The students' counsellor had a very good relationship with students. Students called there quite frequently for an informal conversation or to discuss some individual or class problem. So, some attempts were made by me to participate in these conversations in such a way that more information could be gleaned.

During my period of participant observation, written notes were taken. Most of the time these notes were only key words, names and sentences which could help develop more detailed notes, which I wrote up when I was alone or at home. When it seemed inopportune to take notes, this was done only surreptitiously. A tape recorder was never used. Notes were taken not only of the event or what was said, but also on the spatial and temporal context. Records were made of who did what, where, when and with whom. Care was taken that in the reconstruction, the words and substance of the original conversation were retained.

4.4.6 - Group Discussions
Although I was able to collect a considerable amount of data from focused interviews, questionnaires and participant observation in order to understand the problem of dropout, this was not enough from a participatory research perspective. Participatory research also comprises education and action to
change the reality. Education is reached through data analysis in which the people under investigation participate. So, besides the techniques mentioned above, I also used meetings and group discussions to analyse the data and organise action to change reality.

In the present research I use 'meeting' to describe the kind of reunion where data were presented but not deeply discussed and analysed, either because these meetings were occasional or because a large number of people were involved which did not allow a more organised and deep debate. 'Group discussion' refers to the kind of reunions where the dialogue technique was used either because the reunions were more frequent, as in classroom discussions, or the number of people involved permitted the dialogue.

Although there are different ways of carrying out collective analysis such as workshop, theatre, etc. (Jackson et al., 1981), dialogue has been one of the most valued techniques and according to Fals Borda (1981) it is almost essential.

Paulo Freire (1972, 1976) presents 'dialogue' as a method of inquiry and interaction as well as a method of raising people consciousness and praxis. In the dialogue process, either teacher and student or researcher and researched learn from each other within a horizontal relationship. For Freire, dialogue helps to develop a radical and liberatory education and consequently helps to raise consciousness. It also helps to enter, to understand the cultural world of those being educated or researched.

According to Aronowitz and Giroux (1985: 106)

... the interests underlying a specific form of behaviour may become clear once the nature of that behaviour is interpreted by the person who exhibits it. But we do not mean to imply that such interests will automatically be revealed. Individuals may not be able to explain the reasons for their behaviour, or the interpretation may be distorted.

Collective analysis or dialogue helps individuals to grasp the reality and the interdependence of the different social facts. In this way it might also help individuals to understand better their own behaviour.

The participants in research have their own theoretical framework or in Gramsci's word, their own philosophy which directs their behaviour, expectations, and points of view. In the analysis of the data during the dialogue sessions, continuing students' opinions were determined by their own vision of the world, their popular philosophy or common sense. Although the study of a social phenomenon must take into consideration the 'common-sense' and its representations, scientific philosophy or scientific knowledge requires a rupture with it which can be reached through critical analysis. Group discussions or dialogues were the main opportunities where a critical, collective analysis took place. I cannot deny the existence of some limitations in this kind of analysis since the students' point of view were politically and ideologically determined, but one must keep in mind that as Gramsci very well
remembered, "Every social stratum has its own 'common sense' and its own 'good sense'..." (Gramsci, 1971: 354). On the other hand, there were several students who were politically very well informed. In fact, one student had read some of the Freire’s and Gramsci’s works and another was participating in group discussions about the Old Greek Philosophers. I have to say that these students were members of the Workers Party - PT - and were political activists. However, not all the more informed students were either political activists or members of a political party.

My participation was quite different in the meetings and the group discussions. In meetings, where teachers and students were participating I tried not intervene, except to help the parties to resolve an impasse, to raise or bring back a subject. However, I did not refrain from expressing my personal point of view. On the other hand, in group discussions, my participation was much more active, since students were frequently asking for my opinion, and frequently I needed to complement and/or to correct a student’s point of view.

Through the dialogue sessions I was able to check and complement the information obtained through other techniques as well as verify the differences and contradictions in the information gathered. On the other hand, students learned to identify their problems and analyse action possible to be taken. They always had the opportunity freely to ask any question or make any comment they had about the topic discussed. As part of the field work coincided with a presidential election - the first for nearly 30 years, on several occasions this subject came into the discussion. Nevertheless, besides the time constraints and the limited opportunities to have group discussions, every time that this subject was raised, I included it in the dialogue. I did this for two reasons. First, psychologically and pedagogically it would not be convenient to inhibit the students' interest. Second, but not the least, as I was trying through dialogue to show the interdependence of the social facts, the 'election' subject could perfectly well be integrated into the discussion. Another aim in the group discussion and dialogue was to increase students' consciousness. In this sense, discussion about the election was quite appropriate. More than this, it was quite advisable since some students were going to vote.

During the group discussions I had the opportunity to strengthen my belief that dialogue could be an effective educational tool and could contribute to the increasing of students’ consciousness about their own reality and the need to change it.

The following table indicates the number of formal meetings and group discussions held and the categories of people involved in them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>People involved</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students, teachers and staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative body and counsellors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students and teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group Discussions
Students and teachers
Students

The average time of the meetings was one hour and a half and the group discussions around 40 minutes, the time that a class lasted. However, on two occasions the group discussions lasted 30 minutes.

Participatory research comprises a social investigation with educational activities through action designed to deal with a specific problem. In the present research, the educational activities consisted mainly of organising the information collected and reporting them to the group in order to discuss the results with them. The results of this discussion constituted part of the theoretical elaboration.

In considering social practice as the basis for the production of knowledge, the researcher must consider the objective as well as the subjective elements in the everyday life of the group (Jara, 1984). So it is necessary to consider not only the actions taken by the group but also the interpretations that the members of the group had about their actions. To Jara (1984) the analysis or theorisation about people's interpretations must allow for the identification of the internal contradictions of the social practice, going from the external appearance of the facts to their essential (actual) elements, and from empirical knowledge to a theoretical one.

A systematic process of theorisation requires a permanent and broad questioning about the facts, which requires the confrontation of our knowledge with the results of other studies. On the other hand, people's knowledge is usually fragmented, incomplete and sometimes contradictory with their practice. So, the critical understanding of people's knowledge and their theorisation about the subject studied is necessary.

Here, dialogue was the most important technique in seeking a clear and critical consciousness about the problem. So, students, teachers and staff actions and their contradictions were constant in the dialogue and process of analysis.

The analysis of the data and the elaboration of the information took place in different forms and stages. In a first step, the organisation of the data was done by the researcher. However, in participatory research, data analysis is seen as an integral part of a cyclical process in which data is analysed, studied and interpreted as it is collected, and in which the process is expected to continue beyond the study when the results were communicated to all those who were involved (Ellis, 1990: 25).

In this way, as soon as I had completed the questionnaire surveys and carried out some interviews, I organised a general meeting with all school members and presented the data. This happened in the middle of July 1989 and was intended
both to report the data collected up to that moment and to motivate people to group discussion. This general meeting lasted two hours, since the presentation of data raised great interest among both teachers and students. The data presented astonished both students and teachers, but while students agreed with the facts and figures, not all teachers did. Although teachers were surprised by the overall results, the most surprising and questioned fact concerned the great number of dropouts and continuing students who mentioned within-school reasons, particularly teacher-student relationships, as the cause for having dropped out or having thought about dropping out. This teachers’ reaction was quite natural since in their questionnaire they emphasised outside-school reasons as the main causes for students to leaving school early.

After this meeting I started small group discussions. In these group discussions, some data were presented and then discussed and analysed. This step aimed to explore both the nature of the conceptions that the group had about the dropout question and their understanding of the relationships, contradictions and conflicts involved in it. They also aimed to give due weight to people’s knowledge.

Because of the difficulties in both holding meetings out of lesson time and of ensuring the attendance of both teachers and students together, these discussions normally took place only with students, during class time, when some teachers had failed to turn up to school. All interviews, meetings, debates etc. were tape-recorded.

4.5 - Difficulties and Limitations

4.5.1 - With Dropouts
Several difficulties arose in the initial stages when I tried to find their address and contact them such as:
1 - As some students had no file and for others the information in the file was incomplete, I could not obtain the addresses of all dropouts. Nonetheless, the percentage of those who had no file or incomplete information was less than three per cent of all dropouts. Since there were more dropouts than could be contacted during the field work, this problem did not interfere with the sample size. From those who dropped out in the current year, I partially solved the problem by getting their addresses from their class colleagues. However, this was possible only when the student had attended classes for at least a short period of time and had good contact with colleagues.

2 - During the enrolment period, many students on first and second levels enrolled themselves in more than one school in order to hold the place, while they were making up their mind about what course to take or what school to attend. They then chose to attend classes in only one of these schools but very seldom communicated their decision to the other schools. In this case, they are enrolled in all these schools, but, as they frequented classes in only one, they were considered dropouts in all the
others. Because of the shortage of secretarial staff and the quantity of administrative work at the beginning of the year, teachers in the school under investigation received a class register only at the end of the first month, when they started to record students' attendances. So, when a 'dropout' case appeared at the very beginning of the second month, it was not always possible to clarify if it was really a question of dropping out. Since teachers had many classes and consequently large number of students, it was quite impossible for them to identify students who had never come. The only way to do so was through colleagues. However, they were not always sure about the information given. On the other hand, the information given by colleagues or teachers, or taken from the teachers' class register did not always agree with that given by school secretaries. In at least five cases where the secretary considered a student to be a dropout, in reality s/he had started the course in other school. This was verified when I contacted students as dropouts and in reality they were not. In fact, this reduces the 'real' level of dropout.

3 - Another difficulty arose when I was contacting dropouts. This was in relation to their addresses. As the parents of several students lived in the countryside or in places not well served by transport, students used either to work for and live with other families, or work in shops or offices and live in boarding houses. In these cases, they gave to the school their temporary work/home addresses. In some cases, either their current address or the address of relatives or friends was known at their previous one, and I was able to find them through these 'tracks'.

4 - Having the addresses of dropouts, I started to make contact with them in order to arrange an interview. Since the secondary school under investigation had been running for only seven years, my initial intention had been to interview dropouts from all these years. I started listing the latest five years (1935-39) dropout and intended to complete the last two years (1933-34) later. However, as I started to contact dropouts, I realised both that many dropouts no longer lived or worked at the address existing in the school file, and that the difficulties in finding the dropouts increased in relation to the number of years since they had dropped out. So, considering the time constraints on the field work, the number of dropouts already identified by the end of April (1,116), and the difficulties in contacting older dropouts, I decided to omit the 1983-84 dropouts and concentrate the interviews on those who had dropped out subsequently. I organised a list of dropouts by area and/or streets and went to their houses. However, many of them were not contacted either because they no longer lived there or because they were not at home. Some of these were contacted later, in a second attempt. Consequently from 172 interviews, 142 (83%) were from the current year and 30 (17%) from '87 and '88 academic intakes. As the reasons for dropout might have changed over time, this can be considered one limitation of the present study. On the other hand, as I intended to discuss and try to change the present situation, this limitation seemed to be less serious.

5 - Many dropouts no longer lived in the city. I was unable to contact these. Others were living or working far from the school. I was able to contact some of these. Others I managed to contact by going to their homes, sometimes up to three times, or sending a message asking them to come to school on a later afternoon or in the evening. Some dropouts were living
far from the school but were working near the school. After an initial contact some were interviewed during their two hour lunch time, but most of them came to the school early in the evening, after their work.

6 - Only a few interviews were carried out on the first contact. This happened either because the first contact was made at their place of work, when they could not spare some time or because they were not at home when I first called there.

7 - Although most dropouts were always contacted personally, many of the first contacts were made by telephone or by a message sent through some friend or relative. Dropouts’ friends and ex-colleagues helped a great deal in making contacts.

It is important to note both that these problems were not peculiar to this school and that, because of the problems indicated, the figures about dropout are not entirely reliable. They can only be regarded as approximate.

4.5.2 - With Students, Teachers and Staff

1 - Gender is a controlled variable in most research. The existence of both genders in the school was incidental as this is the common way in Brazil. Considering the difficulties in contacting dropouts the interviews were done opportunistically. Consequently although male dropouts were slightly more than female (M = 51%; F = 49%), 13% of the male dropouts and 16% of the female dropout were interviewed.

2 - To ensure people’s participation is essential to participatory research, even when participation is taken as a ‘means’ to reach an aim, as it was in the present study. Several factors determine the achievement of participation. One of them is the cultural question, or more precisely what Freire (1980) calls the ‘culture of silence’. Some difficulties in obtaining participation are consequences of historical conditions characterised by oppression and the lack of opportunities to participate. Considering the historical conditions in Brazil, I was forewarned about the difficulties in achieving the participation of students and teachers and so, was not expecting a high level of effective participation. Even so, I came across some unexpected situations.

My intention was to involve as many continuing students as possible in the research process. I aimed to do so, partially, using class periods and/or vacant classes. As teachers had been on strike for almost a month in March 1989, and therefore were delayed in their schedule, it was not possible make use of regular classes to contact students, other than for a meeting with all the school, or only to give or ask for brief information. So, to apply the questionnaires as well as to have group discussions with students, I had to wait for the absence of a teacher from a class. Teachers absences were not rare. However, when teachers failed to turn up, other teachers often used the vacant classes to advance their own classes. To do so, the day’s schedule usually needed to be reorganised by the headteacher, deputy head or secretary. During my first months in the school, I used the vacant classes only when the anticipation of classes by other teachers was not possible. Since the anticipation of the classes was welcomed by both teachers and students, I declined, at the
beginning of the field work, to use every class that could be anticipated. Only after the second teachers strike (9 Oct. - 3 Nov. 1989) when I fell the need for more group discussions with students, did I decide to ask for every vacant class, independently of its possible use by any other teacher. To use this opportunity, I asked permission from the headteacher, who readily agreed that from then on, each vacant class would be used by the researcher. As meetings with students depended on teachers’ failure to turn up, I could neither plan nor control the number of meetings with each class. So, I met some classes more than others. When a vacant class occurred either on the last evening period or on any Friday evening period, the number of participants as well as the level of participation decreased since students tried to escape from the class and those who remained did not participate in the discussion with the same interest showed on other days. As soon as I realised this fact, I gave up meeting on these occasions.

3 - As contact with students was limited to vacant classes, the continuing students' questionnaire was not applied to all classes/students on the same day. So, some students who had already answered the questionnaire could have commented on the content of it with some others who had not yet done so. Although I agreed about the convenience in applying the questionnaire to all students in the same day, I believe that this fact did not interfere significantly in the answers given by the later respondents.

4 - Since the discussion and analysis of the interviews and questionnaires were of concern to both teachers and students, and since I had no opportunity to join both of them during the week, the only alternative left was to meet on Saturday afternoons. In the three attempts made only a few students and no more than two teachers came each time. In spite of the small number of students, this could not be considered a weakness. The fact of being a small group and the fact that they were very concerned with the subject under discussion promoted a good level of discussion and analysis. Actually, Freire (1974) recommends small groups for a good 'dialogue'. However, as teachers' participation was so low and as the students' participation was likely to become more difficult, since those who used to attend these meetings started to be involved with the election campaign, I needed to abandon these meetings, at least temporarily. The election campaign finished only in the middle of November 1989, close to the students' final exams. Since most of the students worked during the day and studied in the evening, they needed all their weekends to prepare themselves for the exams. This fact discouraged recommencing the Saturday meetings after the election.

5 - The relationship between teachers and students came up as one of the main institutional reasons for dropping out. As the bulk of relationship between teachers and students takes place in the classroom it would have been helpful to have observed some classes. However, because of time constraints this was not done. To compensate for this weakness I intensified my observation of student comment about their teachers and vice-versa and how teachers and students related with each other out of class-
4.5.3 - With Parents

1 - My intention at the beginning was to involve parents both in the interviews and in the group discussions. Since either many dropouts were not contacted at their homes or frequently when the contact was made at their homes their parents were not in, only ten parents were interviewed. On the other hand, considering time constraints and the difficulty of contacting both dropouts and parents, I decided to give priority to dropouts.

2 - The participation of the parents in group discussions was not possible for two reasons. First, because parents' participation on the Saturday meetings with teachers and students was planned to happen only after some meetings, when teachers and students had already become familiarised with the group discussion. However, these meetings did not go on long enough to involve parents. Secondly, because the integration of parents in student group discussions at school, in the evening sessions, would be impossible, since these meetings depended on the failure of the teachers to turn up, which were not known with the necessary anticipation. Although in the present study I intended to concentrate my analysis on the dropouts' and students' declarations, more of the parents' point of view could have helped to understand and or complement the students' declarations.

4.5.4 - With Participation and Change

1 - According to Reason (1988b) in a co-operative inquiry, such as participatory research, the researcher must be strongly committed to the participants. My commitment to the students helped me to obtain their cooperation. However, when the researcher is closely allied with one party, s/he generally aroused antagonism from the other(s), and thus may have repercussions on the inquiry (Tandon, 1981a). In the present research, some antagonism arose on the part of the teachers on two occasions. First, when the first results of the interviews and questionnaires were communicated. Second, when continuing students questioned teachers' attitude on the teachers' strike. Fortunately, as described in Chapter 8, these antagonisms were soon dissolved and did not cause major repercussions.

2 - In participatory research and dialogue the process of knowing and changing occurs simultaneously and after some time the situation under study is no longer the same as it was at the beginning. According to teachers, students' consciousness and criticism developed during the period of my field work. However, it is not easy to evaluate how much dialogue or group discussion contributed, alone, to this fact. The single fact that there was someone concerned with their situation and trying to help them to solve their problems may have helped to boost their self-confidence and so their criticism. The presidential election campaign (the first after nearly 30 years) that occurred during the field work period could also have influenced students' consciousness and criticism.

3 - In the present research, actions to change reality were severely limited by time constraints. So, the within-school situation at the end of the field work was much the same as it had been at the beginning of it. However, some difference in students' behaviour such as self-confidence and criticism were noticed by teachers. Reasons for dropping out were
also considered at the teachers' evaluation of that academic year and in the plan for the next one.

4 - When I first contacted the school I introduced myself and my interest in the research inquiry as well as my political and ideological thought. I tried to explain to the teachers the nature of the inquiry and the demands of it, but possibly their personal involvement was not sufficiently emphasised or very well understood by them since their commitment/participation was not as great as they had promised. Maybe also, although they may have understood the importance of the research, the sense that they were working for the researcher and the students' interests rather than for their own one, could have remained and so influenced their participation.

5 - There was practically no room for negotiation at the beginning of the project since the decision of what and why to do had already been taken. In retrospect I strongly believe that the participation of the teachers and students at this stage could have helped to increase their commitment and to establish genuine co-operation.

6 - People have different skills and interest which diversify their level of participation. So, participants were not all involved in the same way. Students were more interested and involved than teachers and within the students, some were more involved and interested than others.

7 - The size of the group is a factor that usually influences the level of individual participation. As the size of the group depended on the size of the class that I was working with, the number of participants varied from around 15 to around 30 participants. While it was easy to work with a small group, a group of around 30 participants was more difficult to co-ordinate.

8 - The process of inquiry revealed to me some of my own limitations and abilities. I faced realities that I was not expected, such as the difficulties of contacting dropouts and parents and in holding meeting at the weekends. Although I was able to partially solve some of these problems, I soon realised that both my aim and my agenda were over-optimistic.

9 - In order to understand the reality it is necessary to act on it (Vic Grossi, 1884; Demo, 1982). On the other hand praxis is a central issue in participatory research. However, time constraints did not allow me to remain in the school until the students had reached the level of consciousness needed for action-reflection-action. Thus no major change in the school situation could occur.

10 - In a participatory or co-operative inquiry, the researcher must have analytical skills, which in its turn, can only be learned in practice (Reason, 1988b). If on one hand I believe that during the field work I had the opportunity and even developed or improved some skills such as negotiation, observation, etc., on the other hand, I believe that previous experience in this kind of research would have improved some results and/or lessened some constraints.

4.6 - Reliability and Validity
Validity is a point usually discussed in any research although this issue is much more emphasised in the traditional research paradigm than in the new one.
The traditional research paradigm emphasises a set of criteria to establish validity, which, according to Reason (1981) is concerned with methods and not much about people. Validity in the new paradigm "is more personal and interpersonal, rather than methodological" (Reason, 1981: 244). The data-collection process that is most relevant to both parties - research and researched - determines its validity.

In the old paradigm, the issue of validity is based on the kind of traditional logic, based on the natural sciences, which, according to Reason (1981), is inadequate for human inquiry. As the new paradigm is based on an interactive, dialectic logic, it cannot use the old criteria of validity. So, it negates some of these criteria, such as the single truth, value-free, variable control, etc.

In the traditional sense validity implies an authentic representation of reality (Tandon, 1981a). The new paradigm rejects the possibility of only one truth and considers that a set of propositions are truth when it is "coherent with our experience of 'reality'" (Reason, 1981: 241). Considering that reality is dialectic, a process which embodies both subjectivity and objectivity,

\[ \text{it is both wholly independent of me and wholly dependent on me.} \]

This means that any notion of validity must concern itself both with the knower and with what is to be known: valid knowledge is a matter of relationship (Reason, 1981: 241).

Therefore, validity may be improved if the knowledge is produced in cooperation since knowledge produced in groups goes towards an intersubjectivity and beyond the limitation of only one knower, because

\[ \text{In terms of research, accepting, allowing, encouraging, and celebrating heterogenous viewpoints will lead to an increase in our understanding (Reason, 1981: 244).} \]

The existing subjectivity leads to different points of view or to multiple versions of the world. Consequently, the new paradigm claims its validity on the ground of its emphasis on the collective production of knowledge, on experiential knowledge (De Vries, 1981; Reason, 1981).

As said before, participatory research is mostly concerned with people. So, another criterion of validity in the new paradigm is the impact caused on people and their lives. In this case, value-neutrality on behalf of the researcher is a myth (Tandon, 1981a; Lather, 1986). Participatory research works with oppressed people with the aim of changing their conditions. So, it is not a value-free or neutral inquiry and validity must not be assessed on this ground.

According to Tandon (1981a) the data-collection process is the main criterion to determine validity in the new paradigm. To fulfil validity, the data-collection process must be relevant to both parties and connected with the context and content of dialogue. In such an approach the researcher alone cannot set the limits of validity. It needs a consensus about validation which is
obtained only when both parties collaborate.

In the present research questionnaires, interviews and participant observation, all based on traditional techniques, were used as a source of data-collection. These techniques were designed and administered with the purpose of both confirming the initial questions and collecting data to work with in dialogues with continuing students. While questionnaires appeared unnatural to continuing students, in the dialogue they could express more deeply and more expressively their experience of what was a valid source of information. Dialogue also brought to them a deeper understanding of their situation and raised their level of consciousness. Considering Fielding and Fielding's (1986) view about triangulation, if the use of different techniques did not necessarily increase the research validity, it may at least have added some range and depth.

Participatory research works with oppressed people and aims to improve their reality. The development of a critical consciousness is a basic step for reaching this aim. Dialogue is seen as education and a research design is the tool to develop a critical consciousness (Freire and Shor, 1987) and "when the data-collection process is disjoined from the context and content of dialogue, it becomes invalid" (Tandon, 1981a: 299). For Comstock, dialogic education is integral to every research program which treats subjects as active agents instead of objectifying them and reifying their social conditions (Comstock, cited by Lather, 1986: 265).

Dialogue as inquiry and intervention becomes a political and ideological process (Tandon, 1981a) and so is not free of both ideology and political consequences. In the present research a consequence of dialogue was the development of a critical consciousness and self-confidence and the requirement of changes in the within-school situation. Due to time constraints student requirements could not be implemented during the period of field work. However, some of these requirements were considered in the teachers assessment about the current academic year (1989) and in the plan for the next one.

For Reason (1988b), in a co-operative or participatory inquiry the researcher must be strongly committed with the participants and the establishment of authentic collaboration is one criterion of validity. In the present research I had some true collaboration but I also met some limitations. Both teachers and continuing students were not so willing to participate at the beginning of the research. However, as described in Chapter 8 (Participation in a School: A Case Study) this participation increased significantly throughout the field work in terms of both quantity and quality.

If we understand a 'case study' to be as a study where workers are concerned to capture the 'commonsense' meanings; which attempts to describe the world as it is seen to the people in it; where internal judgments made by the people under study or who are close the situation "are often more significant than the judgments of outsiders" (Walker, 1984: 203), I can surely consider the present research as a case study.
In considering this study a 'case study' a new problem arises - the question of external validity. External validity or generalisation of the findings is the most frequent criticism of the methods of case studies and participant observation which also involves the intensive study of one case. Atkinson and Delamont (1986) made a severe criticism of case study research in education, as the findings are limited to the setting actually studied. Unlike other traditional research methods, the case study, action research and participatory research aim to deal with a specific problem and the results are intended to be applied mainly, if not only, in that situation. In the traditional sense this can be a weakness but to many recent researchers this characteristic is its strength.

To Webb (in Denzin, 1978: 197), generalisation involves three dimensions concerned with population restrictions, which are: equal characteristics of the populations; instabilities in the population over time; and instabilities arising from spatial or geographical differences.

Educational reality in Brazil can be different according to several characteristics such as: a) kind of sponsorship: private or public schools; b) localisation: urban or rural schools, and different geographical Brazilian regions; c) size of the school: small or big; d) classes period: day time or evening schools. However, on the other hand, the school reality is quite similar among schools with the same characteristics. Consequently, the conclusions drawn from the school studied can be, with some care, applied to similar schools.

Apart from the external validity, every study must also be evaluated in terms of its internal validity. Constraints, difficulties and limitations during a study can possibly alter its results, provoking some bias. Factors that could have provoked bias in the present study, were described in the sections about difficulties and limitations (4.5) and must be considered in case of any comparison or generalisation.
PART III - PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA
It is generally understood that multiple reasons influence students to drop-out. Most of the literature about dropout present a general taxonomy of reasons which identifies three main categories or groups: economic reasons, school-related reasons, and family reasons. However both school-related and family reasons are not independent of economic problems and vice-versa. Concerned with this question, Tedesco (in Borsotti and Braslavsky, 1985) presented a different classification. According to Tedesco, the reasons or variables for dropping out can be classified as *exogenous* — those related to the socio-economic and family or domestic reasons — and *endogenous* — those related to the school. To this author, both of these groups can be subdivided into material or cultural factors.

Based on Tedesco's classification, I organised my own classification which comprises:

1. **Exogenous (or Outside) School Reasons** — subdivided into economic, and domestic and personal reasons; and
2. **Endogenous (or Within) School Reasons** — subdivided into institutional, teacher, and student-related reasons.

If on the one hand this classification brings some methodological advantages, on the other hand it may also bring some constraints. In order to minimise these constraints in the discussion of our data and our conclusions, I will keep in mind that these two groups of reasons are not independent of each other. Actually, one cannot separate what goes on in the school from what goes on in homes, and what goes on in these places cannot be separated from what goes on in the broader society. The inter-connection of what happens in these different places can be seen clearly in the statement of one girl:

> I was studying and working... There was too much group homework to be done... It was quite difficult to meet my colleagues... I got married and went to live a long way from the school... I became stressed... then I became ill... now I am doing a course for a receptionist given by my employer... (D. 35).

Since any one person can have had several reasons for dropping out and considering that these reasons are generally inter-related, the classification adopted has only an analytical purpose. In order to understand the classification better I aggregated the reasons given for dropping out into groups, and these into categories, as follows:
Respondents were asked to pinpoint the different reasons which contributed to the decision to drop out. In each case, the first appointed reason was considered the main or primary reason and the following as secondary. In the statistics of this date, the percentage was taken from the total number of respondents in each category (172 dropouts; 195 continuing students; 10 teachers; and 10 parents) rather than the total number of reasons given. For a practical reason, the figures were rounded up.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exogenous</td>
<td>1 - economic</td>
<td>employment; work timetable; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 - family and</td>
<td>healthy; family relationships; marriage; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endogenous</td>
<td>1 - institution</td>
<td>quality of education; lack of guidance in choosing the course; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 - teachers</td>
<td>relationships between teachers and students; teaching style; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 - students</td>
<td>difficulty with study; student-student relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An abundance of data were collected from the interviews with dropouts and some parents, from questionnaires with continuing students and teachers, from observations in school, from meetings held with teachers, students, and staff, and from group-discussions with continuing students. Using ethnographic data analysis techniques, the data were studied for two main reasons: first, to identify the reasons why students leave school before graduating, giving particular emphasis to the within-school experiences; second, to identify the possibilities of changing some within-school causes of dropout through the participation of students, teachers and staff.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the exogenous or outside school reasons sub-dividing them into two groups: Economic, and Domestic and Personal reasons (see Table 5). Chapter 7 will discuss the endogenous or within-school reasons for dropping out separating them into three categories: Institution-Related, Teacher-Related and Student-Related (see Table 5). The reasons emerged mainly from the interviews with dropouts and teachers, questionnaires with both continuing students and teachers, and group discussions, although field notes taken from observation are also considered.

Chapter 8, Participation in a School: A Case Study, describes and analyses the participation of teachers and students in meetings and group discussions. It also explores the question of participation as a learning process and the constraints encountered in it.

The reasons for dropping out will be presented and discussed in order to assist in preventing dropout by understanding their own perception about the school and the reasons why they dropout.

The analysis includes figures, tables, interview extracts and dialogue extracts. The interview extracts are identified by an alphabetic character followed by a number. The alphabetic character refers to the category of participant, and the number, the order in which the questionnaire and/or interview transcription was classified. The alphabetic characters have the following meaning:
Table 5 - Exogenous and Endogenous Reasons for Dropping Out by Respondent Category (First and Second Reasons) (number and % of respondent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS</th>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing Students</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXOGENOUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Domestic &amp; Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Exogenous</td>
<td></td>
<td>1116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDOGENOUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Institution-Related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Teacher-Related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Student-Related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Endogenous</td>
<td></td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>1721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 — EXOGENOUS (OR OUTSIDE SCHOOL) REASONS

6.1 — Introduction

Outside school reasons comprise, in the present research, those reasons which are not directly linked with the students' school experiences. They include economic situation, family-related problems and personal motivation. Family or personal problems are often based on or related to economic concerns. In spite of this I decided to consider the several economic variables separately. This decision was based on the intention to highlight how much each outside-school reason contributes to the decision to quit school.

Table 6.1 — Economic Reasons
(number and % of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS</th>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Timetable</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved Because Transference</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a Job in Another City</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Between Home</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Home, Work &amp; Sch.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Prospects of Employment</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Intrusion on Study</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 172 dropouts interviewed, 69 (40% of all) pointed to economic factors as the main reason for leaving school before graduating and a further 10 (6% of all) gave this as a secondary consideration. Although all of these reasons were related to employment, the specific reasons tended to diverge. Only 48 (28% of all) mentioned employment itself as the main reason. Other reasons were: their work timetable (7% of all); moved to another place (district, city or state) either because they were transferred to another branch of an organis-ation (2% of all) or because they had obtained a job in that place (2% of
all). Only one dropout alluded to the distance between the school and his home as the main reason for leaving school, while 4 (2% of all) mentioned this as a secondary factor. For both dropouts and teachers, economic factors were the most pointed reasons for leaving school early. However, for the continuing students who had ever thought of leaving school, economic factors appeared to be secondary after school-related reasons.

Table 6.2- Domestic and Personal Reasons
(number and % of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS</th>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Problems in the Family</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Family Starting</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Physical Condition</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Family Moved</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Family Relationships</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Personal Reason</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Absence</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Shyness</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Laziness</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Other Course</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Domestic and personal reasons (Table 6.2) were less significant, in number, than the economic ones. Among the domestic and personal reasons, dropouts mentioned more problems in family with 10 (6% of all) respondents as the main reason and 2 (1% of all) as a secondary cause. Other course was also mentioned 10 times (6% of all) as the main reason for quitting that particular course. Among the other courses opted for were army training, concentrated courses (supletivo), 'pre-vestibular' and even graduation course. Family starting was mentioned by 9 (5% of all) respondents followed by physical condition 7 (4% of all), and family moved, 5 (3% of all). Both physical condition and family moved are strongly related to economic reasons since most of the time student illness is caused by long hours of working and studying, and the need for moving is usually related to the father's new job or the lack of job.

Within the economic reasons, teachers concentrated their answers on the need to work (50% of all) while only 28% of dropouts mentioned it. The same dissimilarity occurred in relation to domestic and personal reasons. 47 (27% of all)
dropouts pointed domestic and personal reasons as the main reason for leaving school early and further 21 (12% of all) as a secondary cause. However, only one teacher (6% of all) mentioned a domestic reason and then as being student laziness. None of the dropouts interviewed considered this factor as the reason for their leaving school before graduation. However, 2 (20% of all) parents mentioned it. Others reasons mentioned by dropouts were: family relationships, personal reason, absence and shyness – each of them no more than 1% of all as showed in the table below.

The existing dissimilarities between teachers’ and students’ answers reveal the lack of teacher understanding about students’ reality.

6.2 - Economic-Related Reasons
Considering the Brazilian economic situation at the time of the data collection in 1989, it is not surprising that the most pointed reasons for dropping out were economic-related ones. Although most of the evening students worked and studied at the same time, a lot of them gave up study as soon as they obtained a job. However, what motivated these students to give up study cannot be seen as just an economic issue. In some cases it is also related to cultural and family background questions.

6.2.1 - Employment
Employment was the main reason presented for leaving school early. This is not surprising since due to economic situation in Brazil, people tend to enter the labour market very early with a low level of schooling or even with no schooling at all (Sicuro, 1984; Gomes, 1990).

I left school as soon as I got a job (D. 158).

I was studying only to fill in the time while I was without work. As soon as I got a job, I gave up school..., (D. 71).

The economic crisis which Brazil was going through at time of the interviews in 1989 and the lack of expectation of any significant economic improvement in the near future, were the main reasons why some students left school early. Due to the economic situation, some students preferred to take employment, when it was offered, even if it was poorly paid and with limited prospects, rather than spending time and money in order to achieve a certificate which might not help too much in achieving employment in the future. However, quitting school could also leave them vulnerable to many new difficulties in the future.

Since they had started secondary school, it seems that they value a school certificate. So, leaving school seems a paradox. Yet, it is a realistic fact considering the present economic situation. Things are so bad that they prefer to solve the immediate problem rather than to worry about a better future.
Most of the secondary school courses take place in the evenings. This facilitates students working and studying at the same time. Many students who either started to work as soon as they left primary school or intended to get a job as soon as possible enrolled themselves in the secondary school, although knowing that it would not be easy to do these two demanding activities at the same time. The school requires the hardest effort but leads to day-dreaming because of tiredness and low grades. So, in many cases they feel themselves not capable of coping with both job and study and so quit school although they know that this kind of choice (or actually a 'no choice'?!) will leave them vulnerable to future difficulties.

Developments in technology and the constant advances of automation tend to increase the skill requirements and consequently to eliminate many low-skill workers from a great number of the 'best jobs'. A lack of a certificate can disqualify dropouts from most white-collar jobs and according to Beck and Huia (1980), they also have less chance of promotion and their expected lifetime earnings are considerably lower than those who have a leaving diploma.

For several dropouts the reason for leaving school was the job itself. When asked why the job was so important to them, the answers given diverged. For some the personal freedom achieved with the money earned through employment was actually the real reason for their dropping out.

Because to have a job means to have more freedom to do what I wish to do... I’m the owner of my own life (D, 86).

...I acted just as my older brothers had done. As soon as they got a job my father stopped telling them what they ought to do or what they shouldn’t do (D, 120).

I am tired of being told how to behave. Having a job I have more freedom. I can arrive home later, travel with friends, go to dancing clubs... (D, 135).

Girardi (1988) states that adolescents can experience a period of conflict against their parents and others authorities, and according to Naylor (1988b), they claim the right to make their own decisions and resent the adult dictatorship about what they must or must not to do. Ochberg (1986) observed that some youth leave school in order to restore their sense of autonomy. For the above cited dropouts (86, 120, 135) the freedom to behave as they wish was the most important thing. However, this freedom depends on economic independence which in turn depends on having a job. On the other hand, for them to work and to study at the same time means that they do not have much free time to enjoy their independence. So, they felt they had no other choice but to give up studying. Although the desire for personal freedom was mentioned by both males and females, this reason was stressed in particular by the former.

Freedom was not the only dream that motivated students to leave school before graduating. For one girl

... to have a job means I can buy nice clothes and dress more
fashionably, what I always dreamed about and never could before (D. 168).

Sicuro (1984) in research undertaken in the south of Brazil, found similar reasons. According to this author, some adolescents leave school because they need to help their family but others because they wish to have more money to dress themselves in a more fashionable way. As they cannot afford this money depending on their family income, they decide to leave school and get the necessary money through a job. The same interest was showed by a continuing student. She used to dress poorly. One evening she came along with a smile on her face and a new brightness in her eyes and said to me:

Didn't you realise? Now I am more good-looking. I have got my first salary and have bought some new clothes. Now I am happy... I am more confident... This is what I always dreamed about... (CS. 25).

Concern about clothes and appearance was shown not only by the girls. Talking about the students' situation in a meeting with teachers and students, a boy made the following comment:

If a student leaves his home and come to school hungry and without decent clothes to wear, when he arrives here, in the classroom, he isn't in any condition to pay attention, ... to study (CS. 1).

Concern about appearances was so strong that in several cases girls preferred to sacrifice their diet and not eat properly in order to get money to buy the last fashionable pair of shoes or suit of clothes. Boys were more concerned with freedom. In a society where the values of 'consumerism', 'appearance' and 'body culture' are strongly emphasised by the media, it is not surprising that some young achieve confidence and happiness through their external appearance.

6.2.2 - Work Timetable
The demands of the work timetable were also mentioned (7% of all dropouts) as a reason for leaving school.

As a private nurse I work 24 hours and have 24 hours free... (D. 108).

I started a new turn in the hospital. Now I am working from 1 pm. to 2 am. ... (D. 76).

Some professions such as nursing sometimes require a very unusual work timetable, which makes it impossible to attend any courses, as was pointed out by some dropouts. Some other jobs, such as travelling salesman (D. 140) and technical assistant (D. 87) also have no fixed timetable, so that the workers eventually fail course assignments. When the failures become quite frequent, they find themselves puzzled and give up study, as was mentioned by a travelling salesman and a technical assistant.
On many occasions I came back to the office too late to be on time for school. Sometimes I arrived late, but several times I was so tired that I failed classes ... I started to have difficulties in understanding the lessons; my grades became lower, and so I decided give up (D. 140).

Others do not have an irregular timetable but for one or another reason have to work overtime.

My father lost his job so I needed to work overtime in order to contribute more to the expenses of the house (D. 133).

While some students left school in order to have more money to spend on themselves, others needed to do so in order to help their families with basic necessities. This is quite common behaviour in poor families since there is no long term unemployment benefit. Unemployment benefit was set up in Brazil only a few years ago and covers the unemployed for only the three subsequent months after losing a job. But it is not only to increase their contribution to the family expenses that some dropouts needed to work overtime.

Every time that my boss needed to leave early I had to assume charge of the till. As the bakery only closes at ten o'clock, I needed to remain there till that time (D. 57).

This particular dropout, in spite of having to work overtime, which led him to abandon school, did not see this negatively. To him, assuming charge of the till and working overtime signified more than an economic question. It meant the reliance which his boss placed on him, which in turn augured well for a higher position in his present job or in the search for a new one in the future.

6.2.3 - Moved Because Transference Within the Same Company

Change of work place was also a reason given for leaving school (4% of all dropouts). For some students keeping their job was more important at the moment than remaining at school, because usually the job move was caused by promotion to a higher position within their company.

6.2.4 - Get a Job in Another City

Two percent of the dropouts contacted left school in order to get a job in another city. For them, the question of getting a job or getting a better job took priority over a secondary school diploma. Pucci and Sguissardi (1989) studying students who worked in São Paulo (Brazil), found that student-workers changed their employment quite frequently because of their search for a better salary and the problems of redundancy due to a recession and/or industrial modernisation.
The chances of getting a job are related to the level of economic development in the region. Florianópolis is essentially an administrative city and has no large industries. So, there is a shortage of jobs. On the other hand, it has the only public university (which means it is less expensive and has better quality) and some of the better ‘pre-vestibular’ courses. Many students come from the surrounding country to take these courses. As many of these students cannot afford to depend economically only on their family, they need to work, and this increases still more the difficulty in getting employment there. Consequently, the difficulty of getting a job in their home town caused several dropouts to move to another place in search of work and consequently to leave school. A mother’s statement gives a good example of this situation:

As he was not getting a job here, we decided to send him to Porto Alegre, where my brother lives. There, there are more factories and it was easier for him to get a job ... maybe in the next year he could continue his study (P. 3).

Emigration can be a contributor factor in the decision to leave school early. According to Gambeta (1987), people generally move around in search of better economic opportunities. Another factor which is related to this kind of emigration is the level of education. As is commonly known, the level of job is strongly related to the level of education. Without a secondary school diploma it is difficult to get a job at the white collar level. A city with few industries has limited blue collar employment. Consequently, many of those who do not have a secondary school diploma feel compelled to look for a job elsewhere.

6.2.5 - Distance Between Home, Work and School

Geographical conditions such as location of a student’s home and job influence her/his decision to leave school (Rumberger, 1983; Tidwell, 1988). Having to spend too much time travelling, students get tired and give up school (Barber and McLellan, 1987). This was exactly what dropouts from the study school revealed. Although only one (1% of all dropouts) mentioned this factor as a primary reason for dropping out, other 4 (2% of all) mentioned it as a secondary reason.

In spite of the shortage of jobs in Florianópolis, getting a job in the centre of the city was easier than in the outskirts. Apart from this, jobs in the centre of the city are generally better paid and have a higher social status. People prefer to be a shop assistant in a boutique or big shop in the centre than to work in a small shop in the outskirts. These factors motivated many young people to leave the suburbs in order to work in the city. As they worked until it was time to start evening classes, they needed to study in a school near their place of work. However, after the evening class many of them had up to two hours journey home since public transport either was infrequent or did not take them near their home. Inevitably this discouraged the continuation of schooling.
6.2.6 - Financial Problems
To keep a student in school involves direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are related to the fees while indirect costs comprises expenses with transport, books, uniforms for the day sessions, other small fees for a multitude of reasons, contribution to the PTA, and so on. Although there are no direct costs in primary and secondary public school, sometimes, even the indirect costs are too great for some students or their parents (Masci, 1985). In these cases students are forced to leave school either because their family cannot afford the indirect costs of education or because they have to work (Beck and Muia, 1980; Gambeta 1987; Wilhoit and Roesh, 1989).

While this factor was not mentioned by dropouts, it was emphasised by several teachers and continuing students. As those who really could not afford the indirect cost of education probably also needed to help supplement their family income, this reason is likely to have been overlooked when stressing the latter.

6.2.7 - Low Prospects of Employment
No dropout mentioned this fact as a reason for dropping out although three teachers (20%) mentioned it as a secondary reason.

In spite of all the evidence which shows that those who leave school early have more difficulty in getting a job and make less money over a lifetime of work (Fine, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Rumberger, 1987), asking dropouts if the lack of the secondary school certificate would not seriously affect their career prospects, generated a variety of answers. To some a secondary school certificate was worthless, as showed by the following extract:

No, I don't agree. It is much easier to get a job as a driver, as a salesperson, ... than in an office. One doesn't need a secondary school certificate to be employed in one of these jobs. So, why continue in school? (D, 13).

This point of view may be influenced by the aspirations of the dropout since according to Rowley (1989) they have a low occupational ambition. Willis (1977), in Learning to Labour, observed that working class 'lads' in England value low status manual labour as a symbol of masculinity. However, there is no evidence of this kind of cultural valorisation in Brazil. In research undertaken with young workers in Brazil, Bomes (1990) observed that they are prepared for work in nonformal education and by the on-the-job training.

The modernised primary sector requires a very low number of workers in general and secondary school level technicians in particular. The secondary sector, encouraged to use high technology, needs a declining number of workers. Although the tertiary economic sector is the one which requires more of a secondary school trained labour force, it does not manage to absorb the excess supply (Kuenzer, 1988). Consequently, due to the present economic situation, the opinion of dropouts that the secondary school certificate is not of a much value can be considered as a realistic assessment, especially if one ponders
the economic and job policies.

According to several authors, the labour market requires only a small number of highly trained workers, some technicians, and a great number of unqualified workers. In the capitalist economy, the school has the function of achieving this proportion through the elimination of students at different levels of schooling (Boudelot and Establet, 1971; Althusser, 1972; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). However, as in a general way the educational qualifications for a better job tend to increase, the pressure, within the society, for a higher level of education is increasing too. So, the minimum skill requirements for jobs tend always to rise. In this way, the number of secondary schools and university courses have been increasing in the recent decades.

The increasing number of educated people and the level of their attainment reflect directly on the labour market. While some years ago a primary school diploma ensured a white-collar job, at the present time most of these jobs are filled by those who have got at least a secondary school diploma.

According to Colli (1987) several researches undertaken in United States revealed that dropouts were ineligible for many of the jobs available. In fact, most of the dropouts contacted were working in blue-collar jobs. Most of the girls were working as shop assistants while the boys were working as mechanics, drivers, in catering, and so on. If on the one hand they did not deny the importance of having a training course to get a 'better' or white-collar job, on the other, they knew perfectly well that the entry to such work is determined not only by the possession of a diploma but more directly by the specific needs of the productive system. In the same way, it is not only the possession of a diploma which determines the level of salary; in fact, at least in Brazil, a shop assistant may earn more than many civil servants or a university teacher. This fact can be one of the reasons why some dropouts expressed indifferent or even negative attitudes about the value of education.

I don't care about schooling. I can get more money working as a sales assistant in some shops or in a state agency (D. 78).

Starting to work now, I can save money and then later on start my own business. These days it is safer to be your own employer than to depend on employment (D. 147).

For Bickel and Papagiannis (1988) the low difference in prospects between those who succeeded and those who failed to get a high school diploma was caused by the increase in the already high rate of unemployment, especially among teenagers. Students who dropped out, generally did not see any short term advantage in continuing at school (Sicuro, 1984) and students revealed to ochberg (1985) that they dropped out because they felt they were wasting time or their courses seemed unrelated to any career they could imagine.

The increasing importance of the university degree brought as a consequence a devaluation in the secondary school certificate. Being realistic about their chances of getting a university degree and the uncertainty of getting a better job, the physical, psychological and economic costs of staying in school
seemed too much for many students. Consequently they preferred to drop out and make money rather than to spend time on education (Bickel and Papagiannis, 1938; Weizhi and Benxiang, 1939). In the same vein, Bickel and Papagiannis (1938) state that when a high school diploma improves economic opportunities, achievements are higher and dropout rates lower.

The idea that better pay or more prestigious jobs could be obtained through the achievement of a certificate was largely spread through the economic theories of education such as Human Capital theories (Schultz, 1961). This idea promoted increased demands for education with the consequence, noted by Dore (1976), of a large number of frustrated youths. Seeing a great number of their graduated colleagues frustrated either because they had not obtained a job or because they had only found a job which did not require specific trained skills, it was quite natural that some students quit school so they had not to spend money and time in getting a worthless diploma.

As Dore (1976) noted, it is far easier to expand the school system than it is to expand the modern sector economy and the number of job opportunities. Consequently, the much larger number of secondary and university school leavers "can no longer look so confidently to the future" (Dore, 1976: 60).

Several dropouts believed that their failure to complete secondary school would present no problems in their future career or success. This indifference toward school could be a consequence of their parents' negative attitudes toward school. Several studies (Hunt and Glamson, 1975; Beck and Muia, 1980; Callan, 1988) revealed that parents' negative attitudes towards school can be a highly influential factor in students' decisions to quit school.

Frequently dropouts generalised over only a few examples and used a friend's or relative's experience as a way of guiding their decision.

Schooling really doesn't count. My cousin has a university diploma and didn't get a job. My brother has only the primary school diploma and got a not too bad paid job (D. 87).

A generalisation over a few and near examples is common to a popular or 'common sense' knowledge in Gramsci words. Another common sense attitude is to believe in or to leave everything to 'fate'.

Everything depends the fate. Some people have a diploma and don't have a job. Others are illiterate and have a steady job (D. 21).

One boy, who worked for one of the government secretariats expressed his negative belief in the value of education in a particular way:

No, I don't think that education is important to me. I am a civil servant and what really counts is your 'O.I.' (D. 114).

'O.I.' normally means the abbreviation for 'Intelligence Quotient' but in this case O.I. meant 'Quem Indica', which corresponds to 'who indicated', that is, who was the 'political godfather'. In fact, we can subdivide the civil serv-
ants into two broader groups: those who follow a technical career and those who follow a political career. While the former get their job through achievement criteria and their promotion by educational diplomas, by further examinations and by their seniority in the job, the latter normally get their job through patronage and are both fostered and promoted through political protection. In this case, the level of schooling counts far less than the power of the political sponsor. However, with the organisation of the civil servants’ association – ALISC – and more recently with the civil servants’ syndicate – SINDE, which combines several different associations, this kind of practice has been criticised and condemned. So while it is unlikely that such sponsorship will ever completely disappear, it is likely to decline in significance in the future as achievement criteria become more important than ascriptive criteria.

Political favouritism or the spoils system is a common practice in a non-democratic political system. Brazil’s history is riddled with examples. According to Gomes (1990), children and adolescents tend to obtain their jobs via informal channels. However, if on the one hand there is a current belief that to get a job or promotion in the civil service it is important to have a good political godfather, on the other hand it is not true that education does not count at all. So, if the boy (D. 114) who made the quoted remark was right about his contacts, mainly because he had several relatives in important political positions, he was mistaken about the importance of schooling. In trying to locate this boy, we contacted his parents who showed considerable concern at the possibility that their son had left school. This fact demonstrated that the boy’s indifference to education was probably an individual rather than a family belief. This personal view about education can also be influenced by adolescent perspectives and/or a peer group attitude in relation to the future.

This boy’s parents were not the only ones who both did not know that their child had dropped out and did not approve of it. In these cases, parents seemed to give more importance to a school diploma than their children. The fact that parents did not know that their children had dropped out is not so strange as might appear at first sight. Since on the one hand classes frequently finished early because of teacher absences, and on the other hand these dropouts often did not go home immediately after work but at the time that evening classes used to finish (10:00 p.m.), parents did not realise that they had left school.

While some dropouts showed an indifferent or even a negative attitude to a school qualification, others acknowledged the importance of a secondary school diploma. Although school does not give a good training (Dale, 1986; Glesson, 1986; Saigado, 1989), it is considered a means of social mobility since without schooling people are less likely to obtain employment. In spite of its ineffectiveness, school is still considered to have an indispensable value (Freitag, 1984). In research undertaken by Bruns (1987), most of the dropouts revealed that they saw the school as a way to get employment in the white-collar sector, that is, in offices. The following quotations illustrate this.
If I had got a diploma I could be in a better position in my company (D. 34).

I need a good education if I want to get a good job (D. 112).

I have the example of my father. If he had got an engineering diploma he could be the head of his department. . . . he knows more than many civil engineers but he has no diploma... (D. 84).

I had a well-paid job and was doing well. I easily learned what to do and how to do it, but as I left the school I lost my job (D. 126).

If I had a secondary school diploma I could be working in a better paid job. There are a lot of advertisements asking for persons with secondary school diploma (D. 167).

The importance of a school certificate was also expressed by most of the continuing students. 115 continuing students (59% of the respondents), answered that they either had never thought of leaving school or that they had given up such thoughts because they wished to get on in life.

Although many dropouts considered it important to have a secondary school diploma, some of them at the same time doubted their capacity to succeed. This is illustrated by the following quotations:

Yes. To have a certificate is very important, but I was not made for school... (D. 85).

Oh, yes. A certificate would be very good. But, you know, not everyone was created to be a doctor (D. 44).

One cannot deny that there are differences in learning capacity. However, frequently learning difficulties are cultural and ideological since school helps to maintain the power relations existing in the society, through the cultural reproduction of the dominant class culture. Their belief in their lack of ability to complete a course also interfered with their self-esteem. Since low self-esteem also affects students' beliefs in their own capacity and slows down their school performance (Rowley, 1989), this becomes a vicious circle. In this case we can say that school problems started much earlier than their school experience. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the dominant class imposes its culture as worthy and having universal validity. With a relative lack of access to the dominant culture, the dominated people are more likely to fail school examinations. However, as they are persuaded that they are less competent, they regard both their failure and their position in society as 'reasonable' and 'realistic'.

According to Althusser, in order to reproduce the relations of production the school takes children from every class and drums into them "a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology" (1972: 147). The individuals are introduced into the labour force after differing lengths of training; a large
proportion of the workers and small peasantry enter at the age of sixteen or after elementary school; a little later the small and middle technicians, executives and the white-collar workers are introduced. Finally, a small number are introduced into intellectual activities. Through the different levels and lengths of training and through different functions, the state secures both the reproduction of labour power and the reproduction of relations of production (Althusser, 1972).

Another group of dropouts did not deny the importance of being trained, but considered that this training could be obtained on the job. The following comments are illustrative.

Since one's got a job, one can be trained inside this job and get a better place and so a better salary (D. 137).

My company puts more value on practical training than on any certificate (D. 42).

It is true that one does not need to have a data processing training or a general education certificate to be employed in many blue-collar jobs. It is also true that most of the secondary school courses do not prepare adequately for specific jobs. As Salgado (1989) pointed out, secondary schooling in Brazil is passing through an identity crisis. Public secondary schools have been given inadequate resources for either job training or preparation for the 'vestibular', the university entrance test.

The few existing training courses before 1972 used really to prepare for the job. However, when the Law 5692/71 was passed, compelling all secondary school courses to be training courses, these courses began to give neither a good academic formation nor a good training. The cause of this weakness was the attempt to fulfill two aims at the same time: to give some training to those who intended to enter in the labour market, and to give some academic formation to those who intended to proceed to further education. Theoretically these weaknesses should have been overcome by the Law No. 7044/82 which amended the previous one. In accordance with this new law, every course would be either just academic, preparing for the vestibular, or just training, preparing for work. However, even this measure did not solve the problem of the quality of training since these courses generally gave only a 'theoretical knowledge'. As Kuenzer emphasised

The school, recognised as the 'locus' for the production of theoretical knowledge, does not give to the students either access to other forms of articulation with concrete work, or the social practice within which the work is inserted (Kuenzer, 1988: 21).

So, students learn the theory separately from the practice, since the school gives the theory with very little or no practice. In most cases the lack of practice is based on the lack of material resources. However, the lack of teachers' training in how to link theory and practice also affected the outcome to a considerable extent.
In a study about secondary school laws in Brazil, Warde (1977) observed that in spite of the effort to overcome the separation between theory and practice in the secondary school training courses, it was not possible to achieve this without first solving the separation which exists in the wider society.

The dissociation between theory and practice is not simply a school weakness. In a capitalist society, the school must reproduce social relations. In separating theory from practice, schools are reproducing the separation between intellectual and manual work which exists in the system of production, which in its turn is a consequence of the separation between capital and labour.

The weakness caused by the separation of theory and practice in training courses will be solved only in actual employment. So, it is not surprising that some students do not attach much importance to training courses. In fact, if they do, it is usually because their employers do also. Capital has always tended to solve the question of work qualifications without the need of the school (Kuenzer, 1980). According to Brandão (cited by Salgado, 1989), historically many companies have not valued the training given by schools. They prefer to train their workers inside the company (Kuenzer, 1985; Salgado, 1989) and according to Gomes (1990) the majority of industries are indeed training their employees informally. On the other hand, as Salgado pointed out, companies are not predisposed to spend money and time on the formal education of their workers. So they require, as a prerequisite for a job, that applicants have a school certificate. The level of the certificate depends on the kind of work and the 'reserve of talents'. Where there is a higher surplus of labour, the requirement of a certificate performs a selection and allocation function. According to Kuenzer (1988), normally the prerequisites in Brazil are as follows: four academic years for unskilled work; six academic years for semiskilled work; and a secondary school certificate or university degree for technical work. However, one must take into account what Dore (1976) calls the process of 'qualification escalation', that is, the high qualifications required by a few better paid jobs leads society to press for and try to obtain more education. Education is then seen as a form of investment (Schultz, 1961). This, in turn, influences the level of educational requirements for many jobs which previously used to require very little education.

Through employment, workers gain practical knowledge based on their empirical experiences. However, as their experiences are partial, because of the technical division of labour, their knowledge is also partial and fragmented. Since these workers have not the theoretical and methodological base from which to produce systematic knowledge, their knowledge remains at the level of common sense. Workers should have theoretical and methodological knowledge and develop a critical sense. Only in this way would they increase the possibility of both participating in and elaborating the decisions which involve their work and their lives (Kuenzer, 1985, 1988). Knowledge means power and according to Kuenzer (1988) a worker without knowledge is no more than an extension of the machine.

The dominant managerial ideology in Brazil states that one really learns how to do within the relations of production and so the school training or certif-
icate is not important. However, while some dropouts discounted the importance of a school certificate, others did not. Although the objective exogenous conditions of these dropouts forced them to leave school, they intended to return as soon as possible, since they saw in the school certificate a way to help them improve their standard of living.

... a certificate is quite important to have a better job. ... I intend to continue study as soon as it will be possible (D. 15).

... I hope to return to school as soon as I get a job which allows me to study (D. 71).

I don't intend to be a shop assistant for the rest of my life... I intend to return to school, get a certificate, and so a better job, in order to have a better life (D. 154).

I should have made more effort to go on. I'm really missing a diploma (D. 159).

The economic police, set up by the military dictatorship in 1964 imposed a rationalisation of the productive system through technological and administrative developments, on the one hand, and a reduction of salaries, on the other. The salary reduction affected all kinds of workers but especially those at the lowest level. At the same time Human Capital theory started to be defended. This theory states that education is a tool of development and the equalisation of social, political, and economic differences. Consequently the school certificate started to be seen as both a way of ensuring a job and a way of improving the standard of living. Consequently, the lowest social classes began to aspire to a higher level of education. The primary school certificate, which used to be the norm for the working class, was no longer sufficient. A secondary school certificate or even a university degree is now the aim of many in this class.

The technological developments which have taken place in recent decades require, on the one hand, better trained workers, but on the other, fewer of them. This process has accentuated labour market competition and launched the 'qualification escalation' (Dore, 1976). In other words, to be prepared for this competition and to ensure a place in the labour market, the population has pressed for more free education. As the level of education increases in a population, the prerequisites for getting a job also increase. In this way, many white-collar jobs that used to be fulfilled by middle-level technicians now require high-level technicians. Consequently, more effort is required from lower class students if they aspire to have white-collar jobs.

According to Dore (1976) higher educational requirements bring economic expenditures to the government and emotional stress to the youths because of the selection system. In order to avoid or lessen these consequences Dore (1976) suggests starting a career earlier, having the selection and promotion within work organisations, and abolishing the educational qualification as a requisite in job selection. Instead, an aptitude-test should be introduced. Little (1984) complements Dore's alternatives suggesting reforming the examination
and qualification system and selection through restricted lotteries.

6.2.8 - Work Intrusion on Study

The excessively heavy load of school work was one the reasons for leaving school early mentioned by students in research undertaken by Meizhi and Benxiang (1989). In the present research neither dropouts nor teachers mentioned this reason. It was also mentioned by very few continuing students as a reason why their colleagues had dropped out or for themselves, if they, at any time had considered leaving school early. However, continuing students frequently complained about the amount of academic work. Their inability to complete assignments or come to class prepared contributed to their low grades and frequently to school failure.

To some continuing students it was common to fail classes because they were not able to complete assignments or prepare themselves for school tests. As a daily session has five classes, in this case the student misses not only the class in question but also the other four. The frequent failure of students disturbed the progress of those students who did not fail since teachers needed to repeat or at least review the content given in the previous class. Consequently, teachers' programmes or schedules were affected.

I have cut the programme four times during the year in order to reach the students' level. It seems that students don't study, so you can't go on (T. 8).

In the 1st. evening grade I'm going to complete only 50%, as much! In the 2nd. and 3th. grade I hope to complete 80% (T. 1).

Another complaint by continuing students was the heavy demand of essays and study by all teachers at the same time. Every two months teachers have to evaluate students. They do this through students' behaviour, tests and essays. Although partial tests are applied during the period, generally, at the end of the period, a test, which covers all content, is also applied. As students have several subjects to review and tests are concentrated in a few days, they feel it is difficult to prepare themselves since they have little time to study. This heavy demand in preparing themselves for tests can be increased when a teacher delays asking for an essay. This fact was not only regretted by students but also recognised by some teachers, as expressed in the following extract:

... there are times that we demand nothing and others when we ask too much. There is no equilibrium and it's this that they (students) complain about (T. 5).

When students left school in the evening, after eight hours work and three and a half hours of study, plus the time spent in travelling, they felt themselves much too tired to start work on their assignments or to review the day's lessons. So, under these conditions, however small the amount of work required by teachers it will be too much for the students.
In his study about dropout, Ferreira (1983) found that students' lack of time to do their homework and to study was one of the reasons why students left school early. Although in the present research only one teacher mentioned this, several continuing student emphasised this aspect. The need to work 40 hours a week and go to school in the evenings compels students to leave all their study and homework to the weekends. However, many of them needed the weekend to organise their house work. This is particularly true for married females although many single females are also responsible for their house work. As in Fukui et al.'s (1982) study, it is quite common for women to take responsibility for the house work, despite the fact that they also need work. Consequently they cannot follow the teachers' lessons and end up being kept down.

Some continuing students revealed that as they did not need help with home work, they had all weekend free to study, but as they felt that they had worked hard throughout the week, they were not inclined to study at weekends. Although this is quite understandable, to some teachers this meant a lack of responsibility and laziness.

Most of the students don't want to study at weekends. They have no responsibility. They think that weekends is a time to fall in love and go to parties. They don't study. They are lazy. They are not prepared to study. They are in school because they think they are going to learn something. They have some hope, but they have no structure for study (T. I).

The failure of continuing students to bring in their assignments was several times observed in student conversation. Sometimes it could be said to indicate a lack of responsibility, but frequently it was really a lack of time, since teachers gave an assignment at the beginning of the week for students to bring in at the end of the week. For those who worked during the day and studied in the evenings it was really difficult, if not impossible to complete these assignments, especially when an essay was required. With too few books for every student to borrow and without time to spend in libraries, these students had no satisfactory conditions to cope with these kinds of requirements.

The lack of time to study contributed to the need for students to develop strategies to cope with school requirements. Among these strategies was the informal agreement of mutual exchanges. When someone in the group had no time to contribute s/he was pulled along by the others. In such a case, this student made only small contribution to the group work or even with only her/his signature or was allowed to copy the answer when it was an individual exercise. This practice, which was also observed by Hargreaves (1967) in an English secondary school, is not regarded as a form of cheating but a way to help peers. Another common strategy used by continuing students was physical absence. Some of them used to miss one or more classes in order to study for a test. Sometimes students went to the library to study but sometimes they preferred other places in order not to be caught by some school staff. This was the case revealed by a group of girls who were studying for a test in the female toilets. Another strategy used was to fail classes when there was a
test and later on do the test in the student counsellor’s room. There was also the case when a complete class escaped from the classroom in order to stop the teacher administering a test for which the students did not feel adequately prepared.

6.3 - Domestic and Personal Reasons
Domestic or personal reasons for leaving school early were mentioned by 46 (27% of all) dropouts. If, on the one hand, for dropouts, continuing students and teachers, domestic and personal factors were the least mentioned reasons for dropping out, on the other hand four parents (40% of all) mentioned this group of factors as the reason for their children leaving school early. Problems in their family were the most frequently cited reason (4% of all dropouts). Marriage (5% of all dropouts) was the second primary reason most cited, followed by health (4% of all dropouts). If, on the one hand, stress was not mentioned as a primary reason, on the other hand, it was mentioned by 11 (6% of all) dropouts as a secondary consideration. Other reasons were also mentioned although with not the same impact.

6.3.1 - Problems in the Family
Family problems were mentioned in previous studies as one of the reasons for leaving school early (Beck and Muia, 1980; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Colli, 1987; Miller and Ferrel, 1989; Rowley, 1989; Wilhoit and Roesch, 1989). In the present study problems in the family were pointed out as a reason for dropping out not only by dropouts but also by continuing students when they were asked if at any time they had thought of leaving school and, if so, why. Although two dropouts preferred not to comment or mention the type of the problems, others spoke freely about them. The kind of problems mentioned were unspecified problems with the girlfriend, family illness and housework.

Since my mother became ill I had to take care of all housework. I'm the oldest daughter and my other sister is too young... I can do the cleaning, washing and ironing at weekends but I needed to leave the family meal prepared, every night. Since I used to arrive at home after 11pm. I had no choice... (D. 142).

Both, my husband and I were studying and my mother used to look after the children till we came home from school. My father .... new job .... they needed to move to other city, so, I needed to withdraw. ... (D. 163)

Within the Brazilian culture it is quite common for the female to have to take care of the children and housework. So, in a case of D. 163, inevitably it was the woman who had to sacrifice her school opportunity. However, sometimes men are also compelled to leave school because of family problems as mentioned in the following extracts:
I'm married with three small children. My wife had an operation and I needed to help her with the children ... (D. 96).

My wife had a baby. As we couldn't find a domestic servant I needed to leave school in order to help her (D. 169).

For some students a particular and/or temporary fact compelled them to leave school. For others it was the daily activities which forced them to withdraw. They did not have the physical and/or emotional resources to cope with school activities as well as their family problems, mainly because most of the time these conditions were hampered by the fact that these students were also working in a full time job. Working six days a week these students had no time to study during the week and sometimes neither at weekends, when they needed to give more attention to their family. Both dropouts and female continuing students commented about the difficulty of studying at the weekends while caring for children and doing the housework. The lack of a balanced distribution of responsibility over housework, overloaded the women and prevented them having enough time to complete their school assignments and to prepare for classes, as well as resting a little in order to renew their strength for the coming week.

Most of the time students were aware of the difficulty of coping with job, school activities and family responsibilities. Even so, they enrolled themselves hoping to cope with them all. When they felt it necessary to reduce their activities they generally opted to leave school and keep their job since they could not escape from the family economic responsibilities.

According to Hargreaves (1967), to explain the difficulties in school in terms of a difficulty at home is an over-simplification. However it cannot be denied that when students come to school leaving some problem at home, it is quite probable that s/he cannot concentrate on school activities.

6.3.2 - Family Starting
Family starting comprises, in the present research, marriage and pregnancy. Both of them were mentioned as reasons for dropping out in the present and in previous researches.

Rumberger (1993) and Barber and McLellan (1997) pointed out that marriage was a frequent reason presented for dropping out. In the present research this was the second most frequently mentioned reason among the domestic and personal group of factors. All of those who mentioned this reason were women and three of them were not yet married but they left school because they were already engaged and planned to be married.

The reasons why a Brazilian woman leave school just before or after getting married can vary. When asked why marriage was a reason for leaving school three of them (33%) answered that it was because they had too many things to prepare for the wedding that they decided to leave school and after that they never returned. Four (44%) mentioned that their fiancé or husband would not
allow them to continue since they had to take care of the house. Two of these agreed with this decision while the other two did not accept it but considered that they had no choice. The remaining three (33%) left school by choice. In their opinion, in no way would they work since they had planned to have children and they also needed to take care of the house. Consequently, there was no point in continuing in the school. It seemed that for these men and women, schooling is still primarily for getting a diploma and obtaining employment than for personal fulfilment.

In the American literature about dropout, pregnancy is one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for females leaving school early (Rumberger, 1986; Barber and McKeon, 1987; Colli, 1987; Hahn, 1987). The result obtained in the present study contrasts with the American literature—only one girl mentioned pregnancy as a cause for dropping out, and even then, only as a secondary reason. Several reasons such as age, social class and culture may explain this fact. Secondary school students are, generally, 16 to 18-19 years old. In recent years the average age of marriage for women has been increasing. So, most women are getting married after 18 years old. Those who still get married quite young generally belong to the lower classes and have left school during or as soon as they have finished primary school. The lack of free or cheap day nurseries to take care of children may also be a reason. Since generally married couples plan to have children and expect the woman to stay at home in order to take care of both home and children, many of them leave school as soon as they get married since they see no point in continuing to study. It is true that some unmarried women become pregnant. However, when this happens, in most cases they get married quite soon after they discover their pregnancy. In this case, marriage, rather than pregnancy, could have been mentioned as the reason for leaving school, since to become pregnant out of marriage in Brazil is still disapproved of by the great majority.

6.3.3 - Physical Condition

Within the domestic and personal group of reasons, personal illness was the third most mentioned cause. Twelve (7% of all) dropouts pointed this cause as a reason for leaving school. For 7 (58%) of these it was a primary reason. Apart from these, 11 (6% of all) mentioned stress/fatigue as a secondary reason for dropping out. In total 23 (13% of all) dropouts mentioned a physical condition as a reason for leaving school.

Taken by itself, this figure appears to be quite high. However, considering the students' circumstances this result is not so surprising. Most of the students lived in the outskirts. Consequently, they had to leave home quite early in the morning in order to arrive in time for their job. At lunch time (from 12:00 am. to 2:00 pm., the main meal for Brazilian people) they could not have hot food since they worked too far from home while on the other hand they could not afford to pay for one in a restaurant. Most of them worked in blue-collar jobs and so worked quite hard for eight hours a day. When they left their job at 6:00 pm. most of them had neither time nor money to have a meal before the beginning of the classes, at 6:30 pm. At break time some of them had a sandwich brought from home or a snack bought in the school bar. At
10:00 p.m., when the classes finished they went home, many of them arriving at 11:00 - 11:30 p.m., if not later. After years of heavy manual work, boring academic activity, badly fed and short of sleep, it is not surprising that some felt stressed and that this led them to drop out, as indicated by the following extracts.

I left school because I couldn’t cope with work and study at the same time. It’s much too tiring. ... Many times I didn’t eat because I needed to study during the lunch time. ... When I arrived home, after 11:00 p.m. I was so tired that I usually went straight to bed without eating. ... I became so weak that I fell sick (D. 73).

It isn’t possible to work and study at the same time, I tried but I couldn’t bear it. So, I had to choose ... (D. 158).

When I used to leave work at 6:00 p.m. ... I was always so tired that I got discouraged at school and so I gave up (D. 166).

Many other similar extracts could be presented. Apart from one dropout who left school because of an accident, all the others linked their stress or illness to their heavy workload. This effect was not only realised by dropouts but also by teachers.

To teach in the evening is dreadful! We are tired, the students too. We have to be artists to keep the students awake... (T. 12).

Evening students come to school too tired! ... They come so tired that they sleep during the classes (T. 1).

... it’s not only tiredness. Some students fall asleep because they are starving. Some of them are so weak that they can’t keep themselves awake (SC. 2).

One of the reasons for the students poor health is their poor nourishment since they have neither money to buy food nor time to go to their home in order to have a proper hot meal at lunch time. Morning and afternoon students have a hot meal at break times. Evening students have not. They asked for a free hot meal before the classes but since there was no a cooker for the evening period they were not successful in this request, except for the few occasions when a little has been left from the afternoon session.

Tencä (1982) studying an evening course in Brazil, observed that the lack of a free meal was one of the main causes for the high number of dropouts and failure. The same reality happened in the research school, as observed by teachers:

The evening students used to eat the lunch quite well. The morning and afternoon students no. ... The evening students used to eat and to wake up. Now, some times students sleep from hunger (T. 1).
Many evening students come to school without having a lunch and this affects their performance (T.2).

The following is a good example of the level that this situation can reach. Impressed by how short and pale-faced a first grade male student was, I commented on the fact with the student counsellor. His comment was that that particular student lived far from the school. As he was working as an upholsterer's assistant in a repair-shop near the school, he needed to leave home quite early. As his family was very poor, his breakfast normally consisted only of a cup of coffee and a small piece of bread. During the lunch time he was working as a waiter in exchange for a free meal. However, as usually the restaurant was extremely busy, he had no time to eat. When this happened his only meal until he arrived home late in the evening was breakfast. Certainly, for this student, to attend school required a great effort, but despite this he hardly missed a class.

Cases such as this are not uncommon. According to the student counsellor it was not unusual for an evening student to come to him asking for some money to buy some food since s/he only had a small breakfast and so they were hungry. Others came to him asking for some medicine to treat their headache. When trying to discover the reason for the headache he frequently found out that it was because of a lack of food.

Lack of food is generally related to having little money. Yet, how to spend this little money can also be a question of priorities. According to some teachers some girls preferred not to eat properly in order to save money to buy fashion items.

6.3.4 - Family Moved

Family transience was related to the father's job and seemed to be responsible for 3% of dropout. The need to move is due to the need and or the opportunity to get a job in another district or in the city.

Considering the present economic condition in Brazil and the consequent high number of redundancies this figure seems to be quite low. Some factors may have helped to bias this figure. One of them was the lack of information about the new address and so the impossibility of contacting all the dropouts. The lack of information in the students' files was another factor which contributed to the probable inaccuracy of these figures. Students are not bound to report to the school or teachers their decision to withdraw and the reasons which led to this decision. Furthermore, with the 'normal' shortage of staff, the school does not contact the students or parents to find out about the student's decision.

Transference to a new school means adaptation to new teachers, new colleagues and sometimes to a new local culture. This is so difficult for the students that sometimes they prefer to quit school if not finally, at least for that academic year. In the latter case, they do not ask for a transference paper because they still do not know in which school they will study the following
year. The transference paper is normally required at the time of enrolment, at the end of the holiday period, when the school report of the previous academic year has already been completed. When a transference paper for a new school has not been requested during a current academic year, the student is considered as having dropped out.

6.3.5 - Family Relationships

Unsatisfactory family relationships were also mentioned as a primary reason for leaving school early. This confirms the observation undertaken by other researchers such as Beck and Muia (1980); Nyal (1986b), Colli (1987) and Rowley (1989). In Colli's (1987) and Rowley's (1989) researches an unstable family structure was one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for dropping out. Cervantes and Husted (in Beck and Muia, 1980) found that the family of the dropout is less stable and less influenced by a father figure, while Nyal (1986b) observed that persisters tend to belong to families who have a more democratic and supportive relationship.

A disordered family structure and relationship can produce nothing but detrimental effects on the students, causing feelings of insecurity, unhappiness and lack of fulfilment. According to these dropouts they were unable to sustain their academic performance, having their minds constantly distracted by home problems. Consequently they failed to complete their school work and their academic performance suffered. Anticipating their academic failure, they decided to drop out.

While generally an unstable and unhappy home environment can strongly contribute to the decision to drop out of school, on the other hand, there were some exceptions. This was the case of a continuing student (CS 37) who preferred to stay at school rather than at home. According to her, there was no one else in her family in whom she could confide and with whom she would enjoy being. As she felt her home life too unhappy, she preferred to return home late so that she had no need to meet her step-father and most of her relatives. For this girl school was the place where she used to escape from the intolerable environment of her parent's home. So, even when there were no classes because of the teachers' strike, she used to go to school. To her, school was both the place to escape from her family environment and the place where she could meet people whom she could enjoy being with.

The literature review suggests that family structure is strongly related to socio-economic status. Family structure and relationship problems are more frequently found in the lower socio-economic status groups (Rumberger, 1983, 1987; Nyal, 1986b; Pangrota, 1986). This association was also observed by the research school's teachers and was well demonstrated by one of them when comparing afternoon and evening students:

They (afternoon students) have a better economic life. Their family stability is much better... The economic factor is basic for this (T. 1).
6.3.6 — Personal Reasons

Personal reasons were given as the cause for dropping out by two (1% of all) dropouts. Factors such as personal characteristics, the kind of problem and the lack of familiarity between the interviewee and the interviewer may have contributed to their unwillingness to explain the sort of reason.

6.3.7 — Absence

One dropout mentioned absence as the main reason for having ended as a dropout. The high number of absences from the classroom may be caused by several reasons. One cause frequently mentioned by the continuing students in the research school was the tiredness caused by work. For some students it is too difficult or even impossible to cope with work fatigue and school work. So, they fail school in order to relieve themselves from some stress caused by school activities. Having missed so many classes, they find themselves unable to follow teachers' explanations and consequently give up.

Truancy is another way of missing class, yet, skipping school is a consequence, symptom or an excuse rather than the underlying problem. Most of the time truancy is caused by the student's lack of interest or boredom in studying, and it is, according to Barber and McLellan (1987), one of the most cited reasons for leaving school. The lack of interest is generated by several factors such as: few attractive classes, class culture, the low value of the diploma in the labour market, the low prospects for employment, etc.

Most of the students are used to seeing schooling only as a means rather than as an end in itself. Observing the low prospects of a better paid job with a diploma, they lose their interest in studying, start skipping school and later give up finally. When dropouts and continuing students were asked for suggestions to improve the present school, some of them suggested that there should be conferences to improve the conscientisation of students about the importance of study.

For teachers, truancy, lack of responsibility and lack of requirement are related, as it is indicated by the following extract from a teachers' meeting:

Our students 'kill' (play truant) as many classes as they want and nothing happens. They must be charged otherwise they don't learn to be responsible (T. 6)

But why do students play truant? This is the question! (T. 2).

Because they are not charged! Teachers must take note of students attendance at the end of every class and when they miss one they must be punished... (T. 6).

In my opinion students play truant because they are not feeling themselves motivated rather than because they are not charged. I think students must be charged, indeed, but not punished... (T. 7).
It's true. The question is not whether to charge or not. It's how to charge (T. 2).

Both, teachers and students must be charged. However, students must feel themselves attracted to classes. ... Further, to say they must not be charged because they are poor, victims of society, that they are working, and so on, it's not fair... More responsibility from both, students and teachers must be required (T. 7).

I agree! Teachers should be charged too. Although I've got tired of asking for the teachers' course programme for the academic year (March to December) there were teachers who haven't yet given me their course programme till October. It's funny, because they are the ones who most complain about students' laziness and lack of responsibility (TC. 1).

... too much freedom is not suitable for anybody. We were not educated to decide by ourselves, to be free and responsible at the same time... We must be charged otherwise we fail in our responsibilities. The same happens with students (T. 4).

As one can observe, the need to fine students as a way to prevent truancy and to develop responsibility was more emphasised than the need to see the real reasons why students were playing truancy. With their lack of educational theory, teachers tended to emphasise the consequences instead of the reasons.

6.3.8 - Shyness

One male student alluded to his shyness as his reason for quitting school. He described his secondary school experience as traumatic and painful. According to him, there were only two boys in his class. When the other boy failed to come, which happened frequently, teachers used to joke saying that he was "the only man among the girls!" or "the blessed among the women!". According to this dropout, he was so terribly shy that this simple and inoffensive joke was enough to make him extremely uncomfortable. As it was too difficult for him to cope with this situation, he decided give up school. Asking this boy about his intention to return to school, he affirmed that he would like to do so but that he was afraid that the same experience could happen again and so he was unlikely to try.

The literature review about dropout hardly mentions shyness as a reason for dropping out. However, in her ethnographic study about dropout, Colli (1987) presented a case of one girl, for whom shyness was a complementary reason for abandoning school and another one in which a girl gave up secondary school because she was not able to cope with her extremely painful shyness. According to Colli (1987) these girls' shyness was an insurmountable obstacle to their participating in school. The same can be said about the boy in the present research since he revealed his feeling of alienation due to his shyness.

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6.3.9 — Laziness

No dropout mentioned this factor as a reason for dropping out. However, asking continuing students why, in their opinion, their colleagues have dropped out, laziness was the most frequently mentioned reason (17% of all answers). When continuing students were asked if at any time they had considered leaving school and why, laziness was the second most mentioned reason. Among the parents, one mother mentioned this factor as explaining why her son had left school. On the other hand, later on, when this particular dropout was contacted, the reason given by him was a problem in the family (see D. 96's extract in section 6.3.1). Only one teacher mentioned this reason, which, in fact, was the only one, among domestic and personal reasons, mentioned by a teacher. However other teachers complained about student laziness, as indicated in the following interview extracts:

What the students need is to study more. They have to know that they are in school in order to learn rather than only to get a diploma. They don't want to make any sacrifices. They don't want to study at weekends. They are too lazy (T. 1).

Students are not interested in studying. More than this, many of them are really lazy (T. 15).

Although some teachers saw laziness by itself, that is, as a cause, other saw it more as a consequence.

This (laziness) doesn't happen to afternoon classes and so I think it is a question of work. They (evening students) arrive (at school) quite tired and this is a consequence of their heavy work (T. 2).

I agree with (Teacher 2). Those who work are responsible. If sometimes they seem 'lazy', it is because they are very tired (T. 3).

Laziness, students' learning difficulties, lack of interest, misinformation, lack of consciousness and lack of participation were, sometimes, mixed up by some teachers as was indicated by the following extracts:

... They are so lazy that they didn't even participate in what concerns their interests. See, for instance, how many evening students participated in the school assembly before the (teachers') strike? (T. 6).

There are students who don't work, and even so are repeating the same grade more than once. They don't study. It's pure laziness (T. 5).

I do not intent to deny that some students can be lazy. However, with so many economic, family, personal and pedagogic factors that might be influencing a student, it is quite difficult to say how much a student is really lazy.
Ten dropouts (6% of all) were taking others courses. In a strict sense these students could not be considered dropouts but since they left the research school without any notice they were officially considered dropouts.

School enrolment can be done either at the end of one academic year or some days before the beginning of the next one. When a student is enrolled the next academic year at the same school where s/he was studying in the previous one, s/he only needs to confirm her/his name already included on the list for the next academic year. When the enrolment is done in a new school, students need to present, to the new school, a document confirming that they have already completed the previous grade. In the first instance, this document can be a simple photocopy of their previous year’s grades and the transference document can be presented later. In this way, any student can enrol himself in more than one school and only later decide in which one to take the course.

The reasons why a student enrols himself in more than one school can be either because s/he had not yet made up her/his mind about which school to study or which course to take or because s/he was looking/waiting for a job near that school. So, in order to guarantee her/his place, s/he enrols her/himself in two or more schools and only later decides which school to attend. Consequently, s/he starts to get fault marks in the roll-call of the other school(s) and after missing 25% of the course s/he is considered as having dropped out. Actually, this kind of dropout may have never come to that school but as s/he was in the enrolment list s/he is considered as having dropped out.

Another fact contributes to this class of reason. The Brazilian educational system comprises a regular, official system and a parallel supplementary system known as ‘Supletivo’. In the regular system, which comprises mainly public schools, students have to attend at least 75% of the classes during each of the eight primary school and three secondary school years. In these years they have to follow a fixed programme or syllabus. The ‘supletivo’ - a condensed system - is offered mainly by the private sector and attended by students from the lower class who had no opportunity to get a diploma in the regular system and/or those who dropped out from it. In this system, students can take exams without the need to attend classes, although there are many private courses which prepare for these exams. Another facility in this system is that students can sit for an exam in as many subjects as they want on each occasion that the examination takes place. The only requirement for taking these exams is to be more than the ‘normal’ age for finishing the corresponding level, that is, more than sixteen for the primary school and more than eighteen for the secondary school. Normally these courses have a lower academic standard than the official system. Because of the facilities offered and the lower academic requirements, several students withdraw from the regular system in order to take a course in the supplementary one. This was the case for three (60%) of those who were taking a course in another school.

Four (2% of all) male dropouts contacted reported that they had left school to take a course in the army and to enter into this career. According to Hahn (1987), for many adolescent dropouts the army provides both job security and the prospect of a career. In the present research they left school in order to
join the army. However, the pros that adolescents see in joining the army remain the same as those mentioned by Hahn (1987). In the present Brazilian economic situation with a high level of unemployment, to join the army is more than a question of status or idealism. It represent the security of having a salary at the end of the month apart from career prospects.

In their attempt to categorise the reasons students give for dropping out, Barber and McLellan (1987) found certain difficulty in identifying some reasons so they opened a new category which they referred to ‘problem codes’. Among this category were the students who entered the armed services. Although they do not explain the reasons for this difficulty, we agree with them that in effect these students were taking a new course and so should be considered more as a transfer than as a dropout. However, in the present research we decided to use the school classification, in which they were categorised as dropout, since they neither asked for a transfer document nor communicated to the school their decision to start a new course.

One student ‘dropped out’ of the secondary school because he started a course at the University. In order to take a university degree it is necessary first to succeed at the ‘vestibular’, that is, the university entrance test. It is a classificatory rather than a selective test and to succeed one must be classified within the number of places offered for the desired course. The Brazilian higher education consists of a public and private system. While the public universities or faculties have a higher academic standard, are (almost) free and accommodate only 25% of the higher education students, private ones, with few exceptions, have a lower standard and expensive fees. Considering the low number of places, the low cost and the high quality of courses, public universities places are highly competitive.

As a consequence of the high level of contest and the low quality of many secondary schools, most of the students who intend to take a vestibular, take first a ‘pre-vestibular’ course. These courses, at a secondary school level, aim to prepare for the vestibular and belong, without exception, to the private system. As generally their fees are high, the lower socio-economic students cannot afford to take them. Consequently, they re-enrol themselves in a secondary school in order to improve their knowledge or simply brush it up. Meanwhile, they keep trying the ‘vestibular’ and if they succeed they abandon the secondary school. This was exactly what happened in the case reported in the present research.

It seems to be quite strange that a secondary school student has to ‘drop out’ in order to take a university course. However considering the explanation given above and the fact that this student left school before the end of the course and without cancelling his enrolment, and so was considered to be a dropout by the school, it makes the classification more understandable.

6.4 - Conclusion
Exogenous or outside school reasons, which included economic reasons and domestic and personal reasons were the most frequently mentioned reasons for
leaving school early. Among these, the economic ones were the most emphasised by all categories of respondent.

Considering the present economic situation in Brazil, it is not surprising that all economic reasons pointed out by the dropouts interviewed were directly related either to getting a job or to keeping it. To get a job or to keep it had priority over achieving a secondary school certificate, at least for the present, since some of them revealed their intention to return to school when it was possible. In fact, as Gomes (1990) observed, it is a common practice, in Brazil, to obtain a secondary or higher education diploma after beginning to work. Different reasons have contributed to this practice. For some, the need for helping the family income was the most relevant. Others preferred to take the job when it was available rather than to wait until they finished secondary school. For a small group, a job signified freedom and respect from others, mainly from their family. The wish to earn money in order to be able to present themselves in a more fashionable way was also pointed out as a reason for choosing between school and job.

Although none of the dropouts interviewed mentioned low prospects of employment as the reason for leaving school, this may have influenced their decision, at least indirectly. The increasing advance in technology has resulted in higher unemployment levels in all economic sectors and at the same time it has been increasing the minimum skill requirements for jobs. Some dropouts interviewed were taking an evening course, which means that they probably belonged to the working or low middle classes. Belonging to these social classes, they know their chance of getting a white-collar job when competing with a middle or high middle class young who took an evening or afternoon course in a private school or even in a public one are slight. So, this fact may have influenced their decision too, mainly to those that said that the lack of secondary school certificate would not seriously affect their career prospects since it is easy to get a job in the blue-collar area. To these young remaining in school may represent a waste of time. On the other hand, they also know that there are many cases where blue-collar workers are better paid than white-collar ones.

To some dropouts, on-the-job training is more important than a school certificate. This is particularly true in the industrial sector, where historically employers seem to prefer candidates who are trainable rather than those who are already trained (Kuenzer, 1985; Salgado, 1988; Gomes, 1990). However, not all dropouts that showed a negative attitude towards the school certificate, some of them were considering the possibility of returning to school as soon as conditions allowed. The importance of the school certificate was also emphasised by continuing students, who thought that if it was difficult to obtain a job even with a certificate, it was worse without it. This was because with the increasing surplus of labour or the so called ‘reserve of talents’, the level of educational requirements was increasing too.

Problems in the family were the most non-economic outside school reasons for leaving school. Although methodologically this reason was classified as non-economic it does not mean that there is no association with the economic situation. The hard working conditions and the bad nutrition endured by the
lower class might be the reason for some family illness. On the other hand, the lack of resources to pay a child-minder or a maid is also related to economic factors. The difficulties in coping with job, school and family responsibilities compelled some students to choose between job and school. The reason for choosing to leave school was based mainly on the economic conditions too.

Physical condition is another outside-school reason which is usually related to economic factors. Although one dropout left school because of an accident, others left because of general conditions which were a consequence of the fact of working and studying at the same time. Apart from expending a lot of physical energy, these students usually did not have proper nutrition.

Family starting was the second most mentioned outside-school reason for dropping out. As in some cases the girls were already pregnant, it is not clear which of these factors were the most important. Although laziness was not pointed out by dropouts, it was by teachers and parents. Even though it is not easy to say how much laziness can contribute to dropping out, it might have made some contribution. The fact that it was not been mentioned can be related to the concern of preserving a self-image.

17 out of 18 teachers mentioned outside-school reasons as the main factor for students leaving school early. Although no one can deny the influences of economic factors there is a significant difference in the answers of teachers and dropouts. 94% of teachers against 67% of dropouts mentioned these reasons.

Although other reasons for dropping out were mentioned, the number of answers was not significant. However, as my main concern, in the present research, was with within-school reasons rather than with the outside ones, I did not explore extensively these questions and the findings must be interpreted with care.
7 - ENDOGENOUS (OR WITHIN SCHOOL) REASONS

7.1 - Introduction

Endogenous reasons, in the present research, comprise those which are related to or are consequences of the educational system itself and refers to the institution itself, to teachers and to students. In the previous chapter the exogenous reasons for dropping out were presented and analysed. In the present one, the endogenous or within school reasons pointed out by dropouts, continuing students, teachers and parents will be presented and discussed.

Although several researches identified school reasons as those which most affect student dropout (Rumberger, 1983, 1987; McDill, 1985, 1986; Mann, 1986; Svec, 1986; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Finn 1987; Wagenaar, 1987), in the present research inside-school reasons were mentioned by only 56 dropouts (33%) as their main reason for leaving school early. However, another 51 dropouts mentioned this group of factors as a secondary reason.

Quality of education was the most mentioned reason within the institution-related factors, although only one teacher (6% of all) mentioned it, and even so, as a secondary reason. This reason was followed by the lack of administrative attention. Other reasons were mentioned but with less emphasis, as shown below (Tables 7.1 to 7.3).

Table 7.1 - Institution-Related Reasons for Dropping Out by Category (number and % of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>Continuing Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>Themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.%</td>
<td>N.%</td>
<td>N.%</td>
<td>N.%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Quality of Education</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Lack Guidance Cho Course</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Lack Admin. Attention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the endogenous reasons, teacher related factors were the most pointed out by all categories of respondent. From those who mentioned teacher-related
factors as the main reason for leaving school, 17 (45% or 10% of all dropouts) left school because of teacher-student relationships. Another 9 (23% or 5% of all dropouts) mentioned this question as a secondary reason. Disruptive effects caused by teachers' strike was the second most influencing reason mentioned by those who left school early although teaching style was the most mentioned by continuing students.

Table 7.2 - Teacher-Related Reasons for Dropping Out by Category (number and % of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
<th>Continuing Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Student Relations.</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Style</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive Effect</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Prob. of Pub. Sch.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3 - Student-Related Reasons for Dropping Out by Category (number and % of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
<th>Continuing Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with Study</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Student Relations.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficulty with students was mentioned by 5 (3% of all) dropouts as the main reason for leaving school early. Teachers (2 or 11 of all) mentioned this reason as only a secondary one.

Student-student relationships was the main and only cause giving by a girl leaving school early. However, continuing students mentioned this factor as possible of influences on thee and their colleagues for dropping out from
school. Parents and teachers mentioned this reason only as a secondary one.

If on one hand outside-school factors were the main reasons pointed out by those who left school early, on the other, asking the continuing students if they, at any time, had thought of leaving school and for what reasons, most of them answered that they had and pointed in particular to the endogenous group of reasons.

While within the exogenous (economic and domestic and personal) group of reasons only one reason tended to be mentioned, within the endogenous (institutional, teachers and student) group, several related reasons were mentioned in most cases. The most frequently mentioned reason by dropouts and continuing students was teachers' and students' relationships, followed by teaching methodology and quality of education. Only one teacher mentioned an endogenous reason - teachers' lack of qualifications - as the main reason for students dropping out.

7.2 - Institution-Related Reasons
Institution-related reasons (Table 7.1) comprise those which depend more on the institution itself than on the teachers and students. However, it is important to keep in mind that some of these factors are not influenced only by the political and ideological policy of the institution itself, but also by the economic situation such as lack of material resources, lack of staff, etc.

7.2.1 - Quality of Education
In Brazil the quality of schooling is commonly understood to refer to those pedagogical activities which give to lower class students the knowledge required to participate effectively in the political process and the struggle for a better standard of living (Ribeiro, 1989).

The educational explosion that had taken place since the 1960s is generally thought to have led a decline in educational quality (Dore, 1976). Its quality was so strongly criticised that Illich (1971) and Reimer (1977) proposed a complete elimination of the educational system. In subsequent years the situation has not improved and in some cases it has deteriorated. This is true in Brazil as elsewhere, since according to Castro and Ribeiro (in Castro, 1990) the quality of Brazilian middle education fell as a result of the accelerated expansion in school enrolment.

Government reports have emphasised the improvement in the quality of education in Brazil. However, a study undertaken by Ribeiro (1989) made clear that the educational improvement are more concerned with quantitative rather than qualitative goals. In fact, according to Pucci and Sguissardi (1989) there is a general belief that the quality of education has been deteriorating in recent years.

The situation in the research school was not different from that criticised by
Illich, Reamer and other educators. Nine (5%) of all dropouts mentioned questions related to the quality of schooling as their main reason for leaving school and two others as a secondary reason. In their criticism about the quality of schooling or the quality of school knowledge several factors were mentioned and/or observed. Although most of the time these factors were related, for analytical reasons they are going to be presented and discussed separately.

Lack of Link Between School Knowledge and Students' Job

The usefulness of school knowledge in their job was strongly criticised, mainly by dropouts but also by continuing students, which reinforces Gomes' (1990) findings that secondary level vocational courses appeared to be ineffective and divorced from practice. To him, there is a gap between school in general and work, as well as between theory and practice. As in McNeil's (1986) research, dropouts and continuing students were skeptical about the credibility of school knowledge as illustrated by the following interview extracts:

The reason why I dropped out was because what I was getting from course didn't have application in my job. What school gives to us is different from what we really need at work (D. 7).

The school was not giving what I needed at work. If I was having what I could apply in my work, I wouldn't have left school, despite the difficulties of working and studying at the same time (D. 24).

Many students needed to work out of economic necessity. For them, getting employment was a question of survival since they could not afford to be economically supported by their family and in some cases they also needed to help support their family. However, for many of these students getting a job was not the only question. In a capitalist and competitive system, workers have to be competent in order to retain their employment. Further, they want to progress, to reach a better position in order to improve their salary and so improve their standard of living and achieve personal and professional fulfilment. To achieve this accomplishment, they looked to the school for help.

Although to take an evening course after a working day requires extra effort, they were determined to take it. However, when the school offered nothing that could help them with their career prospects, they gave up, as mentioned not only in the above statement (D. 24) but also by others.

The two secondary school courses in the research school were 'Data Processing' and 'General Education'. As most of the dropouts and continuing students were working as sale assistants or cashiers, these courses had very little in common with their jobs. Consequently, it is not surprising that dropouts and continuing students did not find their courses helpful. However, it was not only those who were not working in the same area of their courses who were not satisfied:

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I can't say that school isn't helping at all, but what I'm learning on the job is much more advanced than what we are learning here. Not all teachers have the same experience as our employers and the school doesn't offer the same conditions that we have at work (CS. 54).

Unfortunately, most courses, even at the degree level, do not fulfil the needs of the labour market. In the research school, as in other researches (Kuenzer, 1985, 1988; Pucci and Sguissardi, 1989; Gomes, 1990) dropouts and continuing students who were working declared that they had learned their job more, if not entirely, in their practical activities, that is, in their work rather than at school. Actually, as in other schools, the research school offered little in the way of practical exercises to students and there was no compulsory job training. Theory and practice were not linked.

Schools have an ideological function. In a capitalist society its role is to ensure the existing relations of production (Althusser, 1972; Bowles and Gintis, 1976), and to preserve the structure of class relations (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), safeguarding, in this way, the interests of the dominant class. Through the separation between theory and practice, the school helps to maintain both the separation between intellectual and manual work and the consequent separation between the classes.

In order to keep courses more up to date with the market's needs, schools need more investment in both material and human resources and to keep a closer relationship with the market. However, since Brazilian public schools do not fulfil these two conditions they were unable to satisfy both students and employers. Yet, this is not only a Brazilian or a Third World problem but a consequence of what Dore calls the 'diploma disease'.

Lack of Link Between School Knowledge and Students' Personal Interest

The school has been strongly criticised for neither taking the real world as a point of reference nor incorporating students' experiences in the school program (Giroux, 1986; Moraes, 1989) as recommended by Dewey (1964).

The practice of denying the student's own experiences is typical of conservative discourse and educational theory. For this theory, culture and knowledge are treated as if they were not interdependent. Not taking into consideration students' cultural experiences, this theory dismisses the social and cultural differences among students. The ideological significance of this position is that if there is no differences within and between different cultural groups, there is also no threat of disruption. Schooling, in this case, tries to promote harmony, equality and respect within and between different cultures (Giroux, 1986).

Although in their responses to their questionnaires continuing students rarely mentioned the lack of link between school and students' personal interest and/or experiences, in the group discussions and in the teachers' and students' meetings this subject was frequently raised.
Classes have nothing to do with our reality. They keep teaching what we are never going to use and set aside what is important. They should have subjects such us drugs and sex, which interest us. At home, nobody speaks about this; at school they don't teach it, and if, eventually, some teacher does decide to speak, he puts his point of view and doesn't accept ours. If everybody spoke and gave his opinion, we would have a better understanding of the subject (CS. 9).

Topics such as sex and drugs are still taboo topics for many teachers. Others did not feel confident to discuss them. Some teachers agreed with the importance of discussing these topics with students but they did know how. One teacher suggested bringing in a specialist to give a conference but what students wanted more was to see these subjects treated openly and frequently in classes and so have the opportunity to compare and to analyse different points of view.

While dropouts complained more about the lack of school help in their jobs, the criticisms of continuing students were more directed to the dissociation between school knowledge and what they needed in their private lives. According to continuing students, they would like to have more day-to-day problems discussed in school. In their opinion, questions such as AIDS (HIV), sex, drugs and freedom, among others, should be discussed at school.

Although criticism about the dissociation between school knowledge and student private life was emphasised more by continuing students, this fact was also mentioned by dropouts:

There should be talks given by teachers from the university. . . .

The school should give us more information about the present world (D. 7).

When asked why, in their opinion, it was so important to bring these themes to school, most of them declared that this was the only opportunity available to them to discuss these subjects with older and more experienced people. Very few students indicated that they had the opportunity to discuss these topics at home, with their parents or older brothers/sisters. Although many of them used to discuss these topics with their friends, they expressed their desire to have the opinions of more informed people such as their teachers or other professionals from out of school.

While dropouts and continuing students were primarily concerned about the quality of school knowledge, only one teacher, in their questionnaire, mentioned it as a secondary reason. However, occasionally some teachers showed some concern about the kind of knowledge given by the school. Thus one teacher observed in an interview:

School is not up to date and does not please the students. It should be different! (T. 5).

These teachers agreed with students that school should be different, more
contemporary and, as in Pucci and Squissardi's research (1989), they agreed that what is given by the school does not attract students and hence contributes to failure and dropout. Although some teachers were concerned about the lack of interest in school knowledge of most of the students, they never discussed this question and accepted the predetermined course content 'recommended' by the educational authorities.

Students are always becoming less satisfied with the kind of knowledge transmitted by most of the teachers. With the political and sociological movements that have taken place in recent years, they are becoming more politicised, and more required and wanted a sociological explanation for the problems of their generation. Unfortunately teachers are not trained to take account of the interests of students. In fact, several teachers complained about these new demands of students. Most of them did not feel themselves capable of answering satisfactorily most of the students questions. They recognised that their lack of confidence in answering students' questions was a result of their own weak formation, their lack of reading and their lack of opportunities to participate in seminars, conferences, and so on.

I had the opportunity to discuss, informally, with some teachers, the students' complaints about these issues not being discussed in school. Several teachers agreed that the 'real truth' was mainly because they themselves were not used to discussing sex and emotional feelings with others from their own generation. So, it turns out to be difficult for them to discuss these matters with students. Others did not agree with this but did feel that there were matters, such as those in question, which should be discussed with parents or older brothers and that school already had too much to hand out so that it was not possible to take over any other responsibility.

Teachers' admission of their lack of preparation to deal with some of these themes wanted by some students, supports the Moraes's (1989) study. According to Moraes (1989) the resistance of school to the students' appeal is also motivated by both the teachers' belief that school must transmit only the traditional knowledge and the teachers' lack of consciousness of the students' reality.

The question of school knowledge emerged as a delicate issue. If school knowledge does not attract students, they become disinterested, start to play truant and end by dropping out. On the other hand, if some teachers give an interesting class and provide the opportunity for students to discuss and exercise criticism, they become more critical of others teachers' classes which do not interest them. The best way to avoid this seems to be a restructuring of the curriculum and the updating of teachers' knowledge.

Curriculum
School has two main proposes. One is to prepare citizens and integrate them into society. The other is to prepare future citizens to fulfil different roles in the labour market. This second aim is achieved through the development of different levels of skills. So, if on the one hand the school must develop citizens through developing common skills, on the other hand, it must develop different levels of skills and this brings conflicts within the
schooling process. As observed by Apple (1979; 1982) and Giroux (1983a), curricula in school have strong connections with the dynamics that create social inequalities, since those which produce different levels of skill reinforce cultural and economic inequalities.

The preparation of citizens and workers in school is done by formal education or the transmission of school knowledge. The knowledge transmitted by schools is determined by the school curriculum, that is, the range of subjects and course contents.

The curriculum and its course contents is another element which contributes to the quality of education. In the present Brazilian educational system, the curriculum is fixed and determined by the highest Federal and State Educational Authorities. Neither students nor teachers have control over what students must learn. With a predetermined and closed package of what to learn, which most of the time has little to do with their personal or professional interests, it is natural that students are unwilling to follow it, and so they drop out.

Several times students mentioned the need for a review of both the overall curriculum and subjects and individual course contents. In their opinion some new subjects should be introduced, others given greater emphasis and others eliminated. Some content in some subjects should also be changed and updated. Teachers agreed with students about the need for changes, both in the curriculum and in course contents, every time this subject came up. However, there was no general agreement about which subjects should be introduced, emphasised or eliminated since, in a general way, teachers tended to defend the importance of their own subject. In a meeting with some teachers and student representatives this question was discussed. The number of different opinions was almost the same as the number of participants. For some students who were interested in the development of critical thinking, subjects in the Social Science area should be emphasised. For others, more interested in the 'vestibular', Social Science subjects should be reduced in order to emphasise Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Those students who did not intend to take a degree but were concerned with their own professional career emphasised the need to have more subjects related to their jobs.

The lack of agreement over in which subject or area modifications should be introduced was found not only among students but also among teachers. The following extracts from a group discussion of students and teachers indicated how different the opinions were:

I don’t think that Philosophy, Sociology and English are important in the public schools... How many of our students go abroad? So, why have English courses? And Philosophy and Sociology. Why do they need these courses? What they really need is to learn how to survive, how to make money in this economic crisis... (T. 6).

This comment, made by an English teacher, was replied to by another English teacher:
Philosophy and Sociology are the most important courses in the curriculum. Man has to learn to appreciate spiritual values and how to live together with other human beings. Money is not the most important thing. Many people who have a lot of money are unhappy because they have only material values. ... In relation to the English course, we can't forget that some of our students intend to take a graduation course and need to learn English for the 'vestibular' (T.9).

The arguments continued about material and spiritual values and there was no agreement either among teachers or among students about which were the most important. Actually, this is an endless question since principles and beliefs do not constitute a homogeneous unity. Everyone has her/his own way of interpreting and evaluating social structure and differs in her/his values and assumptions. However, a good professional training must also care about the formation of character which is given by the subjects in the Social Sciences.

The discussion about what area should be emphasised went on and took on a political flavour:

I still think that English and other Social Science classes are not important. We have too many courses. Students who wish to learn English should have this course as a non-compulsory one, out of their classes session (T. 6).

What nonsense! Most of our students work during the day and have only the evening period to study. How can they come to a different session in order to have an English course? Nobody will come! (T. 9).

Students who work have only the evening period for study. Offering this subject in a different period would mean that these students would not be able to learn it and that school, once more, would patronise those students from the higher socio-economic classes. The political question of what it would signify to offer the English course in a day session was not discussed, although a continuing student tried to bring it into the discussion. In fact, on many occasions, students revealed that they were more concerned with the political side of education than most of the teachers. However, it is true that not all the students were aware of the political aspect of education, but only those who were involved in political activity outside the school. Several of these students participated in educational movements in order to fight for better public school and/or in left political movements. In order to be prepared for these movements they had group discussions where they discussed the political and educational writings of Gramsci, Freire, Marx and others.

In the discussions about the curriculum and overall course programme, several teachers complained about the lack of time to develop their subjects and the need for more classes. Since the introduction of more classes in one subject would mean a reduction in the number of classes in another, in several cases teachers suggested which subjects should be reduced or eliminated. Most of the time the courses indicated were different from those taught by the teacher
All teachers complained about the question of having too much content to be covered in each subject. However, all of them agreed that it was easier to complete the program with the afternoon than the evening students. Since afternoon students did not work, they had more time to study at home which gave them a better grounding and so helped the teachers in the development of the subject in class. On the other hand, most of the evening students worked during the day. So, their everyday schedule comprised eight hours work, three and a half hours of classes and some time for travelling. Arriving home at 11:00 - 11:30 pm., or even later, and needing to wake up very early in the morning in order to start the work at 7:30 - 8:00 am., the only time they had for study was during the weekends.

Considering that evening students did not have time to study at home so that their courses were restricted to what they learned in class, teachers, with very few exceptions, thought that the content of their courses should be reduced. However, this solution would bring as a consequence a decrease in the quality of the evening courses and would increase the differences in the skills developed.

Some suggestions for increasing the number of technical subjects to the detriment of the Social Science courses were also based on the fact that frequently students escaped from the former classes and played truant. However, the lack of interest in some subjects could be more a question of 'how' the teacher was teaching rather than 'what', as illustrated by the following remarks:

What is less attractive than the religion course? However nobody misses (teacher 16)'s classes. He links religion with sex, drugs, etc. ... We really enjoy his classes (CS. 3).

... If it wasn't for his (teacher 16)'s class, nobody would come to school on Friday evenings (CS. 2).

Schools by themselves have no authority to change the curriculum, but it is possible to adopt the program more realistically since teachers have a good deal of discretion. It seems to be the case that the way a subject is treated and analysed can be more important than the subject itself, since it can be taught in different ways, depending on its underlying theory. As Paulo Freire pointed out, a text can be read in different ways. The reader can either submit himself to the text or go further, 'rewriting' the text, that is, criticise the text and reinterpret it either from a different point of view or within a different context (Freire and Shor, 1988). The same can be said about course contents. The question is more about the way that some content is given to the students than the content itself.

Negotiation

Most of the time school knowledge does not attract students, either because it is hard to absorb or because it does not fulfil students' interests. So, in the effort to transmit school knowledge, teachers have to control students, in order to press those students who are unwilling or not motivated by a prede-
terminated package of contents (Harris, 1982). Control of students is achieved either through coercion or authoritarianism or, most of the time, through the co-operation of the students.

Teachers frequently simplify the content of courses and lower the level of expectations, and this is particularly true in the evening courses. In sum, teachers control students by making school easy for them. However, as a consequence, the quality of instruction declines. In fact, as observed by McNeil (1986), some teachers had more ability to control students than to develop their interest in studying and in their specific subject. In his research he also observed that teachers tried to maintain discipline by the way they presented the course content. Simplifying content and reducing the level of demands they obtained students collaboration and minimal compliance on assignments (McNeil, 1986).

Educational Explosion

The educational explosion which happened in the earlier decades also contributed to a decline in educational quality. If on the one hand the increase in the number of schools and/or enrolments contributed to the required democratisation of schooling, on the other hand this democratisation cannot be seen only through the quantitative aspect. An authentic democratisation requires the provision of good schools and schooling conditions and this in its turn requires material and human resources. Brandão et al. (1983) reporting on their research about dropout in Brazil, stated that the effort to increase the number of seats in schools was not followed by a policy which ensured the apprenticeship to those who depended only on the school to develop socially valued knowledge and skills. The lack of material resources, as will be discussed later, is a constant factor in Brazilian public schools and so in school research.

A great deal of the student's educational process depends on the educators. However, the training of teachers has not received sufficient attention from the government or more specifically from the educational authorities. Teacher training for both primary and secondary schools has been strongly criticised. Most of the graduation courses, which prepare teachers for the secondary school level are offered by isolated private institutions rather than by universities. According to Mello (apud Gatti, 1989) and Guiraldelli Jr. (1990), there is substantial evidence that in a general way these institutions have quite precarious conditions and therefore cannot offer a good standard in the teacher training courses.

As Dore (1976) rightly pointed out, the increase in the number of schools or classes in a school, requires an increase in the number of teachers and teaching resources. However, these requirements are rarely met. Often additional teachers are untrained or inadequately trained. On the other hand, low salaries do not attract the better qualified people. Most of the time teaching resources are inadequate or insufficient and this also contributes to the decreasing quality of schooling.
The secondary level of education in Brazil comprises three years of schooling. The first year or level has a general curriculum. At the end of the first level students select the kind of course they want. They can choose an academic course which prepares for the 'vestibular', or a vocational course which prepares for a job. The research school in the present study had two secondary school courses: General Education and Data Processing.

The right choice of course is crucial since most of the student's future life will depend on it. However, student career guidance is not very common in a Third World Country. Even in developed countries this facility is not always satisfactory. In a research undertaken by Miller (1976) about what America high school students were thinking about their schools, thirty-one percent said their career guidance was poor. In Brazil, Gomes (1990) observed that major priority should be given to vocational information in school. As he noted, despite a legal obligation, this information has been virtually non-existent in schools.

A right choice has to be based on at least three considerations: (a) the student's preferences; (b) the skills required for both that course and the profession for which it prepares; and (c) the job prospects. Considering the crucial nature of the choice and the need to reflect on the relevant considerations, students should have the necessary information about the available secondary school courses before choosing any of them. In the research school there was neither a professional counsellor to advise students nor any leaflet or other written information on which students could base their choice. The only existing facility relating to the choice of course were some leaflets, hung on the wall in the student counsellor's room. The existing leaflets were about a career in the Air Force and some short professional courses offered by SENAC (National Service of Commercial Apprenticeship).

In order to make good use of this information students should compare the required skills of the course and their own skills. However, as students were not sure about their real skills, these leaflets were not of much utility. Apart from this, very few students knew of the existence of these leaflets.

The consequences of the lack of either a professional adviser or choice of course orientation can run from a simply dissatisfaction with the course to dropout. In fact, three dropouts mentioned the lack of school guidance in choosing the course as their main reason for quitting the school and one pointed to this factor as a secondary reason. Furthermore, on several occasions continuing students expressed their disappointment with their course since it was not giving them what they had expected. The following interview extracts give an idea about how dropouts and continuing students felt about the lack of guidance in the choice of their course:

I chose the course thinking that we would have one thing but what we had was totally different. My knowledge about the course was totally wrong but nobody gave us any guidance. ... During the second semester, when I realised that the course had nothing to do with me, I gave up. ... Because of the lack of information I lost
When I chose this course I had only a vague idea of what it would be about. Now, I am not liking it but I am going to finish it because I need a secondary school certificate and I don't want to delay getting it. Maybe, later on, I will take another course (CS. 50).

It was not only students who felt the direct consequences of the wrong choice of course. In a discussion about the lack of interest of students in school, a teacher who taught a technical subject for the Data Processing course expressed his opinion in this way:

Sometimes students are not interested because they are in the wrong course. They don't have the skills required by that specific course because they hadn't any guidance in choosing the course. There are students completely out of their depth (T. 5).

Brazilian public schools are really lacking a career guidance programme. They have neither information about possible choices nor a counselling service which helps students to choose a career which suits them best.

7.2.3 - Lack of Administrative Attention to School Problems

Although this reason was not pointed out as a main reason for dropping out either in interviews with dropouts or in the questionnaires completed by continuing students and teacher, the lack of attention paid by the administration to school problems was severely criticised during meetings, group discussions and in informal conversation.

In a document drawn up by educational administrators and distributed by the AAESC - Santa Catarina Association of Educational Administrators - it is suggested that the main functions of educational administrators are twofold. The first, concerns socio-political commitment and is "to co-ordinate the educational activities in a way that makes students democratic and engaged with the transformation of the Brazilian social reality" (AAESC, 1985: 3). The second, but no less important, is related to the pedagogical area and is "to co-ordinate the planning and execution of the teaching-learning process in such a way that education and culture will be, indeed, a tool for people's liberation" (AAESC, 1985: 3). Besides these two main functions two other subsidiary functions related to the school community were mentioned.

Although the functions of school administrators are clearly defined, in most cases their practice is far from that recommended.

In Santa Catarina State, for the first time, in 1985, the school administrative body was elected by the school community and the candidates were teachers and/or educational specialists who were working in the school. In spite of or because of this most of the persons elected had had no course or practice in
school administration. Their practice was based on their own opinions and the examples of their previous headteachers. When some administrative theory was known, it was based on general administration principles which follow the principles of the capitalist economy. When applied to education, such theories accentuate the gap between the proclaimed and the actual.

The administrative body of the research school consisted of one headteacher and one deputy. They commenced their administrative activities at the beginning of 1986, after being elected by teachers, students and students’ parents. However, at the beginning of 1987, when the inauguration of the new governor of the state took place, as with other schools administrators, they were dismissed by the Governor under the claim that since the position of school administrator was a position of trust, the school administrative body should be appointed by him. Coincidentally, the administrative body appointed by him was the same as had previously been dismissed and they decided to accept the Governor’s appointment despite some protests from teachers and students.

The academic background of the headteacher was a degree in Biology, a subject in which he was one of the school teachers. Among both teachers and students, he had a reputation for being a very good teacher. The deputy had a degree in School Administration and was working as a auxiliary in the school office when he was elected. He had the reputation of being very knowledgeable about educational legislation. Both the headteacher and the deputy were known by teachers and students as ‘progressives’ and used to be very involved in both the democratisation of schooling movement and in teachers’ strikes. This latter reputation had been the main factor in their electoral campaign and the reason for their victory.

Despite being known as progressives, both the headteacher and the deputy declared that they knew very little about educational theories, especially progressive theories. Since they had both graduated during and under the influence of the military dictatorship, when any kind of critical literature and discourse was forbidden in school, they had had little or no opportunity to know about such thinking. After their graduation they also had very little contact with progressive theories since, as with other teachers in general, they were influenced by both the teachers’ working conditions and the lack of an professional reading. However, during the academic year that the field work was undertaken, both of them took a course where progressive pedagogy - mainly Paulo Freire’s pedagogy - was studied.

The lack of familiarity with educational theory on the part of both headteacher and deputy plus the fact that their decision in accepting the governor’s appointment was not approved by many teachers and students, gave both of them a certain lack of confidence in dealing, as school administrators, with other teachers and students.

The fact that the headteacher and deputy appointed by the governor were the same persons as had previously been elected by the school community, had presented them with a dilemma. Should they accept the position or should they decline it as a form of resistance and dissent? Not wanting to decide by themselves, the headteacher and deputy raised the question with the teachers.
The teachers were so divided in their opinion that there was no clear answer or position. Hence, and based in the fact that: i) they had a programme which had to be fulfilled; ii) they had a commitment to the students and parents who had elected them; iii) they did not know who would be appointed in case of their withdrawal; iv) their commitment to the schooling was more important than the question of the appointment, they decided to accept the government appointment and remain as the administrative body for a further three years, in order to complete the four year period for which they had originally been elected. Although students and parents also voted in their election, they were not consulted about the question of whether or not they should accept the government appointment.

Several teachers and students did not accept this decision and feeling both themselves and the democratisation of schooling movement betrayed, they withdrew most of their trust of and co-operation with the administrative body. Consequently, from that time, the school started to be less united. In sum, the administrative body's decision to accept the governor's appointment created a difficult environment which to work and this affected both the administrative and academic work, aggravating, in certain way, the problem which already existed. Consequently, in spite of their best efforts, the administration was heavily criticised by both teachers and students. In their criticism, several topics were emphasised. Although these topics were related, for analytical purpose they are going to be presented separately.

Relationships Between the Administrative Body and Students and Teachers

One of the criticism made by dropouts and continuing students was about the existing relationships between the administrative body and students. As in Rowley's study (1989), the impersonal nature of the relationships between the administrative body and the students was emphasised. Students declared that they would like to have had more contact with the administrative body and complained about the absence of any opportunity to speak with them. This is shown in the following extracts:

The administrative body ... They aren't our friends. The headteacher used to be an excellent teacher and very friendly. Because of this I voted for him. Because I believed in him. ... He was a very nice teacher, but as headteacher, he is a fraud (CS. 37).

I think that the headteacher doesn't respect the students very much. Now, that he has been appointed by the government, he doesn't support the students as much as he used to do before (CS. 42).

The lack of friendship and informal relationships between the administrative body and students was not only commented on by dropouts and continuing students but also observed during the fieldwork. Although the administrative body tried to be accessible and treat students in a fair way, there was very little informal contact between them. This lack of informal contact was considered by students to be unfriendly behaviour, mainly because, as a teacher, the headteacher used to spend much more time with them.
Not only was the administrative body criticised about their relationship with students. Although less emphasised, criticism was also made about other members of the school staff. Students complained about the impersonal and sometimes quite aggressive way they were treated or attended to by auxiliaries and some teachers. As in Callan's research (1988), they claimed they were treated as a number rather than as an individual. They stated that on many occasions they felt the need to discuss their problems with someone at school, but the lack of open and friendly relationships generated a reluctance to seek assistance to cope with their personal or school problems. For students, only the students' counsellor and very few teachers showed any interest in them as individuals.

Many students and several teachers commented on how surprised and disappointed they were about the changes in the headteacher's behaviour. As noted in the above extracts (CS. 37; CS. 42) and many times commented on in school, he used to be one of the most friendly of teachers and used to support students' claims. However, according to continuing students, as a headteacher he used no more to support of students' claims.

Teachers also criticised the lack of friendship between the administrative body and other school staff. Several teachers declared that relationships used to be different at the beginning of their administration and mentioned the administrative body's acceptance of the governor's appointment of them as the point where the relationships started to deteriorate. In fact, several teachers expressed a strong resentment about that decision of the administrative body. Students also criticised the decline in their support for teachers' strike behaviour and both students and teachers reported the development of a lack of trust in the administrative body since the headteacher and deputy had been appointed by the Governor. Teachers and students felt as though allegiances had been transferred to the 'other side'.

Although the deputy had more contact with teachers and students than the headteacher, his personal way of dealing with student problems was strongly criticised mainly by students, as was expressed by the following extract:

Nobody likes the headteacher. Nobody talks to him. We only talk with the deputy but not too frequently. Sometimes it's not possible to speak with him. Everybody complains because most of the time he speaks too loud and very nervously. He doesn't know how to listen and sometimes offends the students (CS. 38).

In fact, the deputy was admired more for his knowledge of educational law than for his ability or diplomacy in human relations. Although he tried to be democratic and understanding, his tone of voice as well as his answers to students' questions were, most of the time, authoritarian.

In their turn, headteacher and deputy revealed their disappointment with some teachers who had withdrawn their support from the administrative body after the latter had accepted the Governor's appointment. They strongly regretted the fact that these teachers had not understood their reasons for having
accepted the appointment and were conscious that this had affected their performance.

As a matter of fact, some teachers never recognised the excuse of the administrative body that they had agreed to remain in that position even as appointed, because they had a commitment to the students and parents who had voted for them. According to these teachers, the bigger and truly commitment was with democracy - the motto of their campaign - which in this case had not been respected.

The main factor which contributed to this lack of friendship and informal contact between the administrative body and teachers and students was the amount of bureaucratic work required from the administrative body. With such a volume of work they needed to spend great deal of time in their office completing forms and reports or out of school in meetings or other activities. On the other hand, Brazilian economic and social relations have historically been characterised by the social separation of those who determine and control from those who execute and obey. In this way, school administrators took the place of those who command and control. As 'controllers', they were expected to preserve a social distance from those they ruled. The sense of being rejected also influenced the relationships between the administrative body and teachers and students. However, this factor influenced their relationship with teachers more than that with students.

Several times students and teachers mentioned the good performance of the headteacher as a teacher and compared that performance with his performance as an administrator. When this happened, only rarely were the differences between these two kind of functions and the difference between these two statuses mentioned.

Administrative Role Performed

Students, more than teachers, complained about the lack of pedagogical care on the part of the administrative body, as shown by the following extract:

The administrative body of 'X' (research school) only complain, complain, complain... They only know how to complain that we are this and that, but they never go to the classroom to speak with students and to promote something, in order that students remain in school. They do nothing. They never went to ask if the students were well, how the classes were going or if the teachers were good. Well, it was too difficult for us (students) (D. 5).

Historically, the function school administrator has been more concerned with order and control than with the teaching-learning process. Beachan (in Cal-lan, 1988) revealed that school administrators were not concerned with students and reported school rules as the primary reasons for dropping out. Students clearly realised that the role performed by the administration was more concerned with bureaucratic work and control and strongly regretted this fact. They also felt they were more controlled than trusted.
We are adults and responsible. If we need either to arrive late or to leave earlier we have to get a licence from the office. This is a nonsense! We are adults and we know what we are doing and why. We are adults and would like to be treated such that (CS. 47).

... you are treated as if you are still in the kindergarten (CS. 16).

Charged with the function of keeping order and control, the school required that any student who needed to arrive late or to leave school early had first to present themselves to the school office, to give an oral justification and to obtain written permission to give to the teacher who was in charge of the class on their arrival or departure. This procedure upset students since they regarded this measure as indicating a lack of trust. Most of them considered themselves to be adults because they were working, and so regarded the measure as a nonsense. In fact, most of the students could be considered to be adult either because of their age or responsibility. However, age is not always indicative of responsibility and nor all students were adults. Many students were under 18 and the school was responsible for them during the period that they were supposed to be in school. So, in order to maintain control and avoid problems with students' parents, this measure was quite common in both public and private schools. However, this measure did not prevent students either remaining in the corridors, school yard or library during one or more classes or of escaping from the school when nobody was looking.

Control in school was not only maintained through bureaucratic measures such as the one described above, but also by the teachers, through the use of assessments and grades, as will be described later.

Order seemed to be the main concern of both the administrative body and auxiliaries. The later helped to keep the school running as near normal as possible. Apart from their bureaucratic work, they helped to maintain student discipline sending students to the classroom when they were in the school yard when supposed to be in class, asking them to lower their voices when they were in school yard because their teachers had not come, and so on.

Administrators left teachers free to run their classes and so long as the classes ran smoothly, no special attention was given to them by the administrators or the teachers' counsellor. However, on many occasions some classes seemed to be running well but actually many students were either not in the classroom or were quiet in the classroom but not paying any attention to the teacher's lesson. Pedagogical problems were of such little concern that there was students who were taking the same level for the third time. A first level student was taking that level by the fourth time although he had never dropped out. The school was doing nothing special to attend to the needs of these students.

The fact that teaching and learning were not given the required attention was deplored by students.
The school must do more to motivate the student. Once a week the headteacher must visit every class, to find out how things are going and what problems they have. I believe that if the administration knew the situation, things would be different. Teachers would be different and so would the students (D. 12).

The concentration of power in the hands of the administrative body and the lack of work and decision-making in groups led many students to attribute almost all responsibility for school problems to the administration. For others, the administrative body was not the only responsible body but had a great deal of importance.

For a small group of students and a few teachers, their only complaint was about the state educational authorities rather than the school administrative body, such as UCRE and the Secretary of Education:

The administrative problems have nothing to do with the headteachers personally, but with the government, with the Secretary of Education and with the UCRE which delay everything (T. 1)

Although it is true that bureaucracy is a big impediment to school efficiency, the administrative body has a big responsibility for what happens inside school. As one dropout put it:

The school dynamism depends very much on the administration (D. 32).

According to Althusser (1972) school or the Educational Ideological State Apparatus has the political and ideological function of reproducing the relations of production. This reproduction can be observed in different levels of educational administration. At the school level, the concentration of power in the hands of the administrative body helps to preserve the domination. Keeping the separation between those who decide and those who execute, the school also maintaining the separation between theory and practice.

The school administrative body, through its decisions and performance, co-operated in the preservation of the dominant ideology. However, this was not the result of a personal decision but the consequence of their own school formation. School and school administration are located and influenced by the broader society. Within a society where most people still believe that education is a neutral act or, at least, do not know how to direct their political beliefs and basing their practice on the example of the previous administrative bodies, it is quite understandable that they could not have had a different result.

Working Environment

Strong criticism was made by dropouts and continuing students about the school working environment. The school organisation was one of the points criticised.

The school should be more organised. It should require more discipline. ... (CS. 42).
To a lesser extent similar criticisms were also made by teachers. The criticism ranged from specific issues to the overall organisation of the school. Dissatisfaction with the level of cleanliness was mentioned as one aspect which, for students, revealed a lack of organisation in the school:

I think that the school must give priority to cleanliness and order. Who doesn’t feel better in a clean place? Cleaned and aired... (D. 48).

I would like to see a cleaner school, with free meals in the evenings, with more technical resources (D. 7).

To some students cleanliness was necessary in order to feel physically and emotionally comfortable in school. In spite of the efforts of the support staff to keep the school clean, this was not always possible. Apart from staff shortages, most of students did not collaborate to keep either the classroom or the school yard clean. Although there were rubbish bins all around the school, students frequently failed to throw papers and other rubbish in the proper places. Often when the class session finished, the classroom seemed as if it had not been cleaned for several days. The same can be said about the school yard. However, they were cleaned at the end of every session, even though the dust in the classroom was not properly removed because of both the short time between the sessions and staff shortages.

Once, I asked a student who had complained about the lack of cleanliness (CS. 9) why he was throwing rubbish onto the floor instead of in the rubbish bin. He answered that there was no point in doing that since most of the students did not. On another occasion, questioning a group of students why they were throwing rubbish in front of the main school door, they answered that people were paid for cleaning the school, so why should they care about this? One of them also added that the school servants were paid by their money (through taxes) so they had to provide work for them, otherwise they would have nothing to do.

Unfortunately this way of thinking is widespread. In a paternalist and quite conformist system, with the continuing influence of a long period of dictatorship, many people like criticising as a way of exercising their rights, but very few take action to change the situation. In fact, they always expect that someone, in a higher position, will solve their problem and become disenchanted when this does not happen.

I think that there was a lack of organisation in the (research school). ... I couldn’t bear to see the teachers so uninvolved when the school was in such a mess (D. 13).

For some evening students, the school was doing nothing or very little to solve the organisational problems. However, some teachers declared that they were concerned with the students’ wish for organisation and tried to demonstrate their personal organisation to them from the first class day, as revealed by the following extracts:
There is no doubt about it. Students want everything working well. They want to find the headteacher administering, teachers teaching, the support staff cleaning. They want to see that everything in the school is working well (T. 7).

I always start the year very carefully, very organised and keep this organisation all over the year, so students get into a routine. At the beginning some of them get a little frightened about this but as they get accustomed to it they really like this organisation (T. 2).

According to Hetz (in McNeil, 1986) students realise when they are treated seriously and they will respond in the same way. However, the students' wish for organisation was not always very well interpreted by teachers as shown in the following interview extract:

Actually, evening students expect classes from the first day. Only in this way do things go right. If from the first day they have classes, they feel confident that everything is alright. Even on this matter evening students are difficult to deal with (T. 3).

According to some teachers, evening students were more demanding and more difficult to please. This supports Carvalho's (in Bruns, 1987) findings in a study about evening courses in Brazil. This appeared to be the case, but there were several reasons for this. First, evening students were older. Being also more mature they did not wish to see things going wrong. Second, most of evening students were working during the day and so had made an extra effort to go to school. They, therefore, became very upset when they came to school after a long day's work and found no class or had to cope with other problems. Thirdly, it was during the evening sessions that most of the problems occurred. Teachers failed to turn up more in the evening periods than during the day. Problems with noise outside the classroom, the lack of free meals etc., were much more likely to happen in the evening periods too.

Noise was pointed as one of the most severe problems in the school.

It shouldn't have noise, students walking to and fro, screaming, making a mess, distracting the attention. No teacher could speak louder than those who were screaming in the school yard and corridors. With silence, one can learn better, because when there was noise, one didn't know if one should give attention to the teacher or to whoever was screaming. The students' freedom to go in and out of the class at any time, was also too disturbing (D. 48).

Sometimes the noise is so great that you can't hear yourself thinking... It is very difficult either to hear the teacher or to concentrate in what you are doing (CS. 38).

In 'X' (research school) there was always somebody chatting and walking in the corridors. They even, once, threw a firecracker in the school yard. It was just when we were having a test with
(Teacher B). Now, if the student was already nervous because s/he was having a test, how could s/he concentrate with so much noise, with a firecracker blowing out and with people screaming? (D. 2).

To tell the truth, I didn't like the school. There was too much lack of organisation. Too much noise. Students used to go in and out of the class all the time. Teachers frequently failed to turn up. For me, it was too much (D. 37).

Noise constitutes a practical constraint since it hinders the teaching-learning process (Descombe, 1980). As the above extracts indicate, it interferes with the teachers' activities and upsets the students' concentration on work. Avoiding noise is not only necessary to provide a better environment for teaching and learning but also in order to minimise mental and nervous stress. Classroom activities are normally not very quiet. The need to be heard by all students in the classroom requires a relatively powerful voice on the part of the teachers and many classroom activities also require a high level of noise. Consequently, students, and particularly teachers, can suffer from the ill-effects of being exposed to a high level of classroom noise for any length of time. The high level of noise from outside the classroom requires that teachers increase the level of their voice, and this can also increase the fatiguing effect. For evening teachers who have taught one or two sessions during the day and for most evening students who had had a long day's work, to dealing with this extra noise was really very tiring. So, the desire of both teachers and students for a quiet school was not generated by a personal preference for a silent environment but for its psycho-physical and pedagogic implications.

Apart from disturbing the teaching-learning process, noise is also associated with aggression (Descombe, 1980). The noise level in the school meant that students and teachers lacked control and organisation and reflected a kind of aggression.

Besides the pedagogical and psycho-physical ill-effects, noise in the classroom also has a sociological effect, since it is frequently associated with lack of control and lack of competence on the part of the teacher in charge (Descombe, 1980). Noise in school yard also has a pedagogical effect, as described before, as well as a sociological effect, since staff can be judged by it. Concerned about both of these reasons, all school staff helped in trying to control the noise made by students in corridors and the school yard.

The noise outside the classroom was generated by students who were not in class. There were different reasons for this. One was the failure of teachers to turn up. When this happened, a few students used to go to the library or to stay in classroom getting on with their study or homework. However, most of them preferred to relax, going to the sports field or the school yard, which were located among the classrooms. This could be also caused either by a physical or psychological need or by the wish to play truancy. It can be also considered a consequence of the freedom exercised by students to go in and out of the classroom at any time.
Students physical and psychological need to be out of class for a while or just the wish to play truancy must not be seem without considering several factors: after a long day's work students are physically, intellectually and sometimes also psychologically tired; frequently the subjects taught are not interesting to the students or students do not see their importance in their private and/or professional lives; students are bored with 'chalk and talk' teaching.

Although teachers used to complain about the students' lack of interest, with few exceptions, they did not use to ask the reason or discuss with students this matter.

While a few teachers required a student pass before allowing them to join their class after the bell had rung, others allowed students to go in and out of the classroom freely. According to these teachers it was better that those students who were not interested leave the class rather than stay and disturb both the teachers their fellow students. However, going in and out of the classroom was also a disturbing factor to both their peers and students in other classrooms, as revealed through the following extract:

How can we attend to the teacher if there is always somebody going in and out of the classroom, opening the door, closing the door, walking around the classroom. You can't concentrate (CS. 16).

The question of whether students should have the freedom to go in and out of the classroom at any time was controversial and there was no consensus about it. Some students maintained that they were adults and so they knew when they could go in and out of the classroom. Others questioned if all students were really adults, since many students seemed to be in school only to cause disorder. Teachers, like the students, had varying opinions. To some, discipline should be maintained and so students should not be allowed to go in and out of classroom freely. To others, it was better to have few interested students in the class than disorder in a full classroom. The question of why students were not interested was not addressed by many teachers.

Similar to the question of the freedom to go in and out of the classroom was the question of going in and out of the school. For some students, keeping the gates closed was not only a question of preventing student truancy by allowing them to escape from school, but also a question of security:

In 'X' (research school) the gates stayed open and anyone could go in. It could be a thief or whoever and students have no security. That was what I felt! (D. 2).

One teacher expressed the views of many teachers that the desire of some students to control the gate and entrance door meant a desire to be controlled and disciplined by others since they did not know how to be responsible by themselves:
Students want a military system. They want somebody controlling the door entrance. They don't know how to be responsible by themselves (T. 1).

However, to some students, keeping the rear gates closed and controlling the school entrance, led to the feeling that they were in a prison as well as being controlled and without any responsibility.

Keeping the gates closed and controlling the door entrance is ridiculous! School is not a prison and we are adults ... (CS. 22).

As with the freedom to go in and out of classroom, the question of if the gates should be kept closed did not generate agreement among those who had different opinions. For the majority, this question was irrelevant since it had little effect on the noise level since the main noise and disturbance were caused by students in the school yard and corridors. In practice, keeping the rear gates closed had more of an symbolic than a real effect since students were able to leave the school by the front door quite easily, since it was not effectively controlled. There was no one in charge to control the front door. The only control was exercised by a member of the school staff who eventually was passing by.

The problem of lack of school organisation seemed to affect the behaviour of teachers, as indicated by a teacher who expressed the views of those who, like him, were working in both the public and private sectors:

... It is a fact that teachers are badly dressed. When they arrive in a public school and see a bad organisation, they accommodate themselves to the situation. I know this very well! I work in the two sectors and I have seen many examples... But if you try to do here (public school) the same things that you do there (private school), you are teased ... (T. 7).

The question of organisation was so strongly emphasised that it was not only linked with discipline and seen as a prerequisite for learning, but was also linked with respect. This was expressed by a dropout:

One has to have respect for oneself in order to have respect from another. So, I think that the school must be more demanding. It must also require certain things in order that the student feel himself to be in an organised institution, with rules which must be followed. The school mustn't, in any way leave the students relaxed, because school is a place to learn discipline oneself (D. 2).

Students who attended the same school and the same session and so experienced the same environment, interpreted it differently. While some students complained about the rigid control which existed in school, others suggested there should be a more authoritarian attitude to student discipline.
Another school problem mentioned by teachers which can be identified as a lack of organisation was the lack of co-ordination. According to some teachers, in several cases the same subject is taught by up to three or four teachers and sometimes the same subject are taught for different classes at the same level by different teachers. In this case two different classes at the first level can have different teachers of Portuguese, Biology, etc. In spite of this, teachers do not have either formal or informal meetings for discussing problems specific to that class or subject. While on one hand this is a way of hiding from their peers what a teacher is doing in his class and so avoiding the consequent evaluation, on the other it does not allow the exchange of experiences and the possible solution for several problems. Several reasons can be pointed out for this lack of co-ordination and integration of subjects. One is the lack of co-ordination within and among the subjects, which was supposed to be the responsibility of either the headteacher or the teachers' counsellor. However, as observed by Silva in her study about the administrative body in Santa Catarina schools, the administrative body has little participation in school planning. In fact, they are more involved in the day-by-day administration than philosophical or pedagogical issues. They also emphasise the control or personal behaviour (Silva, 1981). Although Silva's study was undertaken with primary school administrative bodies, the same can be said of the secondary school. Concerning the teachers' counsellor, s/he usually acts only when some teacher has a teaching problem.

A second reason could be the lack of the time for most of the teachers to meet their peers and discuss their subjects and teaching style. Another reason could be the lack of practice of working in group. A further reason could be the kind of relationship existing between the teachers, as expressed by one of them:

We have a good team of teachers but there is a lack of good relationships among us (T. 14).

There is neither a good relationships nor a unique aim among us. It is because most of us work in several schools (T.1).

... there are several good teachers in school but there is a lack of good relationships among them (D. 27).

Another complaint made by students was about the school building. In fact, the school building was very old and badly-preserved since the school had no money to spend on its preservation. Several windows did not close or open adequately and this contributed to an uncomfortable physical environment either in the winter or in the summer. The desks and chairs were very scratched and many of them needed to be repaired or replaced. The lighting in most of the classrooms was very poor and this contributed to students feeling themselves to be even more tired and sleepy during the evening classes. The lack of lighting in some areas of the patio resulted in some quite dark spots in the evening and encouraged the formation of truancy groups as well as drug-user groups. The condition of the toilets resulted in a bad smell despite the great efforts by the school support staff to control it by keeping the toilets cleaned. The bad smell was noticeable not only in the toilets themselves but also in the corri-
dors and some rooms. It was, sometimes, so strong that it provoked headaches among those who needed to remain in the area affected. Girls, particularly, complained about the lack of a mirror in the ladies' room. In several rooms the walls were damp and the smell of mould was quite strong in the administrative body office. All these conditions contributed to make the physical environment of the school unpleasant. However, the strongest and most frequent complaint about the physical aspect of the school was the lack of a sign with the name of their school. Regardless the poor condition, they were proud of their school and wanted it to be identified. In spite of all complaints about the general aspects of the school, students would like to have seen, in front of the school, a notice with the name of their school. This was one of the requests included in the list of students recommendations for actions to be taken in short term.

According to Foucault (1977) buildings transmit their own messages to those who use them. If this is true, the message transmitted by the school building was neither particularly pleasant nor particularly caring. This could be one reason for the lack of care with which students treated the school furniture and building.

7.2.4 - General Problems of Public Schools
The lack of teaching resources was mentioned as a factor which could influence the decision to drop out. Although it received little comment in interviews and questionnaires, it was frequently mentioned during the group discussions. Students strongly criticised the lack of equipment and facilities, particularly concerning Biology, Physics and Chemistry. There was no laboratory or special room to teach or to work on these subjects and the material resources were extremely limited. In fact, well-equipped laboratories are rarely found in public schools.

The educational explosion which took place in earlier decades increased the number of schools and courses. However, most of these courses were implemented without fulfilling all the requirements such as material resources, special places, trained teachers, etc. In most cases, the human and material resources provided were the minimum required and the situation did not improve over the years. As Dore (1976) observed in his study of education, the pressure to expand the school enrolments on limited budgets brought, as a consequence, schools which were poorly equipped. A good example in the research school was the setting up of the Computer Training Course without the provision of any computer in the school. Students on this course had, twice a week, a practice training class in a government office located in the outskirts, several kilometres from the school. Although the allowance to have practical classes in that office solved the problem for a short period, this was not a comfortable situation either for the students who needed to move to a distant place or for the school which was always under the threat of having nowhere to train the students in the coming year.

The opportunities that schools have to improve their limited material resources are very few. One way is through the material distribution by Secre-
tary of Education. However, these opportunities are very rare and the materials distributed very limited. A second way to improve the situation is to buy it. As the school has no annual budget and the money obtained through the Parents and Teachers' Association is, almost all of the time, not enough to buy things needed to ensure the daily running of the school, materials needed to equip the classes were not provided. In 1989, the year when the fieldwork was undertaken, the government launched the 'Income Tax Campaign' from which the school and other institutions which lent assistance to the community could benefit. The campaign consisted of collecting purchase receipts and the benefit consisted in recovering a proportion of the income tax due to that purchase. The receipts were collected periodically by the organisers and the benefit was soon returned to the institutions. The money obtained by the school on the first two collections was spent on books for teachers (Pedagogy, Philosophy and Sociology of Education) and with the last one, which would be a bigger amount, the administrative body intended to buy some laboratory materials such as a microscope. Although this was an improvement, it was not enough to supply the school with the minimum recommended didactic resources.

For students, the present limitations of material resources was frustrating. According to them, subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics were quite difficult to learn and memorise, so, practical demonstrations and exercises would have helped considerably. However, they were not involved in practical work, with the exception of one Physics teacher who, despite the poor conditions, managed to prepare, with his students, some work for an exhibition along with the work of other schools.

Some teachers also complained about the lack of material resources but their criticisms were less emphatic than those from the students. One reason for this could be because as it is a 'natural' condition in most of the public schools; teachers accept this situation and have become accustomed to it. This was expressed by a teacher who was working in both sectors:

... in private schools teachers are used to having much better teaching resources... However, when they arrive in a public school ... they accommodate themselves to the situation... (T. 7).

Another possible reason why students were more concerned with the lack of resources is because the result of this constraint affects students more directly, as indicated in the following extract:

To teachers, this problem (lack of material resources) doesn't matter because they know the subject and they have got a job. But for us, who need to learn properly in order to get a good job or to pass the 'vestibular', it is a question of life or death (CS. 32).

Actually, the lack of material resources is not a question of 'life or death' in students' apprenticeship as implied by this continuing student (CS. 32) but the expression surely intended to emphasise the importance that these materials can have in the learning process.
The comparison between private and public schools was inevitable every time that the lack of teaching resources was discussed. Coleman et al. (1982a; 1982b) comparing public and private schools in United States, found that in the private sector there was a higher level of discipline and academic demands. This was also revealed by students in Portugal who expressed the view that in private schools there were higher academic demands and a more rigid discipline (Girardi, 1987). To some teachers, parents should be more concerned with the problems of public schools and give them a monetary help since the lack of resources directly affects the quality of education. However, according to these teachers:

Many parents prefer to pay a lot of money for a 'Bardal' (private school with concentrated courses) than to give a little help to the public school (T. 6).

Although these teachers may be right, this is only a partial explanation of the problem. Like many students and teachers, parents believed that the problems of the public schools were the result of government policy and so should be solved by the government. They also did not believe that in the short term it was possible for the quality of education to be improved to the level of the private school and so, they preferred, whenever possible, to transfer their children to private schools:

We transferred our son from a public to a private school because public school doesn't prepare for the 'vestibular'. Even when there are good teachers they can't do too much because they have no material resources (P. 8).

I took my daughters away from the school because we decided to have them enrolled in a private school to give a better instruction to them. ... It's been very difficult for us, but what can we do? In X (research school) teachers failed to turn up, there was no laboratory, up to date books, etc. ... it's been very difficult for us to pay the private school fees, but at least they are having a much better schooling (P. 1).

The high cost of fees plus the indirect costs of keeping children in a private school was the main reason why many students remained in a public school.

I don't go to a private school only because I can't afford the fees (CS. 17).

The above statement, made by a continuing student, expressed the view of many others who would like to have had a better schooling. Those who first studied in a private school and then had the experience of the public one, felt a big difference and the result was frustrating:

There is a big difference between private and public school. In a private school we felt ourselves different. ... I don't know if it's because we pay or what is it, but teachers have much more respect from students. In the first place there are the students,
then, the teachers ... If a student had any problems, the teachers made every effort to solve the student's problem. ... I was so accustomed to the private school that I couldn't bear the public one (D. 2).

Besides showing the difference between private and public schools, the above statement (D. 2) confirms Delgado Gaitan (1988)'s statement that cultural compatibility is crucial to student academic life. The same experience but in an opposite situation was felt by another dropout:

It isn't because now I'm studying in a convent (private) college that I say that (criticism about the research school). I am studying there but I don't like to be there. I just don't know why. Maybe it is because I always have studied in poor schools. It must be because of this. I can't get used to it there (private school) (D. 6).

It is not only parents and students who do not have confidence in public schools. Teachers also preferred to enrol their sons in private schools, as was noted by one of the school teachers:

... How many of us have our children in public schools? ... If we think that public school is not good enough for our children, how can we expect other parents to think differently? (T. 6).

In spite of the fact that teachers recognised the weakness of the public school, many of them were not concerned to change it and did not support those who tried, as was demonstrated by the following extract:

I work in the two sectors... But it is a fact that if you try to do here (public school) the same things you do there, you are laughed at (T. 7).

This teacher was right when he spoke about the difficulties of introducing something new in the public school, especially when this introduction meant more work, even if this was only in the initial instance. On more than one occasion I had the opportunity to see him bring suggestions from the private school, and they were always rejected by other teachers, despite their advantages. Once he brought from the private school a guide model for students' evaluation. The guide was much more complete and so, more fair and less open to bias than the one used in the research school. Despite its being more comprehensive it would not require much more time or skill for completion. However, it was rejected, in first place by the administrative body, who alleged that there would be no point in showing it to teachers since they would discard it. Later, the guide was suggested by the teacher to some other teachers who also rejected it. The model was neither tried nor even analysed. It was rejected even before it had been seen!

In comparing public and private school students' achievements, most of the teachers agreed that private school students had a better performance because they had a better background, were not in employment, and teachers had more
teaching resources. However, a Maths teacher, who taught in both kinds of school, did not see too many differences.

I have a 5th level class there (private) with 45 students. I have a 5th one here with 20 students. I have the same programme and the students over here are a little ahead. I also apply basically the same test... The only difference is the number of questions, because the students here work more slowly. What a student over there needs 5 min. to answer, one over here needs 15 min. But they can produce the same quality. The only difference is the speed... and the age. While those over there are 11 years old, these over here are up to 17 (T. 7).

The age difference was because the referred group of students of the research school belonged to a special class with intellectual and/or emotional problems and so had been kept down several times. Despite the fact that the above mentioned teacher did not see too many differences in teaching in private and public schools, the examples used by him refuted, at least partially, his claim. The difference in the age of the students is quite fundamental. It means that the students in the private school followed a normal course and had not failed while the 17 years old students in the public school might have failed and/or abandoned the school on several occasions. On the other hand, according to that teacher, that public school class was a special one, where several students with learning difficulties were placed together. Even so, the differences remain. While in the private sector students with learning difficulties have special attention which comprises special exercises, out-of-class support, etc., public school offers nothing comparable because they have no support staff to help and teachers have no time and/or abilities to prepare different activities for the same class. Apart from this it’s not possible to compare private and public schools since the former attend to a different social class which doesn’t work, and which has a different family background (T. 9).

The differences in the performance of private and public school students do not arise by accident. In fact they are partially determined by the social background of the students and partially reflect their likely future economic positions. According to Bowles and Gintis (1976), schools have the task of preparing individuals for their role in the labour force. In this case, private school prepares the labour force for the highest place in the labour market while public school reinforces the attitudes, values and skills needed for the lower levels of the workforce.

The better quality of education in the private school is a consequence not only of the students’ background but also of better school resources. If on one hand there is not too much difference in teachers’ salaries, on the other hand teachers in private schools can afford better material resources support. This situation is a result of its economic conditions generated by both students’ fee and government economic help.
7.3 — Teacher-Related Reasons
Among the teachers-related factors the most frequently mentioned by both dropouts and continuing students was the kind of relationships existing between teachers and students. Seventeen (10% of all) dropouts pointed to poor teacher-student relationships as their main reasons for leaving school earlier and 9 (5% of all dropouts) mentioned this fact as a secondary reason. Continuing students also mentioned this factor as one of the main reasons for the dropout of their colleagues and for their desire to leave school. Two parents (20%) indicated this as the reason why their children had left school.

The second most cited endogenous or school-related reason for dropping out, was teacher style. Ten dropouts (6% of all dropouts) mentioned this factor as the main reason for leaving school early and 14 others (8% of all dropouts) mentioned it as a secondary reason. Continuing students also mentioned teacher style related factors as being one of the most significant contributions to their desire to leave school.

Disruptive effects caused by the lack of classes either because some teachers failed to turn up or because of the teachers' strike contributed to the number of dropouts. Three dropouts (2% of all dropouts) reported frequent teachers' absences as the main reason for dropping out and five (3% of all dropouts) mentioned it as a secondary reason. The teachers' strike was reported eight times (5% of all dropouts) as a primary reason for dropping out and four times (2% of all dropouts) as a secondary reason. Three parents reported disruptive effects as the main reason for their children leaving school early.

Teacher qualifications was mentioned only once, by a teacher, as a primary reason for leaving school. However, eight (5% of all) dropouts and one teacher mentioned this factor as a secondary reason.

7.3.1 — Relationship Between Teachers and Students
Teachers' behaviour in relation to students was one of the most criticised points from both dropouts and continuing students, which supports Delgado-Gaitan's (1988) findings. The criticisms ranged from simply a lack of both friendship and attention to students' academic and personal problems, to teachers' authoritarianism and 'non-sense' behaviour.

In this section we are going to present the points of view expressed by teachers, dropouts, and continuing students about teacher-student relationships, analyse them and suggest some actions which could improve these relationships.

In most of the public schools in Brazil the relationship between teachers and students is quite informal. Although in many schools teachers are addressed by their names preceded by the adjective 'teacher', in the research school, most of the secondary school students used to refer to or address their teachers only by their names. In a more formal way, when a particular teacher allows less freedom to the students, they are called 'teacher'.

Whenever two people meet they are compelled to make an assessment
of each other, by taking the other's verbalised or gestured behaviour into account. The impressions detected in this first meeting affect, in some degree, subsequent interaction (Goffman, 1959). According to Ball (1980) the 'getting-to-know-each-other' period, at the beginning of the academic year, is crucial for the understandings and expectations of both teachers and students. This, probably, is the reason why some teachers try to establish the 'rules' of student behaviour in the first meeting, as expressed in the following interview extracts:

All outcome depends on the impression you give to students in the first class (T. 8).

On the first day, when I go into the classroom I 'pray my text-book'. I say the way things are... On the very first day I explain the way I work in order to avoid further problems (T. 2).

Teachers have a "set of values or expectations" concerning how students ought to behave (Hargreaves, 1967: 104) and try to communicate them to students as soon as possible. Since teachers have the power to define the situation in classroom, their first step is to define the situation in a way they feel is the most adequate to perform their role. However, the way they do this can affect the students, as expressed in the following statement:

Some teachers started the year in this way: "This is the subject programme and it's up to you to learn... This is my style and if somebody doesn't like, I can do nothing". It was really a very cold beginning (D. 14).

Lack of teacher care has been reported in several studies as influencing student dropout (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Rowley, 1989). In the present study, teachers' coldness or lack of care for students was criticised by many students who would have liked greater consideration shown them by their teachers.

They (teachers) should care more about students (D. 19).

... they (teachers) think only about themselves and don't care about the students (D 17).

As I recall, not one teacher cared about me. It was as if they had a task to do and they did it automatically. It was as if we were pieces of wood, without feeling, without problems... (D. 39).

I got tired of going to school and being treated as if I didn't exist, as though I wasn't important (D.19).

In my opinion the most important thing is the teachers' care and respect for the students. So a student feels himself as important, as a human being, as if teachers need him in the same way as he needs teachers... Most of the teachers don't care about students. They think "I have my salary assured and I don't care about you."
If you wish to learn, learn; if not, I don't mind" (D.2).

Teachers treat students as "if you want to do, do, if you don't want to, I don't care". They say this. They don't care about students... They don't stimulate the student (D. 8).

Every time that I went to any classroom, I observed one or more group of students seated at the very back of the room, far from the teacher since classrooms were quite big in relation to the number of students. Asking them why they preferred to sit there, instead of near the teacher, the answers were because they did not know the subject and/or because teachers did not care about them.

The lack of teacher and staff interest developed in the students a feeling of their being rejected and unwanted by the school. This supports the findings of Rowley (1989). On the other hand, an atmosphere of friendliness helps teachers control the situation and provides teachers with "a means for motivating pupils to work hard and behave well..." (Descombe, 1980: 61). This was expressed by students as shown by the following interview extract:

When one is treated with respect one has more interest.

We are not children, but it is not because we are adults that we must accept being treated with indifference. Who doesn't like to be treated as an important person? As a person who will be missed? Though if we are treated as if it doesn't matter, we cannot have any interest. This is a deception!

In my opinion, it is mainly the respect from the teacher and the administrative body to the students which make students feel themselves comfortable in school. This shows us that what we are doing is important. That teachers depend on the students as students depend on teachers (D. 2).

Contact between teachers and students was superficial. It was not a friendship contact. It was rather an authoritarian one. ... Friendship is important because when students see the teacher as a friend, they have a higher motivation to learn, to show to the teacher that they are learning. Motivation improves the apprenticeship (D. 7)

According to Meliz (in McNeil, 1986: 95), students realise when they are treated seriously and they respond in the same way. In the present study, the lack of teachers' interest in students individually, was interpreted by the latter as a lack of respect and it affected their decision to leave school. According to several students, they would have worked harder if their teachers had shown any friendship or individual care about them. This supports the observations of Bruns (1987). More than this, they strongly related teacher care and friendship with their interest and performance in school.

Both respect and friendship between teachers and students is really very important (D. 20).
A good relationship between teacher and student is crucial. One doesn't learn well if teacher is an inhuman person. ... When the teacher is a friend the subject becomes easier, nicer and quicker to learn (CS. 9).

I really feel that if teachers had cared more about me, it would have helped me care about my studies (D. 42).

When teachers care about you, you work harder (CS. 26).

Friendship is important because when the student sees the teacher as a friend, he has a higher motivation to learn, to show the teacher that he is learning. Motivation improves apprenticeship (B. 7).

According to Bescombe (1980b), an atmosphere of friendliness is a good strategy to help teachers control the situation and helps the students' apprenticeship. In fact, a good relationship increases the sense of responsibility and reduces the desire to make noise or other problems. Students also expressed their need to be regarded as people, appreciated by teachers.

Teacher and student friendships are quite important. Then we feel more of a person and have a greater desire to learn (D. 13).

What really is important is that the student feels himself appreciated. Then he would have a bigger interest in study. He would improve 70% (D. 8).

For this dropout (D. 8), appreciation meant a great deal, 70% in his view. In fact, this particular dropout revealed that he left school exclusively because of poor teacher-student relationships.

In a group discussion several students emphasised a strong relationship between the teacher and his subject. The statement below is an example:

When I like the teacher I like the subject (D. 41).

Asking these students if the opposite could not be true, all, except one who remained a bit unsure, denied the possibility and some tried to demonstrate their judgment through examples.

The lack of good teacher-student relationships seemed to influence the general environment of the school, as pointed out by one dropout:

There was no atmosphere of friendship in the school. This was missed. Teachers are not students' friends. They don't try to know why students are not doing well. I was doing very well but I observed this in other students (D. 17).

The lack of friendships seemed to be reflected not only in teacher-student relationships but also teacher-teacher interaction, as pointed out by teacher
who affirmed that there was a good team of teachers in the school, but the problem was the lack of good relationships between them. This teacher went further and affirmed that:

When students feel that we (teachers) are a unity, they become more confident in relation to us (T. 14).

A continuing student expressed his feeling in the following way:

Because of some misunderstanding between some teachers and the administrative body, the later incarcerated themselves in their office. Now, there is not the same integration that used to be (CS. 1).

Some teachers also complained about the lack of friendship among teachers and the administrative body since the latter decided to accept their appointment by the Governor, as described in Section 7.2.3. They recognised that this lack of good relationships hindered the pedagogic process since students observed the disagreement existing between them. According to one teacher, the existing bad relationship between some teachers and the administrative body - headteacher and deputy - damaged the pedagogic process since students observed the disagreement existing between them.

The lack of a friendly atmosphere in the school generally and particularly in class, was felt so strongly by students that they tried, on several occasions, to raise the question. The comment presented below is an example of how students perceived the problem and what, in their opinion should be done about it.

...in order that students don't leave school, in order to improve the class environment, it is paramount to have more friendships between teachers and students. Both teachers and students should use the first classes to try to get to know each other. They should forget the schedule for a moment and try to know each other, personally, even if this required a week. But it would not mean a week lost because it would bring rewards. Both must know each other individually, what they like or dislike, what are their natures. Teacher methodology should be discussed. Teachers should accept students' suggestions. Most of the teachers don't accept a student's suggestion however intelligent it is... Students also must accept a good suggestion coming from a teacher because when they accept each other's suggestions, they will both cope well and be successful. So, there will be a friendly environment and it will be very good. Suppose that one day the teacher and student relationship becomes disturbed. In this case, what must be done is to stop and think what each is going to say to the other ... The teacher must know what has happened to the student, if it is a school or personal problem, and give support. If this happens, then when the teacher needs it, he will have the support of the student, too (D. 39).
Many students would have liked to have had more informal contact with their teachers but they had little opportunity since most of them—both teachers and students—arrived at school just on time if not late, and at the break time (15 min. between the third and fourth classes), teachers used to stay in the staff room, having a cup of coffee, chatting with their colleagues, and naturally, resting a little. Yet, the lack of informal contact between teachers and students was felt also by teachers, as shown by one of them:

> It needs play and other recreational activities to integrate teachers and students. During classes there is no time to do this. We are so concerned to give the maximum attention to the programme that we don't take 10-15 min. to have a chat with students (T. 11).

There was strong support from both teachers and students for the idea of arranging informal, social occasions to meet teachers and students. Such activities were seen as providing more informal interaction between teachers and students.

Although one of the leading students tried more than once to integrate students and teachers through a weekend activity, none of the teachers participated in these activities. It is true that, for several reasons, very few students participated. Commenting on this fact in group discussion, some students stated that they did not know about the event, in spite of the posters advertising it in the main circulating areas in the school such as the main entrance, corridors and school yard board. Other students were aware of the event but Sunday was the only day they had either to bring their lessons up to date or to rest a little or even to spend with their families. For others, the only reason they did not attend was because they did not fancy this kind of activity. In fact, the suggested meeting places were some distance from the school, where the "ecological walking" group (i.e. a group walking with a view to developing an awareness of ecological matters) started, which required a good physical condition on the part of the participants. Since many students needed a physical rest in order to regain strength to face a new week of work-and-study, this kind of activity was not attractive.

Several teachers suggested that time constraints, both in and out of school hours, were a major factor in limiting the development of an informal relationship between teachers and students. Teachers had little, if any, non-teaching time during the school days and at weekends they had their private lives to care about. On this matter, a married teacher expressed herself in this way:

> Take my. When I was single, I used to spend most of my weekends with students. It was very nice... Now that I've got married, I don't take part in any extra activities (T. 14).

If on the one hand the lack of teacher care and friendship was pointed out by most of the continuing students and dropouts, on the other, some of them described positive feelings towards those teachers who, in their opinion, cared for them as individuals.
(Teacher 10) cared for me as a person. For other students, too. If some of us were not feeling well, he wanted to know about it and tried to help us as much as he could (D. 52).

For me it was fine. Teachers used to be friends. The same friendship was also shown by both staff and administration (D. 112).

I used to like the school because the teachers were my friends and gave attention to my problems and difficulties (D. 87).

(Teacher 10) was a teacher who used to sit on your desk and help you. He used to be like a friend. Sometimes we used to have a chat in class. If we asked something he used to answer, sometimes even when it was not related to the subject (D. 3).

(Teacher 2) is tough but he is very nice. When a student has some difficulty he helps by giving individual attention both in and out of class (CS. 17).

Nobody misses (teacher 16)' classes. He is really our friend and we like to be with him (CS. 21).

However, not all teachers were concerned about the lives and careers of their students. This was revealed by one of the substitute teachers who expressed the views of several of them:

What they (students) do out of school is of concern only to them and perhaps to their parents. I have enough problems of my own to care about students' private ones (T. 13).

Teachers from previous as well as present year were mentioned as caring about students. Still, all mentions referred to the same few teachers who were considered to be both friends and good teachers. However, a good teacher was not always considered to be a friend or vice-versa.

(Teacher 8) was a good teacher, that is, he knew the subject very well and knew how to explain it. In case we didn't understand, he used to explain it again. But God, what a difficult person he was. He didn't allow anybody to look around. This is not supposed to be necessary for adults ... (D. 1).

The only reason why I left school was because I couldn't put up with (teacher 8). He knew his subject very well but he was too rigid in his way of teaching. He demanded too much. No one could look around or speak with a colleague, even if only to borrow a rubber. It was too much... (D. 9).

(Teacher 8) used to be too authoritarian. He explained his subject very well but we couldn't move our head... He used to explain again in case someone hadn't understood. We also were
allowed to go to his office in case we needed extra help... As a teacher he was very good, but as a person he is too old-fashioned, too oppressive, too authoritarian... (D. 13).

Poor (teacher 21)! He was so nice to us, but he didn't know his subject... Fortunately he didn't stay too long (CS. 24).

According to Gadotti (1983) some teachers believe that they must use repression in order to improve the quality of education. They relate schooling quality with discipline and democratic relationships with a lack of rigour and lack of productivity. Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) recalls very well that rigour does not mean either authoritarianism or rigidity. On the contrary, it requires freedom, since it needs creativity.

The requirement of silence in classroom constituted, for many students, one of the heaviest rules in school, since many of them had no opportunity to have a chat with a friend during the day, in their work. Even for those who had not so strong a rule against talking in their work, it was in school that they meet their old friends. Many of them also had in school their only opportunity to socialise and felt that the short time break was not enough for them to socialise and free themselves from the tensions accumulated during both the long day's work and classroom activities.

Thus for some students, a good teacher could still be an authoritarian, oppressive person. This reveals that students knew how to distinguish friendship from professionalism. On the other hand, they knew how to identify a teacher who tried to be friendly but was not a good professional and expressed sorrow about his lack of ability.

Oppression and authoritarianism were the most criticised aspects of teacher behaviour by those who left school because of poor teacher-student relationships. This was recognised also by teachers.

We still didn't learn how to be democratic. We don't know how to behave democratically (T. 1).

Teachers' authoritarianism is probably still a reflection of the dictatorship period, a period when there was an increase in authoritarianism in school, or as Gadotti (1983) called it, a 'militarisation of schooling'. Many of the continuing students also complained about the authoritarian way in which they had been treated by some teachers.

I could no longer put up with certain teachers. Who can manage to work all day and in the evening stay 45 minutes without moving a finger or speaking a word? The teacher considered only himself. It was a pure authoritarianism, pure militarism. Do this..., don't do that! I neither looked at nor spoke with him in order to avoid being upset. I gave up school! It was no longer possible to put up with this! (D. 9).
(Teacher 8) was too difficult to put up with. We used to leave work very tired, our head could no longer cope... He didn’t allow us even to breathe. He used to give us a lot of work and nobody could make the least movement. It was just fault-finding all the time. I could no longer put up with so many complaints (D. 16).

Teacher ... is too stupid. He treats the students as if they were slaves... To him, the problem is always on the student side. He is always right (D. 11).

Teachers have two basic responsibilities: to keep students under control and to assist student learning. It is not easy to achieve both at the same time: to keep students quiet and to make sure they learn. On the other hand, there is some evidence that the quietest students are the most interested and consequently have a better apprenticeship (Descombe, 1980a). It is much more difficult to control those students who are not really interested in the acquisition of more knowledge but only instrumentally in the award of a certificate. Because of the lack of training in how to deal with students’ difficulties, teachers felt themselves frustrated. Consequently their self-esteem became lower and they started to take a more authoritarian position towards the students (Sicuro 1984). On the other hand, as pointed out by Hargreaves (1967) and Descombe (1980a) the higher the stream, the higher the conformity with teachers’ middle class values, the more they regarded their teachers in a favourable way and the more positively they assessed their relationships with teachers.

According to Woods (1980), the art of teaching is concerned with getting students to do what the teacher wishes and this cannot be achieved by the direct use of authority or power. As observed by some students a friendly environment can be more powerful.

A good relationship between teacher and student is crucial. One doesn’t learn well if the teacher is an inhuman person (D. 9).

In an authoritarian relationship teachers have the right to order and students the duty of obedience. This may be interpreted by students as inhuman behaviour. On the other hand, teachers are the only ones who legitimately can talk in and move around the classroom, because students walking around and talking during the class can be noisy and disturb the class.

Noise in a classroom may indicate a teacher’s lack of control over students and this can be judged by the teacher’s colleagues as a lack of ability to control the class. There is a limit to the level of classroom noise which both teachers and students can tolerate. While for teachers, a higher level of noise can be interpreted by their colleagues as a lack of ability to control their class, for many students, noise interferes with their concentration on their work. On the other hand, noise in the classroom is a form of student counter-hegemony. It is a kind of counter-strategy which students use to challenge the control of the teachers and assert their will on the progress of the lessons. It has the aim of annoying the teacher and disturbing the flow of the lessons. Teachers are concerned with noise and generally devise some
strategies to control it (Bescombe, 1980b). However, a heavy-handed or authoritarian style does not help. Students can appear calm and interested but this is only apparent and because they fear punishment.

According to Geer (1979), in every teaching situation teachers, at least temporarily, are in a superior and their pupils in a subordinate position. Students' interpretation of their subordination are illustrated in the following interview extracts:

One of the weaknesses of the school is the teacher-student relationships. Teachers are located on a pedestal and students in a lower place (D. 6).

If one can speak with the teacher he is compelled to understand. Well, he isn't really compelled... Frequently teachers understand, but there are students who don't approach the teachers. They put teachers on a pedestal. They don't have the courage to speak to them (CS. 5).

The word 'courage' used by the student may possible indicate how strong students feel they have to be in order to approach teachers. This fact raises a question: How can a student who dropped out because of his shyness approach a teacher in order to complain about something?

Teachers have two basic roles; as instructor and as disciplinarian. As disciplinarian he has to determine and to maintain order and discipline in the classroom. In order to fulfil this role teachers make use of some rules which can be determined by the school and/or by themselves (Hargreaves, 1967). While some teachers encourage students to break down the dichotomy between teachers and students, changing their behaviour, others think that social 'distance' between teacher and students must be maintained.

Students must feel that the teacher is an authority who must be fully respected... I don't believe in a democratic relationship between an authority and his subordinate... (T. 9).

However, this is not the way that students see it. The next interview extract expresses well the view of many dropouts and continuing students:

School must behave in a more democratic way. Teachers are always right. Democracy must be on the side of the student as well as the teacher. Both must make concessions... (D. 9).

Democracy and concessions were, in this case, the key words. There is no democracy without concession, on both sides. Such concessions result from what Woods (1980) calls negotiation. To him negotiation is concerned with three assumptions. First, it is related to power. Although teachers historically have more power than students who are concerned to create demands, to get students behaving in conformity with the intentions of the teachers is highly problematic and it is not possible to achieve it by a straightforward appeal to authority. Second, the relationship is dialectic, that is, both teachers
and students are continually modifying their relationships and are influenced by the behaviour of each other. Third, each party has its own interests, which are different. Conformity is never total and when it seems to happen, it is the product of a form of negotiation (p.15).

Different levels and forms of negotiation can usually occur in teacher-student relationships. However, with authoritarian teachers, negotiation is not easy to achieve and when pressed by students, the teacher can use some form of power in return.

There was a petition signed by students to withdraw him (Teacher 9) and when he found out he threatened to keep all students down a year. How could he do this if he didn’t know who had and who hadn’t signed the petition? (D. 16).

I had a quarrel with (Teacher 15). There was only one class per week and he failed to turn up from time to time. When he came he didn’t teach the subject he was supposed to. He used to speak about other things... . He gave us a test without giving us the subject. I complained to him and he no longer spoke to me, and from there on, he started to harm me (D. 15).

The power of the teachers is a salient issue for students (Pollard, 1980). Students who try to contest the teacher’s authoritarianism can get into trouble and provoke teacher hostility since this is regarded as a threat. Teacher authority and authoritarianism can be exercised by both verbal and non-verbal threats to the student’s interests.

The use of such authoritarianism by teachers occurs so frequently that sometimes their behaviour was considered as ‘non-sense’ by students, as shown in the following interview extracts:

Teachers’ behaviour does not make any sense. I missed a class because I was working on the office’ accounts. So I missed a test and the teacher required me to bring a sickness certificate to allow me to do the test another day. How could he ask me to do this if he really knew that I was working at the time of the test? (D. 1).

The teacher called us stupid ... that we were rubbish, that comparing us with a dustbin he couldn’t see any difference. But when he was due to give us a lesson, when he should prove to us that he was a good teacher and would deserve the ... position, he didn’t turn up (D. 39).

One day the teacher became irritated because we were not understanding the lesson. He yelled at us and left the classroom (D. 14).

The teacher doesn’t allow us to use the calculator. Why not, if I use it in my job? (CS. 14).
Once I said to the deputy headteacher that I was no longer able to cope with so much study, that I was sleeping only four hours a day. He answered: "So, give up sleeping and use these four hours to study too" (D. 53).

Once I was troubled with a cough. The teacher blamed me because I was disturbing the class and sent me out of classroom, because there I wouldn't disturb anybody. I became so upset that I gave up. I was already distressed with him and this was the last straw (D. 16).

The teacher's demand for a sickness certificate when he knew that that particular student had missed the text because of his work obligations was interpreted by the student as a non-sense. In fact, the teacher was trying to help the student, executing an unwritten rule that students can do a missed text on another day only if he missed the text for an 'justified' reason, that is, because of illness, accident, etc. However, the pressure from management to work overtime on the office accounts and the threat of redundancy was not considered a justified reason. On the other hand, in order to obey a school rule which, in fact, was not strictly followed by all teachers and at the same time trying to give a chance to the student, this particular teacher put himself in a delicate position. More than this. Demanding evidence of what he knew was not true, this teacher put himself in an ethically questionable position. Since neither always nor all teachers ask for a sickness certificate in order to allow students to do a test in a similar occasion, this teacher could have used his discretion and avoided demanding of the student 'proof of his lie'.

Teacher authoritarianism and 'non-sense' can be the deciding factors in a student's decision to leave school. To one dropout the way he was treated by a teacher was so distressing that when he spoke about his school experience, it was with anger directed towards that teacher.

I knew I had to go to school, but I hated the need to go and meet that teacher. He was so inhuman, so authoritarian... (D. 20).

Continuing students also complained of teachers' 'non-sense' behaviour both in action and language, as expressed in the following interview extracts:

... He kept me down by 0.5. It's not fair when he missed so many classes (CS. 6).

Once the teacher became upset because we were not understanding the lesson. He complained yelling at us, call us of donkeys and stupid and left the classroom without explanation (CS. 42).

They say things that if it were one of us we would be expelled from the school (CS. 93).

According to students, some teachers had used disgusting language at students
and humiliated them. This unfair use of authority by some teachers against some students upset some of them and shocked others. Without exception, drop-outs and continuing students expressed their wish to be treated in a fair and caring way.

Teachers who embarrassed students were disliked and some students were determined to do anything to avoid contact with these teachers.

According to Giroux (1981, 1986), the way one sees the question of authority within the school is the way that s/he sees the school in a broader society. According to him, as well as Freire and Shor (1987), it is paramount that educators adopt a dialectical view of authority since this concept is the basis for their conception of teaching and pedagogical practice, the political and ethical role of the school, and the relationship between domination and power.

Another factor that may influence teachers' behaviour is the conditions of their activities, as expressed by one teacher:

Many years doing the same thing brutalises. From time to time teachers should stop and update themselves. Otherwise teachers become brutalised and aggressive (T. 26).

Teachers' behaviour has a strong influence on the way students feel towards them. While some teachers were praised by students, others were criticised. The unfair treatment given by other teachers also has a strong effect upon students, as expressed by dropouts:

I no longer want to see that teacher in front of me. I have lost all belief and respect I used to have towards him. ... I gave up just because of him (D. 16).

I don't believe in them (teachers) (D. 17).

According to Gramsci (1970) human nature is determined by its historical and social relations. In this way, it can be said that teachers' authoritarian behaviour towards students was determined by the authoritarian way Brazilian authorities treated people during the twenty years of military dictatorship.

Many students felt there was a big difference between primary and secondary school. In fact there are several differences between primary and secondary schools and from day to evening classes in Brazil. In the primary schools, teachers show more interest in the students as individuals while in the secondary school they are treated more as a mass than as individuals. Secondary school students are expected to be treated and behave in a more adult way than in the primary school. Differences in the academic environment of primary and secondary school were also mentioned in a study of Portuguese students (Girardi, 1987).

In relation to teachers, Carvalho (in Bruns, 1987) observed that evening teachers considered themselves as the 'more deprived'. However, this could be
not only for the kind of students they meet in the evening sessions but also because, for many teachers this was their third session of work and naturally they were very tired and so less easy to please.

For several reasons, such as students' age and economic conditions, teachers' workload, and time of the day, the day and evening classes conditions differ considerably.

I started to study in the evening sessions. They were different people. Even the teacher-student relationships were different. ... They treated evenings students as adults. I really don't feel myself as a child, ... but it's too different (D. 8).

I felt they (teachers) treated the evening students in the same way as the children they taught during the day. They must realise that evening students are adults (D. 1).

Even in the evening classes they (teachers) treat you as if you were in a kindergarten. They don't treat you as an adult, as a responsible person (CS. 13).

These interview extracts indicate that students who attended the same session could interpret their experiences differently. While for some they are treated too much as adults, for others they are treated too much as children. This diversity of student opinion can be caused by differences in the age of evening students which can range from fifteen to more than twenty four years old. Given normal progress, a student starts the secondary school at fifteen years old and finishes three years later, at seventeen. However, since some students have been kept down for one or more years or have stayed out of school for some years between the primary and secondary school, many evening secondary school students are more than twenty years old.

Besides the physical age of the students, teachers have to deal with other aspects such as the psychological age and culture of the students. As pointed out by Hargreaves (1967), teachers find themselves at the interconnection between two different cultures with a correspondingly difficult role to play. On one side there is their middle-class system of values; on the other, the students' working-class values.

In order to deal sympathetically with student attitudes and standards, teachers have to make a drastic mental readjustment. Even those teachers who came from a working-class background do not always consider it easy to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards working class students (Hargreaves, 1967). One explanation for this fact is that in order to advance in life, these teachers needed to adopt middle-class values and eliminate their previous working class values. Despite having been brought up in a working-class environment, they now find their new values more valuable and so find it difficult to accept or defend their previous ones, which they sometimes prefer to forget.

Teacher behaviour at school is frequently associated with sympathetic or prejudiced conduct towards specific students.
Teachers approach their students with certain preconceptions, generally based on the student's socio-economic background and race. Frequently these preconceptions are formed by informal gossip among the staff. Although the categorisation of a student can vary between different teachers, and although each teacher tries to form his own evaluation, the opinion of a colleague can interfere with his judgment. Thus, sometimes teachers betray prejudice against some students. The possibility of prejudice is not related only to social class or a student's individual behaviour and/or capacity. It is also associated with age and sex differences, as revealed by the following extract:

There was prejudice against sex and age. Male teachers were prejudiced against male students and protected female students. Older students also didn't receive much attention from male teachers. Female teachers were more balanced (D. 7).

Female teachers were mentioned as having less prejudice on the grounds of gender and age. The preference given by male teachers to female students can reflect a macho attitude so common in Latin American males. Females are still taught to be feeble and needing man's protection.

The above statement was made by a black student. Asking him about prejudice against race, he assured me that he had never experienced it. Although I never observed any attitude which could indicate racial prejudice during my participant observation, this does not mean that it does not exist at all.

When teachers were asked about the reasons why students drop out, a number of interesting issues emerged. In the first place, the answers given by teachers were quite different from those given by both dropouts and continuing students. Only one teacher, who was frequently mentioned by both dropouts and continuing students as a good and understanding teacher, mentioned the relationships between teachers and students as a reason for dropping out. This fact appears to show that, in general, the teachers did not have a clear picture of what was taking place in the school. As they were reproducing the way their teachers had treated them, they considered their behaviour as 'normal'.

The teachers' perceptions about teacher-student relationships are in distinct contrast to student perceptions. After two months of field work, when a substantial amount of data had already been collected through interviews (with dropouts) and questionnaires (surveys of continuing students), the partial results were presented at a meeting to teachers, students and staff. When the complaints about the quality of teachers and relationships with students were presented at this meeting, they surprised the teachers, as shown by the following statement:
I cannot accept this result. I never heard a comment about this problem! (T. 10).

Although the above quotation represents the view of some teachers, not all of them reacted as surprised at the situation. Although others were also surprised at the high number of complaints about these matters, they accepted the lack of good teacher-student relationships as the existing reality. However, when trying to justify the fact, they almost always considered the students to be the guilty party. Only rarely did they recognise that some teachers were really not so 'easy going'.

One teacher, who was several times mentioned by dropouts, continuing students and teachers as having good relationships with students, expressed his ideas in the following way:

I became really very frustrated in knowing that students drop out because of some teachers. This fact must be stopped.... Let us speak up, folks! If a student is having problems with his teacher he must open his heart to that teacher. He must stop the class, speak with the teacher and say what is happening. ... We cannot change the economic situation, but the relationships we can... No teacher should leave the class without solving a problem which will affect the life of one of the students... (T. 10).

In a teachers' meeting at the end of the year, with the aim of identifying the school situation and determining actions to tackle it, teachers pointed out the following problems: the relationships between teachers and students; the lack of communication between students, teachers, advisors and the school administration; the lack of both formal and informal meetings between teachers themselves and between teachers and students. They also agreed about their lack of knowledge about the students' individual problems. However, one must realise that it is not easy for teachers who work with many classes to know all the students personally and how to deal with them, as was pointed out by one teacher:

I really don't know how to behave towards each individual. It's too difficult. Each student is different and we never know them (T. 5).

In fact, (Teacher 5) taught a very technical subject for only the two final levels of the data processing course. As his subject was not one of the most important, he used to meet every class only twice a week. So, it was really difficult for him to know every student individually in order to know how to behave towards them. This was not only the case of Teacher 5 but also of several other teachers. In an informal conversation a teacher expressed his concern in the following way

This matter of teacher-student relationships... Yesterday, before handing out a test, I asked them to arrange their desks in rows in order to avoid any cheating ... They became so frustrated and aggressive that I had to respond in the same tone to create order.
They didn't like my behaviour, but it was only a response of their own (T. 4).

As Pollard (1980) pointed out, teachers are 'tested out' by students to see how far they can go. In such cases, teachers generally respond aggressively in order to impress the students and get them to be quiet. The following interview extract illustrates this:

I try everything I can to keep them quiet. I start talking politely but I can also go to the other extreme. Last year I slapped a (male) student's face and after that his behaviour improved considerably (T. 14).

Although some students' behaviour could have had the aim of 'testing out' teachers, it could also have had the simple intention of drawing attention to themselves, as expressed by a dropout:

There are students who really disturb the class. They like to drawn attention, to themselves but this is because they have problems, and teachers take no notice... For instance, if a student had a very busy day, he likes to get some attention, and teachers just reprimand. They see only the disturbance aspect and send him out of the class. This isn't fair. It's true that there are students who go beyond limits, but they must have some kind of problem. If a student behaves in this way it is because he must have some problem which must be discussed (D. 8).

... sometimes teachers don't understand students' problems. A student frequently has many problems at home and when he arrives at school teachers behave in the same way, so it starts the arguments... (CS. 4).

Students expected to be treated by teachers in a more human way than they were treated in their work or at home. However, the work conditions of teachers (apart from other questions such as teachers' training, ideological and cultural influences, etc.) can have influenced the way teachers behave and prevented them satisfying the students' expectations. In fact, it seemed that for several students, school was as a place where they could go as an alternative to home. This was indicated by one student who used to go to school every evening even when the teachers were on strike.

... sometimes one has no opportunity to talk with anybody when one arrives home. So, he see the school as a second home ... and wants to discuss things with teachers, but most of them say 'NO' (CS. 37).

According to both teachers and students, teacher-student relationships have deteriorated in recent years. In their opinion this could be because in the recent years the number of substitute teachers has been increasing and with it the students' dissatisfaction. However, this fact can have other reasons. One of them can be the democratic movements that have been happening in recent
years.

The lack of a good relationship between teachers and students stimulated a feeling of frustration, distress and anger as students tried to understand teachers' behaviour. This was expressed by several students:

Sometimes, the problems of teacher-student relationships occur because teachers don't have a Human Relations training. They get their degree and start to teach without preparing themselves to be a teacher. ... I think teachers are lacking a Human Relations training. They must have this training to give classes (CS. 4).

Teachers are people like us, with feelings, difficulties... It is a difficult job which requires a lot of understanding, interest and commitment (B, S).

There are some teachers who take their personal problems into the class. They accumulate tension during the day and when they arrive at school in the evening, they blow up, without caring about the students. I can understand this, but this kind of attitude intimidates most of the students ...(D. B).

To continuing students and dropouts, to be a good teacher required more than just a knowledge of the subject. They thought that teachers needed special training in how to deal with people. They considered that more experienced teachers were better both in relationships and in teaching methodology. Only rarely was a substitute teacher pointed out as having a good relationship with students.

7.3.2 — Teaching Style

Among the endogenous or school factors, teaching style is described in the literature as a powerful factor in students' decisions to leave school early (Fine, 1986; Finn, 1987; Rowley, 1989).

As in Tidwell's (1988) study, in the present research dropouts and continuing students revealed that they found school boring, mainly because of teaching styles.

It is the same thing every day. They come to class and talk, talk, talk. A lot of the time I don't understand what is going on at all (CS. 14).

Both dropouts and continuing students revealed that they felt themselves overwhelmed by a teaching style which was centred on the teacher role and which required minimal student participation. With very little or no participation, students experienced a sense of boredom and meaninglessness and felt themselves sleeping. In consequence they lost the thread of the lectures and fell behind as Rowley (1989) had found.
They (teachers) talk, talk, talk. It is so boring that you fall asleep. Frequently I didn’t know what they were talking about (CS. 43).

For a student who works all day and has little sleep, since he goes to sleep quite late and wakes up very early, it is not too difficult to find himself sleeping in the classroom. It is relevant to notice too, that the electric light in the classroom in the evenings was not always very adequate because of a lack of several bulbs and this also contributed to students sleeping.

Another teaching style frequently mentioned as boring, was the extensive use of copying notes from the board or from teacher dictation.

When they are not talking, they are writing in the board, making us to copy all those notes. Then, the next class they give us a test (CS. 52).

Quite frequently teachers wrote notes on the blackboard or dictated them. Students needed to take short notes in order to keep a record of what was taught. However, sometimes they spent a considerable part of the class copying extensive notes since most of the students did not have the book used by the teacher as a class-based resource. Many students did not buy the class-based book either because they had no money or because they preferred spend the money on other things, as pointed out by a teacher.

Every year I make an attempt to adopt a book, but students don’t want it because they prefer to buy other things such as cigarettes, clothes, shoes, which they think are more important to them ... (T. 1). A way of substituting for the notes in the book without students spending so much time in copying it, would be to give handout notes to students. Some teachers used to do this from time to time. But, in order to get the handout ready for a class, teachers needed to prepare it in advance, in order to give sufficient time (one or two days) to the support staff to type and reproduce it. However because of their heavy load many teachers used to prepare their classes just before giving them and so they could not utilise this facility.

A dropout, who left the present school because he was feeling the school ‘so boring’, and is now studying in a private school, made the following remark:

(The research school) was very deficient in teaching techniques. It was always the same way of teaching. They didn’t care about the student interest. Teachers should use different techniques in order to induce students to learn. Here (private school), teachers use different techniques and I am enjoying the classes (B. 7).

Instructional techniques were adopted by individual teachers according their knowledge about them, their specific subject, their material resources and the time required to prepare the classes. Several teachers have never had courses about instructional styles or teaching techniques nor have they read about them. It seemed that those teachers who had no teach training tended to repro-
... He (Teacher 8) knows his subject very well; however, his way of teaching the students is disgusting ... He is only treating the students in the same way he was treated by his teachers. He studied in a Catholic Fathers' college, where a tough line was applied (D. 9).

Two main factors may have contributed to student rejection of the old teaching style. One is the fact that a great number of secondary teachers came from the middle class and had had their primary and secondary education in private schools, where the reality is quite different from the public school. In the research school many of the teachers came from a small town in the countryside, where the reality and culture were quite different. A second factor is the teaching style. Most of the teachers were educated either before the 1964 coup d'etat or during the military dictatorship period when a more authoritarian style was applied to teacher-student relationships. Nowadays, with the democratisation movement which started, in Brazil, in the last few years, students want a more democratic relationship. However, it is not only the older teachers who are still using an authoritarian and non-democratic style. Young teachers can be as authoritarian as the oldest one, as observed by a continuing student who expressed the point of view of many others:

... They (the youngest teachers) say we are almost the same age as they are and that there aren't too many differences between us. However, they don't accept either our suggestions or our criticism... They are very much like the oldest one (CS. 29).

Apart from some material resources such as paper for text reproduction, books in the library, projector, a tape recorder/player and a video cassette player, there were few, if any, special resources for subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Given these constraints and the heavy workload of many teachers, it was only to be expected that teachers would be limited in the range of techniques they employed in their classes. Besides, the students' lack of time for study at home and lack of books to do exercises compelled teachers to lecture.

The lecture was the most commonly used teaching style by the teachers. Its excessive use is not only due to the lack of material resources but also the lack of link between theory and practice. Using this technique, teachers are stressing the dichotomy between theory and practice, and as recalled by Nidelcoff (1980), in doing this, they are neither considering experience as the starting point for theory building nor contemplating practice with reference to theory (Nidelcoff, 1980). Emphasising the verbalist character of the subject, the lecture style displeases students because it treats them as passive recipients instead of stimulating their active role. In this way, the school attempts to socialise students through a passive learner role. However, the lecture itself does not necessarily mean bored class. Depending on the way the content is transmitted it can be stimulating, as revealed by one continuing student who expressed the feeling of most of them:
What is less attractive than a religion course? However nobody misses (Teacher 16)'s classes. ... We really enjoy his classes (CB. 3).

According to Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) not all lectures need be a passive transmission of knowledge. A lecture can be critical and interesting as was demonstrated by the religion teacher.

All of the large schools and most of the medium schools in Santa Catarina state have at least one teachers' counsellor. His function is to advise teachers in matters concerned with teaching style. He should discuss with teachers their teaching methodology and give advice and support to them. In order to do this, he must follow the classes frequently in order to detect the problems before they are too strong or before they have caused much damage to the students' learning.

The research school had only one teachers' counsellor during the period of the field work, although there had been two in previous years. Although the teachers' counsellor had the function of helping teachers with their teaching problems, several teachers, mainly the substitutes, as well as students did not know his function. In fact, instead to make frequent observations in classes and discussing with teachers their strengths and weaknesses as he should do, he remained in his office which was rather isolated. His direct observation of classes occurred only when there was a major problem and the students sought his help. When this happened, the help was sought either from the students' counsellor or from the administrative body. These transferred the problem to the teachers' counsellor who tried to solve it with the support of both the administrative body and the students' counsellor.

Students used to go for help more than teachers. In fact, the very few times that the teachers' counsellor went to a classroom to observe the teacher style or teacher-student relationship was because students asked for some intervention.

The teachers' counsellor was historically seen as an inspector. Hence, the presence of the teachers' counsellor in a classroom was not frequent or 'natural'. When he came it meant that that particular teacher was having a lack of either pedagogical or knowledge competence in dealing with his subject. Consequently, the connotation of having the 'visit' of teachers' counsellor is that that particular teacher is lacking some kind of ability.

The presence of teachers' counsellor is a source of information about teacher competence and a source for evaluation from his colleagues. The fact that the presence of the teachers' counsellor is associated with negative judgments may prevent teachers from asking for help in their difficulties and so indirectly damages the students' apprenticeship.

Since the teachers' counsellor did not give the teachers the necessary support and the administrative body failed to establish specific requirements, teach-
ers were free to select their teaching techniques. If in one hand this procedure gave the teacher freedom in their choice and actions, on the other hand it did not provide them with any opportunity to improve their style. In fact, several teachers expressed a feeling that they would have been able to give better classes if they had received some pedagogical support. On the other hand, according to one teacher:

When a teacher tries to innovate, he risks being considered by the students as a teacher who doesn't know how to teach, who doesn't know how to deal with students (T. 1).

Another complaint made by dropouts and continuing students was that teachers did not link their content with that of other teachers.

They (teachers) must link the content with the reality, so students will pay attention. They should also link their content with that of the other teachers. Have all contents linked in this way, it would be exciting (CS. 25).

The kind of school curriculum which was adopted by the research school and that is the most common in the Brazilian public schools, was what Bernstein (1971) calls a 'collective' one, since there was isolation between contents and teachers did not know what others teachers were teaching. Consequently, they also did not know how to relate their subject with those of other teachers. In this case, one cannot be surprised that students were not able or used to doing so.

The fragmentation of school knowledge by teachers is, according to McNeil (1986), an attempt to perpetuate their authority and efficacy. Although, in the research school, the failure of teachers to link topics or different subjects seemed to be more a consequence of lack of collaborative planning as well as an absence of knowledge about what other teachers were teaching, the consequences of the fragmentation remained the same.

On several occasions students suggested that teachers should organise more integrated classes through collaborative planning at the beginning of the year and through regular meetings in order to check the development of other teachers' programmes. The lack of linking or relationships between the different subjects was also mentioned as one reason for feeling the classes boring. This could also be one of the reasons why students did not realise the practical use of some subjects and so had no interest in studying them:

Physics and Chemistry are difficult and teachers didn't explain them very well. I didn't like them and I also don't know the use of them. Actually, I shall never use them (D. 32).

The inability to understand teachers was also given as a reason for students' feelings of boredom, uselessness and low self-esteem. Many continuing students and dropouts complained about their difficulties in understanding some teachers:
There are teachers who are very difficult to understand. It seems that they intend to explain but are not able to teach what they know. So, this confuses us. It's too difficult to relate to these teachers (D. 4).

One of the reasons for students not understanding teachers is, sometimes, the difference in language between two different classes: middle class teachers and working class students, since according to Bernstein (1971), each particular social group has its distinct form of spoken language.

When students were unable to understand a class, they tried to ask for help. However, in many cases:

When we ask teachers for help in solving a question they don't respond. They tell us to look at our notes and to do it by ourselves. This has become a fashion here, now... This is not right. They must come and see what our difficulty is and help us. We learn when teachers clarify our doubt. They don't help and then, when a student gets a lower grade, they call us donkeys... They must also give us more exercises, even if we complain about it. At the time, we complain, but later we are glad (CS. 25).

I gave up asking teachers for further explanations when I didn't understand the subject. When they agreed to explain again, they did it in the same way as before and this didn't help too much. They should explain in a different way. Maybe, then, we could understand (CS. 16).

I don't want all the teachers' attention for myself but I want some help. For instance, if I don't manage to do something it's not because I'm a helpless, but it's because I'm having difficulties. Usually, I'm not that kind of person who always asks for help but sometimes I really need it. But, there are certain teachers who think "Why he (a student) didn't, it is not my concern". They are not interested in why the student didn't do the exercise (CS. 27).

I didn't understand Physics and Chemistry. I used to ask for more explanation, but didn't get it in a proper way. ... In the end, I stopped taking notes. It was useless since I wasn't understanding (D. 20).

As Saviani (1983) pointed out, students felt that teachers are in school to help them to develop their skills and to broaden their perspectives. Consequently they rely on them to get this help.

The students lack of understand of some classes interfered with their progress. The lack of teacher concern with how students are progressing can influence students' decisions to leave school. This fact was also observed in other studies (Mehlage and Rutter, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Callan, 1988; Rowley, 1989).
As in Rowley's (1989) study, there was a lack of intervention when learning and attendance problems began to develop. Only two teachers were reported to give special attention to students' individual difficulties.

Students' individual differences were also never mentioned or discussed. Teachers seemed to be unconscious of them. Since they had neither extra material or human support nor time to prepare special materials for these students, they resisted dealing with the problem by ignoring it. To teach a heterogeneous class requires from the teachers a great deal of effort and skill. So, in addressing the problem of dealing with different levels in the same class, teachers treated the class as if all the students had the same skills.

During the fieldwork, I frequently had the opportunity to see students in the school corridors or school yard during class time. Several reasons were pointed out by students for cutting classes. Most of the time it was because they could not bear it or because they were not understanding the class. In the view of a continuing student:

Teachers should give more attention to students' individual problems and force them not to miss classes (CS. 33).

According to one dropout, if teachers had given more attention to his difficulties, he would still be in school.

If teachers had given more attention to my requests for help, I'm sure that I wouldn't have left school (D. 27).

For the teacher, it is easier to treat the class as a whole than to use an individual case-by-case approach, which requires more training and more time to prepare the classes. With a heavy workload teachers have no time to prepare different exercises in order to attend different students' needs. With so many students in a class (35-40) they have no time to give individual attention.

Teachers have no time to give the individual care required by students. There is also no time to give an integral education to them... (T. 1).

Students complained that teachers gave more attention to students who were following their explanation instead of giving more help to those who had difficulties. Anticipating students' failure, teachers left them to their fate. Although this can be considered to be a fault of the teachers, we cannot attribute all the fault to them. Part of this problem is caused by teacher training colleges which train teachers to work only with the ideal student (Sicuro, 1984). Although Sicuro observed this fact in a Brazilian context, it might happen elsewhere too. Preparing to deal with 'ideal' students, teachers tend to give attention to the most interested students, forgeting the others.

Teachers' low expectations of students promote in them feelings of frustration and low self-esteem, which influence their decision to dropout (McDill and al., 1985; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Rowley, 1987).
In Rowley's (1989) study, dropouts reported they had to struggle with a sense of their own worthlessness every time they attended school. Consequently they preferred to leave school rather than to confront a situation that reinforced their low self-esteem and in which they did not feel any good.

Complaining about teaching style, continuing students and dropouts revealed that they learned more from an active and practical style. When they were asked what they thought teachers could do in order to give more interesting classes they mentioned:

- "I think they should encourage more group working. So, each one could check on the answers and they could help each other (CS. 52)."

- "Teachers should learn how to teach, how to make their classes more interesting. They should bring news to the class and get students interested (CS. 8)."

These statements indicate a desire for a shift in teaching methodologies: less teacher-centred and more child-centred teaching, or, in Bernstein's (1971) terms, from strong framing to a more weak one, where students can increase their control over the way knowledge is transmitted to them.

Some subjects as Maths, Physics, Computing, etc., may be highly structured and give little space for open discussion. Other subjects such as History, Sociology, OSPB (Social and Political Brazilian Organisation) and Religion are less structured and may encourage an open debate as well as leaving much more room for individual responses.

The way teachers attempted to achieve their aim can vary according to the subject and the teacher preference. It can range from an expository to a more heuristic style and according to Hornsby-Smith, empirical observation suggests that subjects within the physical and natural sciences might encourage the expository style and social sciences the heuristic one, although they are not necessarily associated. The same author observed that student outcomes are more influenced by teaching style than the subject itself (Hornsby-Smith, 1973). Although this fact was observed within the physical and natural sciences, I believe it can be applied to the social sciences too.

Only two teachers, both in the human science area, were reported to encourage student participation and group discussion, which students liked very much.

- "In these classes you learn more because you have the opportunity to see different points of view and discuss your one with others. It seems easier to learn in this way (CS. 35)."

- "The Geography teacher gave us texts and we discussed it in a group. It was nice! The discussions were open and the different opinions promoted an enriching debate. We really learned because we could see things that we didn't realise by ourselves (D. 15)."
Discussion stimulates a deeper and more comprehensive learning because it promotes the opportunity to link the subject discussed with practical examples or with the students' everyday reality. An open and critical discussion helps teachers and students to produce knowledge in the classroom instead of only transmitting and receiving it and passively. Through an open and critical debate students can detect the reasons and consequences of facts as well as realise the activities needed in case of any desirable change. Although the critical development of students is not enough to transform society, their critical vision of the reality is paramount in the process of change, and as Freire (1974, 1985) and Gadotti (1988) observed, although the class struggle does not happen in school, the school can, at least, be a place for discussion and the deepening of social and political questions. However, Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) addresses the fact that a 'dialogical' teacher who is not very serious and competent can be more damaging than a 'banking' teacher who is serious and very well informed.

According to Shor, if teachers and students produce knowledge in the classroom, they will articulate their power to transform society (Freire and Shor, 1987). However, in an authoritarian and conservative society this can be seen as undesirable. So, it is better to inhibit both student and teacher creativity in order to retain the present social system.

For many students, Social Science meant open discussion. However few social science teachers allowed this. Even in the OSPB (Brazilian Social and Political Organisation) subject, which should promote a rich debate and a practical link with an analysis of the existing reality, students reported very few opportunities for an open debate. The open discussion which is essential to the creation of a political consciousness and an empowered and critical constituency of educated social participants, did not take place. In fact, in a group discussion, students asserted that there were very few real opportunities for debate in this subject, since the teacher used to impose his point of view. An example of this imposition was the teacher's behaviour concerning the discussion of any presidential candidate's plan or personal qualities other than those of his own selected candidate, for whom he was actively campaigning. However although education is not politically neutral, it cannot be partisan, that is, linked to a particular party (Saviani 1983; Sadotti, 1988).

According to the students, as this teacher did not accept a different point of view from his own, they decided to remain silent in order not to arouse teacher retaliation and also to ensure a 'good' grade in the assessment. This fact reinforces Shor's (Freire and Shor, 1987) statement that silence in the classroom is a consequence of teacher domination and is also a way of rebelling against the symbolic violence of the school curriculum. He also states that while students know how to sabotage the curriculum they know neither how to change the education for their constructive freedom nor to make organised demands for changes. As observed in the research school, another powerful constraint for student silence was their fear about teacher power which can be expressed through their evaluation of students, and which has historically been used by teachers as a tool for the control of students. It is quite common for teachers to threaten students through evaluation. They use this
instrument to keep students quiet and working.

Since education is not neutral, teachers have to take a position but they should not impose their position on the students. If they have a commitment to real democracy, they must respect the students' positions or choices. The imposition of an idea is totally opposed to what Freire (1985) recommended. According to him, since education is not neutral, teachers have to regard themselves as politicians. However, this does not mean that teachers have the right to impose on the students their own political choices. On the other hand, teachers have a duty to reveal their choice and their political dream. "Our task is not to impose our dreams on them, but to challenge them to have their own dream, to define their choices, not just to uncritically assume them" (Freire, 1985: 19).

The teacher must not impose his own opinion but can, perfectly legitimately, try to convince. This is, according to Saviani (1983) a legitimate pedagogical characteristic. However, to convince means to outline and discuss different points of view. This was desired by the students, as is demonstrated by the following extract:

> When a teacher comes through that door and starts to teach, he must tell us the positive and negative aspects of every fact, not only what he thinks, without saying why (CS. 9).

In the last month of fieldwork there was the first presidential election campaign for nearly 30 years. Teachers and students were excited and emotionally involved. Being the first presidential election for many teachers and all students, the subject was frequently raised during and out of the classes. Following their teaching style, teachers tried to impose their views as well as their candidate, who was not accepted unquestioningly by some of the students:

> Teachers have their candidate and only he is the good one. ... Teachers must discuss why each candidate is good or not (CS. 27).

> There are teachers who point out only the good points of their candidate, but this is wrong. They must point out both the positive and negative points of each candidate (CS. 11).

> There are some teachers who are brain-washing in this election. This is not right. This is not the right way to be political. This is a disease. ...

> For example, (Teacher 15) has a terrible obsession with (candidate X) (CS. 9).

Students were conscious about the role of the president in the social, political and economic situation of their country and so wanted to choose the better. Since different teachers defended different candidates, students really needed to know both the pros and the cons of every candidate in order to make up their own minds. Students are also aware that many people in Brazil still choose the candidate most likely to benefit their own interests rather than in
terms of ideological commitments. This clearly is not the position of every
teacher but could be of some.

Students also questioned how far teachers were conscious about their own
choice. One student expressed the views of many:

When a teacher comes here (in the classroom) and says that (candi-
date X) is the best, I really wonder if he knows what he is saying
(CS. 9).

For several reasons students had difficulties in believing what teachers said.
First, teachers had assured students that they would take some actions which
they subsequently did not take (as is the case of a strike, discussed later in
this chapter). Second, many teachers' behaviour did not match with their
rhetoric. Teachers used to tell students how they should behave but their own
behaviour was not what they recommended.

Teachers exhort us to respect others but they don't respect us
(CS. 19).

Here, again, we can recall Freire's (Freire and Shor, 1987) statement that a
'dialogical' teacher who is not very serious and competent can harm students
more than a 'banking' teacher who is competent and responsible. So, the ques-
tion of professional integrity (responsibility) seems to be as important as
teaching style.

Group work seemed to some teach e rs more difficult to handle than a more formal
or teacher-based class. One teacher illustrated this in the following way;

Students want 'dictatorship'. It is impressive how they want
dictatorship. If teacher is more open they relax. They don't know
how to work with freedom and they don't know how to work in
groups. If one asks them to work in groups they chat throughout
the class. They need to be controlled all the time. I always ask
them to work in groups, but I have never reached the proposed aim
(T. 1).

Allowing discussion in the classroom makes it more difficult to control stu-
dent knowledge and the course programme since it can lead to topics not pro-
grammed. Controlling students in this case is not easy and they can produce
different conclusions from the teacher, which can jeopardise the teacher's
intellectual authority. It can also raise different topics from the one sched-
uled by the teacher. To discuss an unscheduled topic means escaping from the
teacher programme as well as from teacher control. Actually, teachers, in
general, believed that to teach well informally is more difficult than to
teach well formally. However, the teacher judgment that students preferred a
dictatorship could be a misunderstanding for the student's desire for organi-
sation and rigour, which sometimes does not happen in group work because both
teachers and students were not trained to work in groups and to co-ordinate
different ideas. And rigour, according to Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987), does
not mean either authoritarianism or rigidity. On the contrary, it requires
freedom in order to allow the necessary creativity to produce knowledge.

If on the one hand there were many criticisms about the teaching style of some teachers, on the other hand there were some positive comments about other teachers. The following remarks are examples:

(Teacher 2) is the best of our teachers. He knows how to make all students like Maths. I used to hate Maths. Now it seems so simple and easy! (CS. 36).

(Teacher 2) is very good. He never announces the students' grade in class; he never shames the student showing a low grade test in class. When a student had a low grade, he managed to speak with the student without others realising. He tried to find out why the student was not successful and if the fault was on the teacher's or student's side (D. 6).

(Teacher 16) captivated the students. I used to go to religion classes only because of him. The school would seem like a cemetery, on Fridays, if it wasn't for him (CS. 2).

(Teacher 2) was very tough, but there were also moments of relaxation. There were times for play. This helped to keep the student interest and prevented tiredness (D. 9).

We liked (Teacher 10) because he treated us as a person more than as a student. He always tried to understand and to help with our individual problems (D. 142).

I liked (Teacher 2) very much. He used to be very tough but he cared about students. He was also very well organised. We could always understand what he had written on the blackboard. We could see that he liked to teach. He liked to see students learn. If someone had difficulties, he tried to give individual help during the break times (D. 42).

I didn't adapt myself to the new English teacher's teaching. Once, the previous teacher noticed a student cheating at one test. He took the test paper and gave him another one. The new teacher would have given him zero. This would only have led the student to revolt. A student can cheat because of laziness in his studies, but he could also have had problems which didn't allow him to study (D. 49).

From the point of view of dropouts and continuing students, a good teacher was one who captivated students, made them like the subject, gave extra help to individuals, understood their problems and did not humiliate weaker students in front of their colleagues. They also appreciated (Teacher 2, who although 'very tough' promoted moments of relaxation and humour. According to Shor (Freire and Shor, 1987) this is an important element in the teacher-student relationship. Teachers' care seemed to help student self-esteem and interest.
in study and, as in Callan's (1988) study, students revealed that they liked a caring teacher. They also liked one strict teacher since he was caring.

Although extra help was seen as one characteristic of a good teacher, the perception of dropouts and continuing students was that most teachers were opposed to giving additional assistance to students with learning difficulties. The same fact was reported by Rowley (1989). However, the situation of Brazilian teachers is quite peculiar and this fact cannot be interpreted without consideration of the teachers' workload.

Students believed that when a teacher liked his career and was committed to it, they were better teachers. Unfortunately they did not consider they had many such teachers.

The only teacher that was teaching because he really liked it, was my Maths teacher. He was my best teacher. He liked to see students learning. If any student had difficulties he gave him his address so that the student could go to his house and have extra help. He treated students as people. There should be more of this kind of teacher... (D. 8).

Students perceived that several teachers were not interested with students learning because they had an assured salary even though most of their students had not learned anything. They also expressed their belief that several teachers were teaching only because they did not have any other job opportunities. Actually, this fact was also expressed by some teachers who admitted that they were teaching simply because of the lack of opportunities to get employment in another economic sector.

If on the one hand, students expressed a certain disappointment that some teachers were in teaching only because they needed to earn money, they also expressed some appreciation of those teachers whom they believed to be teaching because they liked it rather than because of the salary.

The fact that teachers' performance did not affect their salary was noted by dropouts in Delgado-Gaitan's (1988) study as one reason for teachers' lack of interest in students' learning.

Dropouts and continuing students revealed a resentment of teachers' indifference about their individual lives and their lack of comprehension about the way their individual problems could affect their school performance.

Teachers don't care about students. They don't care if students are not learning. They have their salary assured, at the end of the month. Some of them even say this to us (CS. 16).

As observed by Rowley (1989), students reported they felt a difference in teachers' care between the primary and secondary schools.

In the primary school teachers used to care more about us. Now, even the same teachers treat us in an careless way (CS. 26).
In both Rowley's and the present studies, primary school teachers seemed to care more about individual students. This could be because in the primary school they are treated more as children while in the secondary school, they are considered to be adults. In fact, some students expressed a dislike for being treated as a child in a secondary evening class.

They (teachers) treat the evening students as if they were the same as the morning and afternoon children (CS. 30).

Most dropouts and continuing students expressed the opinion that evening students should be given different treatment from the day students. In their opinion, teaching techniques should encourage more student participation in class in order to avoid boredom and drowsiness and the academic requirements should be lower since they had little or no time to study at home. However, giving different levels of instruction would in turn reinforce the social and economic differentiation.

I think that the classes for evening students should be completely different from the day one. Evening students should have more help. I think they should be allowed to look through the book during an examination. They shouldn't have essays because people who work have no time ...
(D. 1).

There should be more practical work, more exercises at evening classes. Something that helps to keep the student's attention and interest (D. 33).

To many evening students who worked during the day, the only opportunity they had of studying a subject was during the class period. This is considered by teachers a challenge, as noted by one teacher who expressed the feeling of most of them:

Teachers must also be artists since they need to wake up the students. They must provoke students' interest, they must explain the lessons as clearly as possible and in a way students understand and stay on their wavelength because what students learn is only what they get in those 40-45 minutes (T. 1).

To teachers, the tiredness of their students and their lack of time for study are constraints acknowledged by the educational authorities. However, neither the school, nor the educational authorities gave any additional support in order to deal with these constraints.

Some subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Computer Science were particularly criticised when the nature of the teaching methodology was commented on:

I don't like Physics because most of the time I really don't know what the teacher is talking about (CS. 46).
Our Physics' teacher simply knows nothing. Sometimes he asks if anyone has any questions. A teacher doesn't need to ask this sort of question. He only has to look at students' faces and he can see the answer (CS. 25).

Two facts probably can partially explain this fact. First, these subjects are more objective or 'exact' and require both more attention and sequential teaching/learning and according to Hornsby-Smith (1973), these subjects usually encourage a more expository style. Second, most of the teachers who teach these subjects have had no teacher training. This may be an critical factor since, as observed by Hornsby-Smith (1973), teacher style can influence student outcome more than the subject itself.

According to Dore (1976), some subjects are having a hard time attracting good teachers since those who have developed their technical skills better may be tempted by the higher salaries in the industrial sector. However, to be a good teacher requires more than a knowledge of the subject. It is also necessary to know how to transmit that knowledge, to the students, in a clear and attractive way. As most of the teachers in the technical areas have had no teacher training, they experienced more difficulties in being 'good' teachers. The lack of instructional resources also affected considerably the teachers in the technical subjects. Without laboratories and other material resources, there are no or very few alternatives to 'chalk and talk', memorisation and testing. Students perceived that the lack instructional resources was effecting their apprenticeship and complained about this to the school administration. When asked what they would see as necessary in order to improve the learning conditions, they mentioned the need for a laboratory and included this in a list with students' recommendations for future years.

The lack of material resources was relevant not only in the case of technical subjects. Books, which were used for essays in every subject, were frequently either in short supply or not up to date.

The library is not well equipped. We can't find material for many essays. ... Furthermore, when the material exists, most of the time it's neither up-to-date nor clear (CS. 25).

Both dropouts and students complained about the library. In spite of that, according to both teachers and students, the research school library was one of the best public school libraries in the locality. The complaints about books were also concerned with their lack of clarity and the students' consequent difficulty in understand the content:

Any writing should have a title, an introduction and a good development, but most of the writing doesn't have this. So, it's much too confusing for us, and despite the fact that we use several books, teachers complain about our essays. They say they can't understand them (CS. 25).

In many cases, the inability of some students to understand what was written
in some books, was not only a question of the books' lack of clarity, but also the students' lack of skills in generalising and synthesising.

Teachers interviewed were much more likely to be critical of both the economic situation and the lack of student interest in studying than about their teaching methodology. However, as very well noted by Gadotti (1988), frequently economic questions are used as an alibi to excuse the inactivity or laziness of the teachers.

It is generally understood that teachers' opinions about teaching methods are strongly related to their views about the aims of education. However, as mentioned earlier, some teachers have little, if any, knowledge about educational theory. So, any effort to try to change teaching styles requires, in first place, the provision of better knowledge about educational theory.

One of the most frequent complaints made by both dropouts and continuing students was about assessment. The way and time schedule that students were assessed did not suit students and were strongly criticised by both dropouts and continuing students. However, the opinions and suggestions about what the assessment should be differed considerably, as can be seen in the following interview extracts:

It's only tests and essays. They (teachers) give us a lot of essays and we have no opportunity to write them. When can we do them if we work all day? (CS. 42).

The examination period is very distressing. There should be more small tests, so we could manage to prepare ourselves and teachers could realise what students were not understanding ...
(D. 19).

Instead of so many essays, teachers should give more tests. Essays require too much time (D. 13).

I think there should be a week dedicated only to examinations - two or three exams each day. There shouldn't be classes in that week, so students could use the rest of the evening period to study, at home, for the following day's exams.
I think that there should only be a final examination instead of partial exams. There are teachers who give a test at the end of each part of the syllabus. I think that this confuses the students. I prefer only a final exam (D. 3).

In my opinion the exams should be more flexible. I think that evening students should be allowed to look through the book during the examination. Essays shouldn't be required because those who work have no time ... (D. 1).

In the 1960s there arose, mainly in the United States, a considerable literature about alternative approaches to assessment. These approaches changed the objective and quantitative aspects of evaluation to a more ethnographic one,
in which student's individuality could be taken into account. However, only in the 1980s did the Brazilian literature about evaluation start to present a more emphatic and comprehensive debate about these questions. In the new approach, assessment is considered a subjective, intentional, limited, and not a neutral (ideological) and comprehensive process. Its basic concepts are: "emancipation, democratic decision, transformation and educative criticism" (Saul, 1988: 61). It is a dialectical process which aims is to offer the necessary information in order that both teachers and students can understand the situation and make the necessary changes (Saul, 1988). In this new approach, the method of evaluation are basically dialogical and participative. However, to adopt a new evaluation style is not easy or so simple since, as stated by Bernstein, "How a society selects, classifies, distributes and evaluates the educational knowledge (...), reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control" (Bernstein, 1975: 85). Being influenced by twenty years of dictatorship it may be not so easy for some teachers to adopt a more democratic style.

With the democratic movement, which took place in education in Santa Catarina in the middle of the 1980s, which aimed to apply this democracy in the case of student assessment, several schools introduced participatory evaluation. In 1988, a participatory class council in some primary and secondary schools was introduced, on an experimental basis, in the research school.

The Brazilian academic year comprises 180 school days, divided into two semesters of 4 months each. In Santa Catarina, continuous assessment takes place every two months. Essays, exercises and tests are the ways used to evaluate students' performance during and/or at the end of each semester. Apart from this there is a 'class council' for each class. This class council was introduced soon after the Law 5292 of 1972, which established a new educational system. It is commonly composed of the class tutor, all the teachers who teach for that class, the teachers' and students' counsellors and the administrative body. Sometimes, the student representative (s) of that class participate in part of the meeting. In this class council, each student's performance is discussed individually and his/her performance in the different subjects is compared and analysed. In the new 'participatory class council' all students can participate and evaluation is done not only about students' performance but teachers' performance too. However, some teachers never entirely accepted either this new approach or students' criticisms about their performance. This generated a distressing environment both in the class council and in those teachers' classes as can be seen in the following extracts:

The participatory class council used some time ago was quite positive. But it was nearly enforced because the majority of teachers were afraid of it. Nevertheless, later it was accepted.

... It is our duty to make students fair in their criticism. There were some teachers who became grossly offended when students made some comments. This is not fair... If students didn't know how to express their opinion in a diplomatic way, it is up to teachers to take students words and analyse them with students, but not feel themselves offended and later, to harm students (T. 1).
Some teachers didn't accept students' negative comments about their teaching style. Mainly about their authoritarian way of dealing with students. Once, a teacher cried in the participatory class council and left the room because of a student comment about the way he treated us. After that, they (school staff) suspended the new class council and returned to the old one (CS. 42).

The participatory class council used to start with the teachers' views about students. When it was time for the students' view, many of those who had been complaining used to say that everything was all right. They were scared to make any criticisms, because some teachers, such us (Teacher 195), used to harm those students who had criticised his classes and his relationship with students (CS. 25).

Teachers crying because of students' criticisms may point to two different facts. On the one hand it shows that some teachers are not yet prepared to accept criticism; on the other, it shows that some teachers did not realise that if students do not know how to criticise in a diplomatic way, this is only a reflection of the lack of democracy and freedom to speak which occurred during the nearly twenty years of military dictatorship which only came to end recently. Since one of the teachers who cried considered himself to be a progressive teacher, we can conclude that either it is difficult to be progressive in all senses, all the time, or his concept of a progressive teacher was limited.

Since there were some obstacles with a few teachers, the teachers, teachers' counsellor, students' counsellor and administrative body decided to end the experiment and return to the previous class council where students' participation was not allowed and where teachers' performance was not questioned. In this way they threw away the baby with the bath water!

During the field work in 1989, the traditional class council was re-adopted although many students deplored the decision. Continuing students and drop-outs who participated in that experience made quite positive comments about it. They recognised that although there were some weaknesses there were also some strengths, as can be observed in the following comments:

In the participatory class council, we could express our feelings direct to the teachers, and we could see that some of them did their best to change. Many of them didn't change. Maybe it's their way... Many didn't admit their mistakes. It was difficult...
(D. 5).

The participatory class council was very good. I didn't miss one. We could say what was happening in classes and discuss it with the teachers. Things were improving a lot. It was a pity to end it. Teachers, in a general way, tried to improve... Students also improved. They became more responsible, studied more and did their homework (D. 13).
When the participatory class council started, some teachers improved their teaching, such as Teacher 4. He didn't accept the criticisms about his teaching, made in the class council. Actually, he tried to deny them. However, later, in the class, he improved, avoiding what had been criticised. He also became more friendly and more open (B. 44).

A good thing about the class council was that we could speak and complain straight to the teacher. Some of them tried their best to improve, but others didn't... Many didn't admit a single mistake. It was so difficult to speak to them...! (D. 5).

Some teachers agreed that the participatory class council was ended because some teachers did not accept student criticisms. For others, the reason why the participatory class council was ended was because students did not know why and what to criticise. They complained that student criticisms were more about the physical aspects of the school. Actually, in the first group discussions held during the field work, some students were inclined to complain more about the physical aspects of the school, such as the external appearance of the school, the lack of a mirror in the lady's room, lack of sign in the school, etc. However, it is evident that the students' emphasis on physical and external aspects is a reflection of what the school and society value. On the other hand, when teachers explained the low quality of education, they emphasised physical and economic factors such as salary, desk, lighting, and so on. During my eight months of field work which included a questionnaire survey, interviews, participant observation, group discussions and attendance at meetings, only on very few occasions did some teachers mention teachers' lack of theoretical knowledge or teachers' lack of interest as one of the reasons for poor schooling.

Another excuse offered by teachers for ending the participatory class council was the lack of student participation. Although students recognised that not all students used to participate, they also argued that the school had never campaigned to raise the students' consciousness about the importance of all students participating. In a meeting with almost all the school teachers and students, the latter challenged the teachers' excuses. They asked them if the real excuse for ending the new experience was not because they were behind with their schedules since they had been on strike for several weeks and so they intended to use the class council period as a 'class day'. The answer given by the deputy headteacher was as follow:

Well, it was a consideration too, since class council days are not counted as class days, but the lack of student participation was the main reason (AB. 2).

As can be seen, several different motives or accounts were pointed to as reasons for ending a promising experience. According to Scott and Lyman (1968), there are two types of accounts: justification - when "one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it", and excuses - when "one admits that the act in question
is bad, wrong, or inappropriate but denies full responsibility" (p. 47). Although there were excuses referred to both teachers' and students' behaviour, the formal excuse made by the school was based solely on the lack of student participation. In fact, teachers and the administrative body did not accept responsibility for this fact, although some of them agreed it was the wrong decision. The few teachers who admitted teachers' influence in this decision, mentioned others as being responsible for this settlement.

The teachers' and the administrative body's 'excuse' used the students' lack of participation as the scapegoat for their decision, when several teachers and students in general knew that the true reason was their refusal in accepting students' criticisms and the consequent need to change their own behaviour. This kind of attitude is usually associated with the authoritarianism of the teachers.

In a teachers' meeting at the end of the year, with the purpose of assessing the school situation, some teachers expressed the opinion that the present class council was too superficial. Because of its superficiality and the possible bias in the transmission of the students' opinions, teachers that agreed that the participatory meeting should be re-introduced. This view coincided with that of many students.

The questionnaire applied in the classroom is not valid. We express our ideas which must be taken to the class council. But the person in charge does not always transmit them exactly as we have said... So, the teacher becomes disgusted with the class. There should be participation of all students in the class council in order to tell the teacher exactly what the class thinks about him. With questionnaires what the group thinks is never transmitted exactly (CS. 6).

The student representative, when it is time to speak, maybe because of a lack of courage, doesn't say exactly what was said in the classroom. The only way to solve this problem is through the participation of all the class (CS. 7).

Once, all the students of some classes could participate, but only a few used to do so. So, this prerogative was ended. There is another thing. Students know very well how to criticise away from the teachers but in front of them, the majority seems to become voiceless. If two or three don't speak, nothing is said (CS. 8).

In order to evaluate the teacher and school situation, a questionnaire is filled. The question on the questionnaire are asked to the class by the class representative (leader) who take notes of the students' opinions and transmits them to the class council. However, in transiting the ideas, the leader can put more or less emphasis, transforming them more to the way s/he thinks than what the class said. Because of this and because in the new system there is no real opportunity for an open dialogue and analysis, with few exceptions, both teachers and students would like to return to the participative class council.
7.3.3 - Disruptive Effects

The disruptive effect caused by the lack of classes either because a/some teacher(s) failed to turn up or because of a teacher's strike contributed to the number of dropouts. Three dropouts (2% of all dropouts) reported the frequent teachers' absences as the main reason for their dropping out and five (3% of all dropouts) mentioned it as a secondary reason. The teachers' strike was reported eight times (5% of all dropouts) as a primary reason for dropping out and four times (2% of all dropouts) as a secondary reason. Three parents reported the disruptive effect as the main reason for their children leaving school earlier than they might otherwise have done.

Most of the students attending evening classes had a full time job which meant that they had worked eight or more hours before going to school. For these students, study at the evening sessions required a great deal of effort and most of them became very upset when there were no classes because a teacher had failed to turn up.

When some teachers failed to come, the administrative body used to re-organise the day's schedule. Formally, this rearrangement had the aim of concentrating the classes, allowing both some groups of students and some teachers to finish their classes early. However, this rearrangement also aimed to ensure that students remained under the control of teachers and did not run freely in the corridors and school yard. This, certainly, would have meant noise and the disturbance of other teachers' classes. However, with very few exceptions, the rescheduling never covered all the 'free classes' and on several occasions, students stayed without a class in the penultimate period. When this occurred, inevitably students did not wait for the last class. The consequences became even worse when more than one teacher failed to come on the same day.

As in Pucci and Squissard's (1989) research, very few students used this opportunity to discuss some school work with some colleagues, to undertake some reading for some essay, in the library, or even to study for the next texts. Most of the students spent this time playing in the sports yard or chatting with their colleagues. Some of these really enjoyed having 'free periods' because these were the only pleasant times at school. Most of the continuing students and dropouts complained about teachers' absences although they understood that teachers may have had their own personal problems and so were unable to turn up for classes. However, what upset them most was the teachers' lack of understanding when this happened, as expressed by some of them:

In my opinion it is very important that at the beginning of the year, the school has all teachers it needs and that they don't miss so many classes. We don't come to school, after a long day's work, to stay here doing nothing because there is not yet a teacher or because the teacher didn't turn up (CS. 45).

Teachers can fail to turn up for classes and we must understand their reasons. Yes, I understand that they are people like us and so have their own problems, but why don't they try to understand us? (CS. 57).
In relation to teacher absence, this also affects students since sometimes the teacher doesn't come and when it's assessment time, they give us so many texts to study that we become crazy... Teachers must not apply a test without explaining the content... (CS. 8).

There was a teacher who used to fail to turn up for classes a lot, but when some students needed to miss his classes, he didn't accept the students' excuses ... (D. 7).

Teacher absences were so frequent that the administrative body decided to exhibit, in the staff room, a monthly teacher absence figure with the intention of both showing how big the figure was and of motivating teachers to reduce their absences. During the year that the field work was carried out, one male teacher who had classes three times a week, failed to turn up 24 times. Another male who had classes only at Fridays, failed to turn up 8 times, which corresponds of one third of his classes. Only one of the secondary school teachers did not miss any classes during that academic year. As expected in this kind of case, teachers who missed many classes tried to cover their syllabus giving essays to be done out of classes, rushed through some syllabusses and cut out some of the contents. The fact that teachers can 'justify' their absence for up to three days per month by means of a health certificate may contribute for this high level of teachers absenteeism.

Several teachers were concerned about the high number of teacher absences and so suggested a number of measures in order to alleviate its consequences:

The school has still not been organised by the end of March, beginning of April, because enrolments are continuing and there is still a lack of teachers. So, early in the term, should be classes concerned with students' motivation and the importance of studying. It could be in small group discussions, reflections, etc. ... So when the classes really start students will be more committed and will study more. I believe that at least the majority will (T. 14).

It (the school) should have a plan to increase students' responsibility. So when a teacher would fails to come, a counsellor should use the class. S/he should do a little by little working. A little today, another tomorrow and try to improve students' responsibility. It's a slow business but it is very necessary (T. 7).

If a teacher fails to come, the student counsellor must make use of that time. There are a lot of things that they can do with students during this time (T. 4).

I have always suggested that 'free classes' should be used to exercise students' minds. To try to improve their consciousness about what school and life are (T. 1).
Teacher absences were mainly due to their extreme tiredness or slight ailments caused by their heavy workload. Pucci and Sguissardi (1989) in their research about evening courses observed that tiredness, anxiety, tension, stress, hopelessness and depression of spirit were quite common among teachers. Teachers tend to get tired towards the end of the week and the end of the term (Pollard, 1980) but the accumulation of many years of heavy workload is by itself a reason for some teachers to feel very tired even at the beginning of the term, mainly when their holiday period had been spent in taking a course. This was the case of a teacher in the research school. During a teachers' meeting, in the middle of the first term (semester) and for no apparent reason, a teacher had a nervous breakdown which resulted in his absence for several months. On his return he was given a librarian's task instead of teaching classes again. Most of the time teachers missed classes only for a single day but it was quite common to have more than one teacher absent at the same time, e.g., with a medical certificate for illness or for domestic reasons.

The main reasons for prolonged absence were their health (including pregnancy), and domestic problems. When the leave lasted more than a month, the teacher used to be substituted by another one. Otherwise, students remained without that teacher's class and were given an essay to cover the content. However, to find a substitute teacher was not easy and frequently they gave up soon after their first experience in class. A good example of this was the experience suffered by one of the first level class students — they had six different teachers of Portuguese during the 1989 academic year. If on the one hand this large number of substitutes for a class was quite rare, on the other hand the possibility of a class having one or more teachers changed during a year was not so rare, as indicated by the following extract:

The changing of the English, Physics and Chemistry teachers interfered too much in our apprenticeship (D. 42).

Both dropouts and continuing students expressed their frustration in relation to the changes of teachers. In their opinion, this fact disturbed the apprenticeship process.

I couldn't understand what the teacher was teaching. Moreover, we have changed several teachers. As soon as we had adapted to one teacher, he went away (D. 27).

A substitute teacher upsets the student too much. For instance, we had a Chemistry teacher who was very good. Excellent! But he needed to go away. Then, we had a substitute who was the opposite and confused us. It changed completely... We could not understand the subject any more. ... It was one of the worst experiences that we had (D. 4).

In general students did not like substitute teachers despite the fact that they recognised that a substitute did not necessarily mean a bad teacher:
There are good substitutes such as (Teacher 22) ... However, it's very difficult to have a good substitute teacher, who will commit himself to students (D. 48).

If for students it was not easy to deal with substitutes since this meant change and disruption, for the substitute teachers themselves it was difficult, as one expressed in a teacher-student meeting:

I'm a substitute. It's dreadful to be a substitute teacher. It's not easy and I totally support students when they complain about a new teacher again... I'm substituting a teacher for one year, in this school; but I don't know the students nor the school... When one starts at the 5th. level and goes on or when one knows the school, it's much easier. Do you think that is easy when one comes here to substitute for a year and then goes to another school, then another, and another? ... For the teacher, it's not easy, and I think that for the students it is even worse. I think you (students) have many reasons to complain about a new teacher... (T. 12).

Disruptive effects were not only caused by teacher absences. Student absences also disturbed the progress of the class mainly when one was unable to learn the next step without having learned the previous one. The following observation by a teacher shows how student absences can disturb the progress of the class:

I cut off my programme four times... It isn't possible to progress since one day only 20 students come and the next 40. Those 20 who did not attend don't know what was taught. So, either you repeat the last class upsetting those who were present or you go on and those who didn't come can't understand what you are saying. I have to repeat the class several times because of student absences (T. 8).

Another disruptive effect in the student apprenticeship was the teachers' strike. As teachers' strikes tend to last for several weeks, its effects tend to be significant, from a loss of motivation to dropout.

I dropped out because of the teachers' strike. I intend to go back to school, but I hope there won't be any more strikes. Otherwise, I will give up for ever (D. 17).

Two main consequences of the teachers' strike were pointed out by both dropouts and continuing students. One was the disruptive effect. It stopped classes for several weeks and made students lose their motivation. The second and more influential reason was the way teachers conducted their classes after their strike.

I was going well in all subjects. I hadn't any problems, but I became discouraged by the teachers' strike. Teachers go on strike; we lose the rhythm and when they return they rush through the
programme as if we were the ones to be blamed about what they didn't get from the Government (D. 17).

(The strike) discourages us too much because we stop for some time and we lose the rhythm and the interest in studying. And when we recommenced we realised that teachers hadn't improve their quality. On the contrary, when they recommenced classes, they tried to make up for lost time and the classes became worse (CS. 20).

The strike was also too disruptive and influenced my decision to leave school. I was already not doing very well with some classes. After the strike it became harder to understand what the teachers were teaching and I decided to give up (D. 14).

I was already not getting on very well and the strike upset me more. So, I decided to give up although my grades were good enough to pass (D. 51).

Because of the strike some teachers didn't explain their subject very well. So, I didn't understand and as I was sure that I would fail in the final exam, I dropped out (D. 9).

If teachers' strikes in general suffered a great deal of criticism from drop-outs and continuing students, this was particularly so in the case of the second strike in the 1989 academic year, which I was able to observe. In spite of the fact that teachers tried, in the school assembly, to convince students about the inevitability of the second strike in that year, many students were neither convinced nor in sympathetic. Although they were of the low salary of the teachers, they also knew that a second strike would probably be reflected negatively in their apprenticeship.

The strike started on October 6th, 1989. The previous day the teachers had had a general assembly and had decided to go on strike. They also decided that: a) the classes missed would not be replaced since students had already had three-quarters of all the classes. In Brazil the educational legislation requires a minimum attendance of 75% for students. However, the case of those students who had already missed classes was not discussed. b) in order to complete the syllabuses, students would be asked to write essays about those contents not previously covered.

Sadotti (Sadotti et al., 1989) states that it is necessary, when going on strike in school, to consider the course programme before the strike, in order not to overload students after the strike. However, this factor has never been considered properly.

The teachers' decision was announced to the students in a school assembly by an assembly board which was composed of school, state and national students' union representatives and by one of the teachers. There was a meeting during the afternoon and evening periods. After the announcement of the teachers' decision by the teacher, students' union representatives expressed their union's position with some support to teachers' industrial dispute but also
some reservations. In the afternoon assembly the student attendance was large. The classes in this period were for the fifth to eighth level primary school (11 to 15 years old) and one first level secondary school (15-16 years old) students. In the evening assembly, attended by the secondary school classes, the attendance was very small. Fewer than 20% were present. Since the media had announced that teachers were already on strike, many students had decided to go home straight from the work instead of going to school. However, a lack of political consciousness also contributed since students should have gone to school to learn what student activities would be available during the strike.

After the assembly board report, students had the opportunity to express their individual points of view. The afternoon students accepted the teachers' decision on going on strike without questioning it. In fact, many, if not most of the students were very happy with the unexpected 'holidays'.

The evening assembly did not run so smoothly. While, on the one hand most of the evening students who were in the assembly agreed that teachers' salaries were really very low and so, it was a teacher's right to go on strike in order to fight for a better salary, on the other hand many students, mainly those who would graduate the following month, were very worried about missing so many classes. For the graduating students who intended to take the 'vestibular', that is, the university entrance test, if the strike lasted several weeks they would miss many classes with the following consequences:
1 - if teachers would not replace the missing classes, they would not study some topics in the syllabus and consequently they would be disadvantaged in their preparation for the vestibular;
2 - if the strike would run for more than a month and teachers did decide to replace the missing classes, they would not have graduated before the vestibular, and so, would not be allowed to take it.

When a graduation student (CS.5) put these questions to student leaders, one of the leaders answered the questions saying that any action taken by teachers would not really damage students, since:

... Actually, the public school does not prepare for the vestibular. So, in any case, no one of you will be able to be successful in the vestibular without taking first a 'pre-vestibular' course.

It is true that those who attend a public secondary school are less prepared for the vestibular than both those who take the course in a private school or those who take a pre-vestibular course. However, the chances of a public school student being successful in the vestibular depends on the kind of course he has taken, his performance in the course and the course he wishes to take. Courses in the 'noble areas' such as Engineering, Medicine, Architecture and others, which give a higher status and higher salary have proportionately higher numbers of applicants for each place so that candidates must be very well prepared. However courses like Languages, Philosophy and Pedagogy (Teaching) have fewer applicants and so public school graduated students can have a better chance of success. Thinking about not missing this chance, graduating students were worried and disagreed with the students' union leader:
I disagree! If a student studies hard, he’s able to succeed. I have already paid the vestibular enrolments’ fees. My father is a retired civil servant and one can figure what this money means to us (CS. 5).

Many students were not satisfied with the assembly board which held the meeting. Teachers needed students’, parents’ and community support on their strike in order to strengthen their power of negotiation. Students’ support, in particular, would give them the confidence to remain on strike for however long was necessary. On the other hand, being pressed by both students and government would lessen their power. Student dissatisfaction was concerned with the fact that in order to get the student support and vote, the assembly board manipulated the meeting by avoiding a comprehensive debate and by not answering adequately the students’ questions.

The number of students in the afternoon assembly was bigger than in the evening one. Even so, the number of questions was smaller and this was mainly because of the age of the students. Probably because of this, it was really easy to convince them that the teachers’ strike would not have any negative effect on their schooling. One evening class representative who attended this assembly expressed his view in the following way:

The students’ leaders didn’t answer the questions concerning class replacements and the vestibular adequately. ... The meeting was manipulated. Many of the youngest primary school students didn’t know what they were voting for (CS. 15).

In the afternoon assembly, I was seated among several of the youngest students and I could observe that many of them really did not know what they were voting for. The question of the possible consequences of strike received more attention in the evening. Even so, it was both manipulated and the consequences of the strike were not completely discussed.

The meeting was disgusting. The questions asked by (evening) students were not answered (CS. 10).

Many continuing students were concerned with the effects that the strike would have on their and their colleagues’ academic and personal lives. They were very concerned about the fact that after previous strikes many students had given up school and that probably this would happen again.

Students’ leaders revealed, through the two school assemblies, that they were expressing a sort of class solidarity with the teachers and that students did not deny the teachers’ right to struggle for a better salary. Yet, at the same time, secondary school students in general and graduates in particular were questioning the fairness of being harmed. They also questioned, in particular, the teachers’ attitudes in previous strikes and wondered if they could believe in teachers promises.

If on the one hand the student leaders were supporting the teachers’ strike
and indirectly fighting for a better society, on the other hand, students had a more individualistic and instrumental orientation. This individualistic attitude is probably a consequence of a broader political view and the lack of awareness of the importance of class consciousness and participation in the struggle for a new hegemony (Gramsci), or the transformation of the society (Freire).

Dropouts and continuing students complained about having too many essays as a way of replacing classes. Since students lost many classes during strikes, after a strike teachers usually tried to make up for them and complete the syllabus by giving the students many supplementary essays. This discouraged students, especially those who were working and had insufficient time to complete them. Some teachers gave the essays as soon as they started the classes again. Others, gave the essays just before the beginning of the strike, trying to give the students more time to prepare them. However, since all school libraries closed during the strike, most of the students could not work on the essays during this time. They also believed that an essay did not replace a class.

Several teachers give us essays as a way of replacing classes. If an essay was so helpful, we wouldn't need to come to classes. What we need is the teacher's assistance (CS. 12).

After pressure from some students to have the content given through formal classes instead of by essays, the teachers undertook the responsibility of both replacing the classes if they thought it necessary and of discussing any replacements with students. However, given their previous experiences, students did not trust the teachers' promises and questioned whether it would be worth supporting the teachers' strike in order they had an increase in their salaries but at the cost of some damage to themselves.

Teachers go on strike with a list of demands including higher salaries. However, once they get an increase in their salary they forget the other matters concerned with the quality of education. We are tired of seeing this. We should have organised ourselves and include in the teachers' list the needs of the school and required the teachers to negotiate about these needs. Teachers should struggle more for schools and a better standard of education rather than only for their own salaries (CS. 20).

Teachers didn't keep their word in the previous strike. We can't trust them again (CS. 1).

I don't trust them (teachers) any more. When they get what they wish, they think only of themselves. ... At the end of the academic year, teachers kept down students for a matter of only half a point. What is half a point in the student apprenticeship when teachers didn't do their duty? Could someone answer me? (CS. 16).

According to one of the administrative body (AB. 2), it was the first time that students were demanding to have classes replaced. The fact that it was
the second strike in the same academic year could have contributed to this requirement. In any case this fact may show that students were really concerned with the question of apprenticeship and the quality of education.

Conscious about the power of organisation a student, who also represented the school students' leaders, claimed that:

We need to show the power we have through our organisation. Not only during the teachers' strike, but after the strike too. We must show them (teachers) that we don't want to be harmed. So, we must act, too, rather than just talk (CS. 22).

We must organise how the classes would be replaced. On the one hand we are here to support the teachers. But at the same time we must defend ourselves from being kept down. But we are alone... I want to know how we can defend ourselves, how the graduating students are going to pass in the vestibular after have missed so many classes. Teachers must not be damaged, but neither must we. And what about the administrative body, who haven't declared their position? (CS. 16).

After being on strike for nearly five weeks and having achieved only a small part of their requests, the teachers returned to classes and decided not to prolong the academic year since this would mean having classes during summer holidays (Dec. up to the end of Feb.). In this case, classes should be recommenced after the New Year holidays, which would not please either the teachers or the students. However, neither teachers nor the administrative body of the research school gave the students a reasonable explanation for both ending the strike without having achieved any item directly concerned with the quality of education (eg. increase in the budget, more material support, etc.), and their decision not to replace all the missed classes. Although the school teachers' representative claimed to have recommended to the teachers to explain to students the reasons why the teachers had decided to return to classes and not to extend the academic year, with only rare exceptions this was not done:

I asked the teachers to talk with students about our strike in the first classes after the strike. However, most of them didn't do it because they were too behind with their programme. They didn't want to lose more time (T.14).

Teachers also did not give students the opportunity to discuss the replacement of the missed classes and the development of the remained ones.

We had no opportunity to discuss it. They (teachers) simply came and gave us the essays (CS. 23).

A teacher promised to consider our questions after the strike. However on his second class after the strike he gave us a test and almost all of students failed. Only one succeeded, but he is a 'clever head' (very intelligent, more than the normal stand-
Teachers always mention their salary as a reason for the low quality of education and as an excuse for their bad teaching. However, they never improve their teaching quality after a strike, when they have got an increase in their salary. On the contrary, it's after a strike that they give us the worst classes... They rush too much and don't repeat the explanation when asked for it. This time is no different, in spite their promise to consider our side ... I hate the after-strike period! (CS.25).

I don't believe them (teachers). They say they go on strike because of the low quality of the schooling, but their only concern is with their salary. Even when they get an increase in their salary, they don't improve the quality of their teaching (CS. 55).

From now on, I will support a strike only if it will be general, that is, only if 100% of the teachers go on strike. ... students should also participate and both teachers and students have to struggle in favour of the students too (CS. 34).

Although for the youngest students a strike may represent a kind of holiday, it does not mean the same for the older students, even though very few students participate in the strike activities such as the rally, assembly, etc. The lack of the students' participation in the teachers' strike is due to both the lack of students' political consciousness and the lack of activities which could attract students. For the secondary school students there is a further constraint. Most of them work during the day when the strike activities take place. Having nothing to do at school in the evenings they went home straight after work. During the strike that I had the opportunity to observe, only very few students used to go to school in the evenings and for some of these the reasons were social rather than political or academic. When the classes recommenced few students felt themselves relaxed by the interruptions in their classes. For them, the uncertainty of the situation and the fear of being damaged in their apprenticeship were quite stressful, as revealed by a continuing student:

I don't like strikes. After one or two weeks of being on strike I lose my motivation for going to school. Then, when the classes recommence teachers rush too much. ... After several weeks without classes we have already forgotten a lot of things and it's difficult to follow the teachers. Instead of starting the classes with a revision, they start with new material and rush with the classes and give us a lot of essays. They (teachers) don't think about our conditions (CS. 16).

After the strike students returned to school feeling the strike's disruptive effect and needing to put up with the teachers rushing in order to cover the syllabus. Unable both to follow the teachers' classes and write the essays as well as feeling frustrated at being misled, some students dropped out soon after the classes recommenced. Others, who had already experienced this situa-
tion before did not return to school after the strike. Since after the strike most of the teachers did not check students' attendance any more, it was not possible to check, at that time, exactly how many of them did not return. According to some teachers and the students' counsellor, at least around 10-15 students did not return to school that academic year. Later on, when I tried to get this figure, the school staff were unable to find the 1989 report.

Most of the students had the feeling that a teachers' victory is always at their expense. For them, it was quite clear that a teachers' strike meant an increase in the teachers' salary and a decrease in the quality of their schooling. The second strike in the 1989 academic year increased this feeling and left in their mind the following question: Should we support the teachers' strike and be damaged ourselves?

Teachers' rights and students' rights were seen by students and teachers as two opposed things. However, in my opinion, they are complementary rather than opposed. In this way, strikes in schools must be considered differently from strikes in the productive sector. While in the productive sector a strike generally causes damage to the owners' interests, in a school, a teachers' strike must not damage the interests of the students. So, missed classes must be replaced in order not to damage students' apprenticeship. This is particularly true in a situation such as in the research school, where evening students learning is almost if not totally based on the class given. Their working conditions do not allow them to study or review the lessons out of school encounters.

For Gramsci (1971) one's consciousness is not individual but reflects her/his social and cultural relations. Still for him, all hegemonic relationships are necessarily pedagogic relationships (Gramsci, 1971, 1989). He, as well as Freire (1985) also defended the inseparability of educational and political activities. So, strikes in school must be regarded as a means of political and citizenship education. They must be seen as part of the struggle for better conditions in education and in the broader society. According to Freire (1985) the increase in political knowledge increases the awareness of the need for participation in order to achieve the transformation of the society.

During a strike in a school, the course contents are put aside, but students can have the opportunity to learn how to struggle for a better school and a better society. However very few students were involved in the teachers' strike, and since they were not orientated to the opportunity, they did not make use of the opportunity to learn about democracy and the struggle for a better society.

According to Gramsci and Freire, it is not only through lectures, reading and discussion that one learns how to transform reality. One needs also some practical activities and the strike is a good opportunity to exercise one's apprenticeship. Students do not need their own strike to have their lessons. They can learn from the teachers' strike, through discussion and critical analysis of the negotiations — both their negotiations with teachers and the teachers with the government. As Guimarães (Gadotti et al. 1989) recalled, during a strike the process of transmitting contents is interrupted but not
the apprenticeship process.

Every strike has a political and pedagogical role. If the political and pedagogical role of the strike is worked at with students, they can learn much more than if they have classes. As Gadotti (Gadotti et al., 1989: 46) observed, a strike can be a privileged moment in student's education.

A strike is a lesson about democracy by itself and a way of developing political skills in students and represents a struggle for a new hegemony. It can be an educational act which happens out of school and which can be more liberating than a within-school activity. However, at no moment at all was the educational aspect of the strike discussed or explored with the students. Further, in spite of the emphasis given to democratic and participatory relations in education in the teachers' discourses during the strike, teachers' behaviour when they returned to the classes showed that their practice was still dissociated from their discourse.

According to Gadotti et al. (1989), it was during the strike period that the cultural and democratic emptiness of the university could be detected and the desire of the students for a broader formation, realised. The same could be said about the secondary school. Consequently, there must be efforts to motivate students to participate in social movements since, according to Freire (Gadotti et al, 1989), rather than the product of reason, consciousness is the product of engagement and it is during the struggle that one can improve one's class consciousness.

In my opinion, during the strike there should have been other activities in the school in order to keep students informed and involved. It is true that when students are tired after a day's work and do not see any advantage in going to school, they prefer to go home and rest after a long and tiring working day. So, there must be some cultural activities which can attract the students to school or common places where they can enjoy themselves at the same time that they learn about political issues.

### 7.3.4 - Teachers Effectiveness

The lack of teacher effectiveness was not mentioned by dropouts as a primary reason for dropping out. Only one teacher mentioned this factor as a primary reason for students leaving school early. However, eight (5% of all) dropouts and one teacher mentioned this factor as a secondary reason.

> There are good teachers, but there also are a lot of bad teachers too... What I wonder is why not all teachers are identical, why can't all of them be good teachers? It would motivate more the students and we could bear with the sacrifice. Bad teachers are the reason why many students leave the school. They drive away the students (D, 13).

Although teachers' effectiveness were not much criticised by dropouts, continuing students frequently complained about the quality of some teachers' class-
In a group discussion with teachers and students soon before the teachers' strike, students raised the issue of teacher effectiveness and their lack of concern about the quality of education in the negotiations with the educational authorities during the strike. One of the administrative body, who is also a teacher, made the following comment:

Every school has good teachers and those who don't want to compromise. Certain teachers retain the same behaviour because you (students) allow it. Because there is the favourable aspect to the students. If the students don't push the teachers, teachers also don't push the students. Students should strive to push the teachers because no teacher should be allowed to be lazy during all the year. It isn't only after the strike we must push the teachers (AB. 1).

Frequently students associated teacher effectiveness with teacher training.

He (teacher 8) knows his subject but he doesn't know how to teach (CS. 42).

I don't like (teacher 23). He doesn't teach properly. He doesn't know how to teach (CS. 15).

I think that next year (teacher 18) shouldn't be allowed to teach here. He really doesn't know how to teach and we learn nothing (CS. 16).

Although teachers from both Physical and Human Science areas were criticised for not knowing how to teach, teachers on the Technical or Physical Sciences area were more frequently criticised. The teachers mentioned above, as several others, had taken a university course in the technical area but had not had any training in how to teach. In fact, most of the students who take a technical course prefer to take a bachelor's degree which emphasises technical skills but does not prepare for teaching rather than a degree of licentiate which prepares for teaching. So, to have a licentiate teacher in the technical area is much more difficult than in the Human Sciences area. As Dore (1976) observed, some subjects are having a hard time in getting good teachers since most graduates may be tempted to work in the industrial sector where they are better paid.

The complaints about the lack of teacher training was directed not only to those teachers who had had no teacher training but also to the substitute teachers who were still students. This fact was criticised not only by continuing students but also by a teacher, as indicated by the following interview extract:

The problem is that there are too many teachers who are still undergraduates. They have no teaching methodology... (T. 3).

Some of the student teachers were teaching as substitutes, that is as 'supply' or 'temporary' teachers. This was due to the difficulty of getting a qualified
teacher to substitute. This difficulty arises mainly because of the low pay and poor prospects for a substitute teacher. Other unqualified teachers were not substitutes but student teachers who were teaching some classes for their practical training. Generally they give only a few classes since there are several student teachers who have to be given this experience. These classes are regularly, but not invariably given under the supervision of both their own teacher and the class teacher. Although these classes were supposed to be a 'model' or 'ideal' class, students in the school usually did not like them.

There is a difference between a teacher and a student teacher. They have no experience. It's better to have classes with the real teacher (CS. 8).

Many dropouts and continuing students related the quality of teaching to teacher experience, as revealed by the following extracts:

Once, we had a teacher whom nobody used to understand what he was teaching. We used to understand nothing. If we asked for any explanation, he would blame us for not understanding. It was the first time that he was teaching. Actually, he used to become very nervous when he was giving an explanation. We did realise that he used to become very nervous. ... (D. 1).

... it's the practice. They have a university degree and know their subject, but they don't know how to teach to the students. ... I think they need a lot of contact with students. They only learn over time (CS. 28).

They have a degree but they don't know everything. They don't have the practice of teaching and they need to know more about their subject (CS. 29).

The students' point of view about teachers' practice and their quality of teaching was shared by a teacher who was feeling the consequences of the lack of experience of some of his colleagues.

Even the nearly graduated teachers have no teaching methodology. I realised this on my postgraduate course (he was taking during the field work). I am thinking of dropping out because there are too many teachers who have just finished their M.Phil. and have no experience of teaching. They still have a lot to learn and I don't intend to waste my time (T. 3).

Another factor that influenced teacher competence is concerned with their training courses. As observed previously, most of the teachers had their training courses in a private institution which, due to its lack of resources, has a lower standard (Guirardelli Jr., 1990). A feeling which comes through the informal conversations with teachers and later was checked in interviews, was a lack of teacher knowledge about educational theory. They obtained very little knowledge on their university course and after that, most of them had learned no more.
Generally teachers did not know the latest publications in both educational theory and their specific subject. Only two of them used to buy a monthly educational journal and very few used to read the one subscribed to by the school library. If on the one hand teachers' low salaries restrain them from buying educational literature, on the other hand even the few books about educational theory existing in the school library were rarely borrowed by teachers.

In a study undertaken by Feldens and Duncan (1980) in 45 primary schools in Porto Alegre, Brazil, with the aim of identifying and interpreting teachers', students', and parents' beliefs about desirable schooling and teaching, teachers assessed themselves "as competent and committed but needing improvement in their professional performance and procedure" (p. 111) and that "professional teacher training could help make their instruction more interesting and increase their capacity to get students thinking critically" (p. 112) The same feeling was shared by many of the teachers in the present study. Despite their lack of knowledge about educational theories, which was great, what they most missed was a better knowledge about teaching style.

Asking them why they did not ask for help from the teachers' counsellor, the answer varied. Some of the teachers did not know exactly the function of the teachers' counsellor, others knew but did not think that could be of any great help, and a teacher revealed that he would not like to see the teachers' counsellor visiting his classes since this could mean to his colleagues and students that he was not teaching good classes. As this can be judged by the teacher's colleagues as the teacher's fault, they preferred to avoid the presence of the teachers' counsellor. This misjudgment of the teachers' counsellor presence in a class is due to the fact that most of the time that teachers' counsellor visits a class it is really because it is having problems.

The teachers' counsellor has the function of helping teachers in the classroom teaching-learning process. There was, in Santa Catarina State, at the time of field work, one team of teachers' counsellors in each one of the 20 UCRE (Regional Unity of Teaching Co-ordination) which can advise teachers with their teaching difficulties. Apart from this, there is at least one teachers' counsellor in most of the schools.

Despite the teachers' counsellor being a great help with teachers' teaching difficulties, his help is not frequently sought. One reason for this is because as with the teachers, the teachers' counsellors graduation course did not prepare them adequately to perform their function. Consequently, some teachers did not trust much in their effectiveness and preferred not to ask for their help. Most of the time, the presence of the teachers' counsellor in a class was required by students or recommended by the administrative body rather than wanted by the teachers. As in Feldens and Duncan's (1988) study, teachers in the research school expressed a desire for a more effective teachers' counsellor service.

Teachers' practical experience and effectiveness were also related to their
In some ways students preferred a more experienced teacher who showed a broader knowledge of their subject, as expressed in the following extract:

Nowadays many teachers are almost the same age as us. ... Before, they didn't try to be so much like us. Nowadays they say "what I know, you know too. You live in the same world as I... I, personally, prefer a teacher who has more experience than I have. I believe that I have something to learn from them (CS. 29).

It seemed that to be a good teacher is not easy even for those teachers who had a teaching qualification. As Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (cited by Mardle and Walker, 1980) pointed out, there is a change between training and reality. In their professional training, teachers build up some ideals of what they were hoping to achieve, but in practice, they are forced to deal with a different reality.

Teacher effectiveness may also be related to the load of work and the value put on it by others as revealed by the following teachers' interview extracts:

Most of us work in more than one school. ... Besides, teachers have been so under-evaluated that they are escaping from their duty. They come to give their classes but are integrated neither with the school nor with the students. ... There is no longer that integral education that they used to have. ... We can find some teachers who are committed with a good schooling, but this is no longer common behaviour. It is all individualism. ... Now, individualism is our law (T. 1).

I used to do a lot. Prepare lessons and mark work carefully. However, as you are not judged by doing this, I gave up. Now, I'd rather spend my time looking after myself and my family (T. 11).

Individual problems, institutional factors, professional training and economic conditions can exercise some constraint on teachers' effectiveness. In order to improve the quality of teaching, teachers should have more support through the teachers' counsellor, materials and courses. However, as Smoke and Oxenham (1984) observed, since the teacher's career does not depend on students' performance, there is no direct incentive to put a great deal of effort in to improving themselves and so improving students' educational standard. To these authors, the drive for social mobility can affect teachers' commitment to their function since there is an interaction between one's aspirations and the requirement, incentives and sanctions of her/his institution.

If on the one hand Brazilian teachers' promotion, in a general way does not depend on students' performance, on the other, it is based on teachers' formal qualification. With a low salaries teachers are eager for promotion and a certificate can increase their chances. This is the main factor that encouraged several of the teachers research school to take a holiday course, as shown by one of these teachers who was considering dropping out of it:
I don't believe it! If this course is not going to be counted for career promotion I will give up. I swear. I am not so mad as to spend my holidays studying and a lot of money in doing a course which is worthless ...

If for some teachers an increase in their income was the main reason for investing money and two holidays) taking a course, for others the eagerness for new and updated knowledge was the main factor. This teacher was giving up his post-graduate course - M.Phil. - because he was not satisfied with its quality. Another teacher was planning to go back to the university only because he recognised that his undergraduate course had been very weak and he wished to improve and update his knowledge. He was also wishing to learn to link theory and practice which he had had no opportunity to do on his previous course.

Teachers' conditions of work are not attractive. The high number of classes and the lack of material and technical support, on the one hand, and the low salary, on the other, scare away many good professionals who prefer to follow other career.

7.4 - Student-Related Reasons

Among the endogenous or within-school reasons, student-related factors were the least mentioned by dropouts and continuing students as a reason for leaving school early. Only six (3% of all) dropouts mentioned this group of factors as their reasons for dropping out. Of these, five declared that they left school because of their difficulties with study and one because of his relationship with other students. Six other dropouts (3% of all dropouts) mentioned difficulties with study as a secondary reason for leaving school.

However, when continuing students were asked why, in their opinion, their colleagues had dropped out, difficulty with study was mentioned 35 times, the highest single reason. Difficulty with study was also mentioned by continuing students when asked if at any time they had considered leaving school and why.

7.4.1 - Difficulty With Study

Many studies have found out that poor academic achievement is a common factor among dropouts (Kelly and Pink, 1974; Hunt and Clawson, 1975; Sicuro, 1984; Finn, 1987; Hahn, 1987; Tidwell, 1986; Nahood, 1981; Rowley, 1989) and some of them mentioned it as the most commonly cited reason for leaving school early (Barber and McLellan, 1987; Colli, 1987). Sicuro (1984), in a study about dropouts observed that students, especially from secondary school, give up when they are afraid of failing. They simply leave school without asking advice or help from anyone. However, in the present study only a few students mentioned this factor as their primary or secondary reason for dropping out.

The reasons for poor academic achievement differed among the students. For one dropout his difficulty was due to the fact that he had left school some time ago and that, when he returned, he felt himself too much out-of-date and was unable to follow the teachers.
unable to follow the teachers.

I dropped out because I wasn't able either to understand some subjects or to follow some teachers' pace. . . . I stayed many years out of school, without studying, and I found it too difficult to catch on to understand teachers' explanations. . . (D. 16).

Changing from primary to secondary school or from afternoon to evening session was also mentioned as a reason for starting to have academic problems or for aggravating the already existing ones.

The afternoon sessions are quite different from the evening ones. While the afternoon session is attended more by primary school and secondary school students who do not work, the evening session is attended almost exclusively by secondary school students and by those who work during the day. Consequently, the social, economic, and psychological environments are also different. As a consequence, teaching styles are also typically different. Apart from this, changing level and/or session generally means change of teachers and colleagues. Peer relationships are also different since in the evening period most of the students arrive just on time, the break period is shorter, and they have no time for a chat at the end of the period, at 10:00 pm.

I always got good grades in primary school but when I started the secondary school my grades began to deteriorate. Last year I failed and as I was going to fail again this year I gave up (D. 61).

I started to study in the evening session. . . It was too different from the afternoon session . . . teachers treat evening students in a different way. . . It was too difficult (D. 3).

In a study about the question of transfer from middle to high school, as it was experienced by the students in three different schools, Bryan (1980) observed that when in a transfer situation students expressed feelings of anxiety and that this kind of feeling was not particular to a given age, sex, or location. Differences between primary and secondary schools' academic environments were also felt by Portuguese students who revealed that these differences interfered with their academic achievement lowering their academic performance and increasing the rate of failure (Girardi, 1987).

The adjustment to some new teachers, new colleagues, or different teaching methodologies makes a lot of emotional demands at times and this experience may lead to stress. Physical sense data such as temperature and lightning are different too. Classroom regimes are also different. Primary school teachers tend to give more individual help to students than secondary school teachers. Afternoon sessions are attended mainly by the youngest students and by those who are not working. Consequently they have more time to spend with their homework and this helps them to achieve a better performance.

In a study of evening courses undertaken in Brazil, Carvalho (in Bruns, 1987) observed that evening students are always considered both the weakest and the
'most difficult' to teach. This was also observed by the teachers in the research school:

There is a big difference between the afternoon and evening period. There are hardly any dropouts at the afternoon... The afternoon classes are better and are the only ones where you can fulfil yourself... (T. 2).

The performance of the afternoon students is much better than that of the evening ones. The former have better economic conditions... They don't need to work... (T. 1).

Evening students are not prepared for school. They are so immature that they blame only the school for their failure (T. 7).

Since most of the teachers work more than one session per day, it must be taken into consideration that at the evening period they are more tired than in the afternoon and this may also interfere with the quality of their teaching. Another fact that may contribute to the lower academic performance of the evening students is the teachers' expectations. Low expectation on the part of the teacher influences students' self-esteem and interest in learning (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986; Barber and McLellan, 1987; Rowley, 1989), which leads them in turn to achieve lower grades and later to quit school.

For many students difficulties with study are also related to the 'automatic promotion' set up with the 1972 educational reforms. Since then, up to 1985, students were not kept down even when they did not reach the minimum standard. Having no 'failure', many students were 'automatically promoted' to the next level although they did not have the necessary grounding to follow it. On the other hand, teachers had neither the academic training nor the material conditions to deal with students with different levels of achievement. Therefore, students had to face new difficulties and consequently to lower their academic level. There is no need to say how harmful this system was. With the return of the 'failure' system in 1985, students who had previously advanced by automatic promotion rather than by merit, faced too many difficulties in following the classes. In turn, their grades became very low and they started to be kept down several times, as happened with a student of the first grade of secondary school. He was kept down three times at that level. So, he was taking that level for the fourth time.

When students were asked if they used to ask for help from their teachers, most of them answered that they preferred not to do so for different reasons:

No. They are supposed to do this. So, why ask for it? (CS. 21).

No. There is no point in asking for it. Some of them refuse to repeat explanations, others repeat them in the same way ... I prefer to ask a colleague (CS. 47).

They help a only few students, those who are they pets (CS. 106).
Some students reported that they never or rarely asked for help because they were afraid that teachers would poke fun at them.

Sometimes you really are interested in learning but if you ask for help, teachers laugh at you. So, I really prefer not to ask for any help (CS, 53).

School cannot always be judged to be the main cause of low academic achievement. A student with low achievement may have low ability, decline to study, not attend regularly, etc. Although many dropouts and continuing students blamed the school for their low achievement, others recognised their own fault and blamed themselves for their low grades since they were lazy and used to study only for the tests.

I was having low grades mainly in Chemistry and Physics. ... They are difficult subjects and I was quite lazy with my studies (D 19).

The fact that some students admit some blame for their low academic achievement and/or failure, this can be either a fair judgment about their efforts but can also reflect ideological influences since, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the schooling system contributes greatly to perpetuate the structure of class relations. In this way, lower class students are not only determined to have less success in terms of academic performance but they are also persuaded that they are less competent.

The lack of personal responsibility in studying and doing the assignments was mentioned by several teachers. Teachers complained that many students failed to bring in their assignments. However, those students who were working had only their weekends in which to prepare their lessons and some of them declared that this time was not enough to do all they needed.

7.4.2 - Student-Student Relationships

Friendship is one of the most important ingredients in most people's lives. However, to build a real friendship is neither quick nor easy since real friends need to have several things in common. This difficulty is especially true in the case of a person who comes from a different environment, as was revealed by the following extract:

In 'X' (previous school) I used to have a lot of friends. They lived near my house and after school we used to go home all together. In 'Y' (research school) I had only one friend who transferred herself to another school and I stayed by myself. This upset me too much. ... After school, when I took the bus, I used to become very sad, thinking about what I should do, since people were so different from my previous school. I had no friends in 'Y' school. People were not friendly. They didn't talk to other people and I was too lonely. There were different groups in a
class and they didn't mix with each other. If one didn't belong to one of these groups one became too isolated, too lonely. ... What upset me more was the fact that I couldn't get on well with other students. They were different from those in my previous school. So, I used to keep to myself. In 'X' I used to have friends to talk to and to do school work. I can do my school work alone but I don't like to feel isolated. So, I dropped out.

Next year I'm going back to the previous school. There, they are much more like me. I have very happy moments every time that I meet my friends from there. I'm going back there (previous school).

... Every night I used to leave 'Y' by myself. Sad... When I arrived home, I threw my books on the sofa without the slightest wish to study. When I was in 'X' I used to arrive at home more excited. I walked home chatting with friends. This made me feel as if all tiredness had vanished.

... In 'Y' I used to talk with three or four students from my class but they were not real friends. There was not a real friendship. ... It gave me sadness, agony... I became almost crazy. I was so upset that I was no longer eating properly. I was already becoming ill. I could no longer bear the situation and gave up (D, 15).

The importance of friendship is very clear from this interview extract with a dropout. It confirms the findings of Barber and McLellan's (1987) that most of the dropouts in their research reported problems with other students. In relation to transferred students Bracey (1989) recommended that these students must be helped in the integration into a new setting since in his research he found the lack of integration in a new school or system as one of the single most powerful predictors of dropping out.

The importance that this girl showed about having at least one real friend at school and about friends belonging to the same cultural environment indicates that the peer-group may be the main way that many young students organise their social relationships. For Hargreaves (1967) the peer-group is the main foundation of students' social relationships. Meyenn (1980), in his study with a group of middle-school girls observed the existence of peer group relationships among them and concluded that the peer group for those girls was of critical importance. On the other hand, Henry (cited by Meyenn, 1980), in describing American teenagers, pointed out that girls do not need groups and that for many activities more than two would be an obstacle. In fact although several peer groups could be observed in the school a lot of pairs could also be observed.

According to Meyenn (1980), for girls a group of friends is vitally important. This conclusion was confirmed in this present study by the fact that it was quite normal to see one or more girls sitting in the school entrance or in the school yard waiting for a girl friend. The fact that I have never observed boys waiting for boys does not deny the existence of this fact but it is at least a positive sign that this fact is not so frequent among boys and accords with the literature about peer group presented by Meyenn (1980) which reveals
that girls' groups tend to be smaller and more intimate than boys' groups.

Hargreaves (1967) stressed the importance of peer groups to mid-teens. According to him, in this period they are no longer children but not yet adults. Being not yet an adult, they have no valid autonomous status in the eyes of their elders. Consequently, they turn to their peer group for support since it is with their age-mates that they try to interact.

Belonging to a group is also important for homework. It was not rare to see or to know about a group where mutual exchanges were organized. Sometimes, when someone in the group had no time to contribute, s/he was pulled along by the others. In this case, the student contributed to group work only with her/his signature or was allowed to copy the answers when it was an individual exercise. These two facts, as observed by Hargreaves (1967) in an English secondary school, are not regarded by the peer group as a form of cheating. In the research school, particularly for those who worked six days a week, this was the only way it was possible to fulfill all or most of the teachers' requirements.

Although only one girl alluded to a lack of friendships in school as a reason for dropping out, several other continuing students complained about the lack of friendships both among teachers and between teachers and students. In a meeting between all evening teachers and students, one of the third level girls observed that some years ago there had been a more friendly environment in the school than was now the case and regretted this fact. Other students, always girls, also complained of the lack of friendships in the school:

Students didn't know each other. I only knew some students from my class. ... There should be more recreational activities in order to help students to know each other (D, 17).

We should join and struggle to improve our conditions here in the school. But how can this happen if students are too selfish? (CS, 25).

In my opinion there is no unity in this school. The students are selfish. The government gave us the opportunity to get money for the school and most of the students didn't collaborate. ... The students don't take things seriously. They should have more interest, take more care of things instead of destroying them. ... I think that if one wishes to advance in life one must struggle otherwise one will get nothing. I think that students here are not only uninterested but also very selfish. When the school promotes an event, students do not come. ... There was a lot of campaigning in the school where I was studying before. ... I think that we must fight for our school (CS, 5).

The adolescent must cope with the painful passage from childhood to adulthood. Sometimes they have difficulties in adjusting themselves and consequently have academic problems. In this sense, Willis (1977) observed the importance of the peer group in making the situation in school tolerable and even fun. It is not
rare for students to see in the school an opportunity to make friends, as observed in research undertaken by Bruns (1987). In school students have the opportunity to meet people of their own age and with the same interests and values. However, for the evening student who works this opportunity is restricted by the fact they arrive at school just on time and have no time for chatting at the end of the period when they need to rush to catch the bus. On the other hand, the break time in the evening session is shorter than that during the afternoon and frequently it is used to take books from the library, complete homework, or review some subject for a forthcoming test.

Strong support for the idea of arranging informal, social occasions was given, verbally, by both teachers and the administrative body. However when a student tried to arrange an end-of-year party for his classroom, he had a lot of difficulty in trying to convince the administrative body to allow them to use their classroom for the party. After several discussions the party was allowed with some restrictions such as not bringing out-of-school people, not drinking any alcoholic drink, and having some teachers to take care of or be responsible for the group, not playing very loud music, and so on. Although questioning the restriction about not bringing out-of-school friends, the class accepted the imposed conditions. However, what they really questioned was the difficulty in getting permission for using what they were told would be theirs:

They (school staff) say the school is ours, that we should feel and respect the school as if it were our own home... How can we feel as if it were ours if when we ask permission for a simple meeting, in our classroom, with our class, they come up with so many silly excuses? (CS 9).

Students complained about the lack of good will on behalf of the school staff every time they tried to do something different in school, that is, something that was not considered a traditional academic activity. On the other hand, the school staff complained about the lack of student collaboration every time the school tried to launch any campaign. A good example of this was the 'gincana' (a kind of school competition) launched by the school some days before the teachers' strike, with the intention of raising some money in order to improve the school's material resources. Few students participated. Their excuse was that having no classes because of the strike, students did not meet among themselves and this discouraged the campaign. However, since there were no classes, students had free time to spend on this activity. On the other hand, the strike was also a 'good excuse' for the total non-participation of some teachers.

There is from both teachers and students the habit of blaming the other party for problems. However, few of them recognised their own part in them. This is possibly the effect of a paternalistic government policy which is a strong cultural aspect in Latin American countries.
7.5 - Conclusion

Within school reasons were mentioned by 56 (33% of all) dropouts. While for dropouts within school-reasons appeared to be secondary to exogenous reasons, for continuing students this group of reasons appeared as the most frequently mentioned. While within the exogenous factors only one reason tended to be mentioned, within the endogenous group several related reasons were mentioned in most of the cases. However, for both dropouts and continuing students, the teacher-related factors were clearly the most frequently stressed, followed by institutional or organisational reasons, while students' reasons were mentioned less frequently.

Among the teacher-related factors, teacher-student relationships were the most criticised and as in Callan (1988) and Rowley (1989), it was associated with students' decision to leave school. Some dropouts, said they could not stand the authoritarian behaviour of some teachers, mainly when they considered themselves as adults and wanted to be treated as such. Yet, as observed by Gadotti (1988), some teachers believed that they must make use of repression in order to improve the quality of education. They associated schooling quality with discipline and democratic relationship with lack of rigour and lack of productivity. This was particularly the case of Teacher 8. On the other hand, dropouts and continuing students felt that a heavy-handed or authoritarian style does not help. In these cases, students can appear to be quiet but this may be only an apparent quietness, generated by the fear of punishment by the teacher.

The authoritarianism of teacher-student relationships existing in the school was an expression or materialisation of the historic and social reality. School is shaped by society because it is linked to a larger political and cultural process. Consequently these conditions are produced within daily schooling activities as a reflection of the conditions existing in the wider society since, according to Gramsci (1971) one's consciousness reflects the social and cultural relations. However, according to Freire (1985: 106) man's consciousness is not passive and educators and educated must realise that rather than 'given', the world is dynamically 'in the making'.

In spite of the fact that social movements are in a general way improving human rights and that this should be reflected in the school, in the present research, teachers and students revealed that teacher and student relationships had deteriorated in recent years. One possible explanation for this can be the fact that recently there has been an increase in the number of substitute teachers. These teachers know that they are working only temporarily and are frustrated because of their professional and economic conditions, and this may be reflected in the way they treat students. However, not all substitute teachers were considered bad teachers. It can also be a reflection of the economic crisis and the general dissatisfaction of the teachers. Their inability to relate in a more democratic way may have also affected teachers' attitudes.

Secondary school teachers seem to care less about students' personal and academic difficulties since they considered secondary school students as adults and independent and therefore more responsible for their own actions. Secondary school students, too, considered themselves to be adults and wished to be
treated as such, but they also wished to be treated as individuals, with personal and academic problems to be considered and helped. More than this, it seems that after a hard working day they are eager for a little attention and, as expressed by a dropout, if sometimes students behave in a childish way it is probably because they are trying to attract the teacher's attention. The impersonal treatment that teachers gave to students was a major reason for students' dissatisfaction. Teachers' failure to demonstrate an interest in respondents as individuals was stated with anger, and frustration.

The teachers' impersonal role was an important contributor for students either to leave school or to desire to leave school early. This result supports that pointed out by Rowley (1989), in his research about dropouts. The impersonal treatment provoked in the students the feeling of being just a number rather than an individual. They wished to be cared for and treated as individuals. They wished to be understood and many of them expressed the desire to be helped in their personal problems. As in Callan's (1988) research, they felt hassled when teachers and school staff refused to listen and to accept their explanation of the situation.

Teacher-student relationships were also related to student performance. According to dropouts, continuing students and teachers, good relationships increase the sense of responsibility and help their progress. Although some students revealed that when they liked the teachers they liked the subject, for most of the students this was not true, which supports Callan's (1988) study. As in Callan's (1988) research, in a general way, teachers were respected and highly considered when students perceived them as having personalized and caring relationships.

In most of the Brazilian public schools the relationships between teachers and students is quite informal and there were, in the present research, some comments about teachers "being like us", with strengths and weaknesses as well as individual problems. Despite this fact, there were a few teachers who wanted to be treated formally, as an authority, as for example Teacher 8. Very few students felt themselves encouraged to try a more close or friendly relationship with such teachers. However, the students' counsellor, because of his role and his personality, was very open and students felt confident in approaching him about either school or personal problems. Students were so confident with him that they preferred to speak to him even when the matters concerned the administration or teachers' counsellor.

In informal conversations, meetings and interviews, students mentioned the qualities they valued most in teachers. Students like teachers who keep control and order in the classroom, are fair, have no pets, are good in explaining the lessons, help them in their needs, give interesting lessons, are friendly, understanding and cheerful, and care for the students as individuals. They dislike teachers who are too strict or too lax, have favourites and pick on students, give little help, do not explain the lessons, do not know their subject well, give dull or boring lessons, are unkind, ridicule students, have no sense of humour, ignore individual differences, fail to turn up and have inconsistent behaviour. Students felt that teachers who were not working just for money were more competent as professionals and more human as
individuals. Dropouts, continuing students and teachers all mentioned the low quality of schooling as one reason for dropping out. However, the views about this problem differed from one group of respondents to another. Dropouts revealed more dissatisfaction with the lack of links between school knowledge and what they needed in their work, while continuing students stressed more often the lack of link between school knowledge and the reality of their daily lives. This later group stated their lack of confidence in the way several contemporary problems such as AIDS, drugs, sex, freedom, etc. were dealt with and the wish to discuss these problems in school since they had few or no opportunities to discuss them with their families. Although they had the opportunity of discussing them with their colleagues, they liked also to discuss these subjects with an older or more experienced person. Religion classes was mentioned as the only classes where students' interests were attended to and subjects such as sex, drugs, etc. were freely discussed.

Since most of the interviews with dropouts took place in the second semester and since most of the dropouts contacted were employed and had abandoned the school in the present academic year, it might be supposed that those who were not quite satisfied with their course and its relationship with their job had dropped out, while those who had found some satisfaction or were not so instrumental remained.

Dropouts and continuing students showed more concern about the quality of schooling than teachers did. While both dropouts and continuing students attributed the within-school - curriculum, teachers' qualifications, teaching styles and teacher absenteeism for the low quality of education, most of teachers located them outside the school.

When discussing the problem of the low quality of education with teachers, most of them mentioned outside-school (or exogenous) factors as the reasons for this. The reasons mentioned were: their low salary, lack of teaching resources as a consequence of the lack of government economic support for the school, students' economic situation, lack of student interest in schooling and so on. For these teachers there was nothing that the school could do in order to improve the situation since the school reflected the society. However, a minority of teachers believed that they could improve this situation since part of the problem was a consequence of both the lack of teacher interest and the inadequacy of teacher training. This latter group of teachers agreed with the economic restraints but in their opinion, to place all the excuses on the economic situation was also a comfortable pretext to explain teacher inertia.

There is a tendency for teachers to blame the victim (Rasche, 1979; Mello, 1982; Picano, 1982; Scheibe, 1982; Davico, 1990; McLellan, 1986). Putting the causes of school failure on the economy or government, teachers relieved themselves of the need to change their performance as well as the school curriculum, structure, etc. As very well remembered by Sadotti (1988), frequently the economic question was used by teachers as an alibi to excuse their inactivity (laziness).

It was quite common to hear teachers blaming the students for their lack of
grounding or competence. However, I frequently heard some teachers asking what could be done in order to tackle this problem. Teachers are not used to reflecting about students’ problems. They talk and complain about their own problems but students’ problems seemed to be forgotten.

Dropouts and continuing students described their need to be helped although the assistance needed was rarely offered. Their lack of trust and confidence in their teachers as well as their shyness were important contributions in their unwillingness to request the help needed. It seemed that they needed the teachers’ approval and encouragement for what they were doing. They needed someone to assist them. As this did not happen they dropped out.

Tiredness on the part of both teachers and students was pointed out as contributing to reduce the standard of the course. Students’ lack of time to prepare and review the lessons and teachers’ lack of time to prepare the classes were also mentioned. Some teachers mentioned a lack of student effort to study. This could be partially true, since some students did not work. However, since most of the students worked eight hours a day, this must be carefully noted. Concerning the teachers, most of them also worked very hard. Since they have many classes they frequently need to take students’ essays home to mark them late in the evenings and/or at weekends since they also arrived home late.

As there was no control of academic standards on behalf of the administration or teachers’ counsellor, teachers felt themselves free to negotiate their standard with their students. In this way, while some demanded a great deal from the students, others demanded very little. However, when lowering the level of courses teachers are contributing for a disqualification of students.

In trying to retain social control, some teachers lowered the course content and so instructional level, forgetting the instructional aim of the school. However, this was not a general practice. Teacher B, for instance, exercised a tight control over students’ behaviour in the classroom, in order to put into practice his motto of “Orden e Progresso” (Order and Progress - the motto in the Brazilian flag) and to reach the educational goals. It was not a verbally expressed motto, but it could easily be deduced from his behaviour. This can be partially justified since, apart from his strong values, before starting to teach, this teacher was asked by the administrative body to raise the standard of his subject, as these were not reaching the expectations of the labour market.

School knowledge is transmitted to students as ‘true’ knowledge but most of the time it is divorced from the students’ reality. Students simply receive, passively, the knowledge transmitted by teachers. They have little or no need to search for it or help in its production. So, they feel the classes boring and are not interested in it. However, many students who have no interest in school are quite interested in knowledge produced by other activities out of school. Such is the case of several students who participated in political party activities and were interested in reading about education, philosophy and politics.
The sense of irrelevance of school knowledge affected students' interest in study leading them to truancy as a self-protective solution to cope with this sensation. As a result of both the sense of worthlessness and the high number of absences, they ended by dropping out from school.

The quality of education cannot be understood by itself, but must be related to the democratisation of schooling, which, in turn, depends on the socio-political and economic situation in the country. Although the number of enrolments has been growing in recent years, the quality has not improved.

The low quality of schooling is also an ideological question. In a savage capitalist system, with an extreme concentration of capital, wealth and income, it is necessary to extend the opportunities of schooling as a way of satisfying the aspirations of the lower classes. On the other hand, it is also necessary to select the opportunities through selection by the quality of schooling. In sum, as stated by Frigato (1984) the unproductiveness of the schooling is productive for capitalism.

No students complained about teachers' low expectations concerning evening students. However, this low expectation was clearly pointed out by most of the teachers. Although students did not refer to this fact, it may have influenced them since, according to Rowley (1989), this is one reason for students' failure to go to school and thus drop out.

Both dropouts and continuing students expressed a great concern about the didactic instructional style of most of the teachers. They expressed feelings of boredom which lead to a lack of interest, an increase in absenteeism and low achievement.

Instructional techniques were adopted by individual teachers according to their knowledge about them, their specific subject, their material resources and the time required to prepare their classes. Several teachers had never had courses about instructional styles or teaching techniques nor had they read about them. Apart from some material resources such as paper for text reproduction, books in the library, a projector for transparencies and a tape recorder/player and a video cassette player there were few, if any, especial resources for subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics. With all of these constraints plus the heavy workload of many teachers, it could not be expected that teachers would use a variety of techniques in their classes. According to Giroux (1986), to some extent, teachers who disregarded students in their classroom practice are themselves victims of working conditions that are determined by a dominant ideology which promotes hegemonic classroom practice and hence, does not allow them to teach as critical educators.

Although lectures were the least appreciated teaching style by students, it was the most frequently used by the teachers. In fact, for some teachers, this was the only one used. Students in general preferred other more enlightened forms such as discussion, exercises, etc. However, as Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) observed, the lecture itself does not necessarily mean a boring class. Depending on the form and how the content is transmitted it can be stimulat-
Teachers themselves felt the need to improve their teaching style but they did not know how. On the other hand, they felt very little or no support from the teachers' counsellor in order to improve their instructional abilities. In fact, most of the time the teachers' counsellor did not know what was going on in the classes. On the other hand, teachers had difficulties in accepting the teachers' counsellor's observation of their class since he used to observe classes only when there was a formal complaint about that particular teacher.

The lack of assistance from the teachers' counsellor disguises his own lack of professional ability. As with the teachers, he also had had a weak training course yet his responsibility is considerable since his task is to advise about teaching methodologies for different subjects. According to Gadotti (1988), he must be an intellectual in Gramsci's sense, that is, the one who organise the production of knowledge in the school.

The lack of school resources found in the research school clearly shows the lack of concern in society for the education of the lower classes. As a consequence of shortages of material and human resources, the school administrators have to spend a considerable amount of time in trying to solve problems generated by these lack of resources. To Mann (1986), in order to be effective, headteachers have to be more involved in the instructional life of the school; to be more in class than in office; to spend more time dealing with the teaching-learning process than with bureaucratic activities; to be present in school not for controlling but for supporting and advising.

The lack of school organisation may influence the behaviour of its students and influence their decision to drop out. At least this was pointed out by a dropout as a reason for leaving school early. As in Beachman's (in Callan, 1988) study, school rules and organisation were mentioned as reasons for dropping out. Several continuing students perceived their freedom to be restricted and revealed that some school rules were making them feel as if they were in a prison which others thought they had too much freedom in school. As in Callan's (1988) research about dropouts, the requirement of a pass to allow students entrance to the in classroom when they arrived few minutes late or in order to leave school early, prompted students to see schools as prisons.

Teachers shared no common definition of school aims. In fact, some of them revealed they had never learned the aims of education, despite their claims to know by experience.

Disruptive effects caused either by strikes or by teachers' absences were severely criticised by dropouts and continuing students. Strikes, in particular, interrupted the learning process and the subsequent rush in order to cover the syllabus provoked stress and anxiety in students. For many students who were already experiencing difficulties in coping with classes, this seemed too much. Consequently, several of them gave up. According to Gadotti et al. (1989), it is necessary, when going on strike in school, to consider the course programme after the strike, in order do not overload students. Although students insisted and teachers promised to discuss this matter with students.
as soon as the classes re-started, this did not occur, provoking in the students a sense of deception, anger and lack of trust in teachers.

Since according to Gramsci (1970) every hegemonic relationship is a pedagogical relationship, teachers should use the strike to teach students how to struggle for a better school and a better society. However, very few students were involved in the teachers’ strike and as the teachers themselves felt that their schedule had been held up, this political and pedagogical role of the strike was not discussed when the strike ended. As Gadotti (1988) observed, although the class struggle does not happen in school, the school can, at least, be a place for discussion and the consideration of social and political questions.

For most students the school was unpleasant and uninteresting. However, they said they accepted it either because they needed a diploma or because they could not afford the expense of studying in a private school. For many students, the only activity they enjoyed in school was the opportunity to socialise with their peers. However, not all of them found this possible. In fact, one dropout left school just because of the lack of friends.
One of the characteristics of participatory research is the active involvement of the researched in the research process. According to Hall (1979; 1981; 1984), Erasmia (1980) and Reason (1988a), participatory research should involve people in the entire research process. However, for some other researchers (Demo, 1984a; Le Boterf, 1984; Thiollent, 1984) this is not necessary since the most important aspect in this kind of research is the researcher's true commitment to solve people's problems. Vio Grossi (1984) pointed out five kinds of participation that took place in different projects undertaken in Peru. According to him, in these projects participation happened: 1) from the return of information to participants; 2) from the method of data gathering; 3) in all research processes in which the theme was chosen by the researcher; 4) in all research processes in which the theme was chosen by the participants; 5) from the educational action which happened during or followed the research. In this present study, due to some constraints such as time and location of the research school, people’s participation was limited to the period of field work and was most significant as an educational action for change in the school. Change, as understood in this study, means the alteration of behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of within-school problems.

Data gathering comprised different techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, meetings and group discussions. Since the participation in the interviews, questionnaire surveys and participant observation was only occasional, that is, did not require a special commitment to the research problem, I am going to limit the analysis to the participation in meetings and group discussions.

Although the data-gathering started at the beginning of May 1989, it was only in the middle of July, after a reasonable amount of data had been collected that meetings and group discussions were arranged. Students' reasons for dropping out were characterised, in the present research, as economic, outside-school (comprising personal and family matters), and within-school reasons. Although all of these reasons were considered in meetings and group discussions, the emphasis was given to the inside or within-school reasons.

8.1 - Participation: Definitions
Participation, in the present research, means taking part in meetings and group discussions occurred in the school during the field work. In this case, the participants were continuing 'students' and 'teachers', that means all professionals of education who were working in the school at that time.
'Meetings', as defined in Chapter Four, were taken to be the kind of reunion which were either occasional or at which there was a large number of participants involved and which, therefore, did not allow a more comprehensive debate. Meeting and group discussion of teachers and students had different kinds of results or outcomes. Meetings were attended by a larger number of people. The large number of participants who wished to express their points of view led to a certain difficulty in restricting the debate to a few themes and did not necessarily lead to a more comprehensive debate and analysis.

Although I based the distinction between a meeting and a group discussion on the level of participation in the discussion, there is no straight line or level to distinguish one from another. However, for a practical reason, 'Group Discussions', as defined in Chapter Four were the kind of reunion which were either more frequent or had fewer participants and so allowed the use of the dialogue technique. They were easier to control and so allowed a more comprehensive debate.

8.2 - Participation: Characterisation

According to UNDIESA (1981) participation can be initiated spontaneously - when people participate voluntarily, without the need of external support; induced - when occurs in a sponsored and officially endorsed way; or coerced - when it is compulsorily determined by some higher authority. In this research, these three different kinds of participation occurred on different occasions, although sometimes participation could be defined as a mixture of different types.

8.2.1 - Participation of Teachers

In Meetings of Teachers

The first meeting with teachers had taken place on a Saturday morning, at the beginning of May 1989. This meeting was called by the school headteacher and was supposed to be a meeting with all school teachers and was intended to discuss school problems. However, only three of the twenty-eight secondary school teachers attended it. Although the number of primary school teachers was higher, their attendance was also very low.

Although only three secondary school teachers attended the first meeting of teachers, their participation can be characterised as coerced since this meeting was called by the school headteacher. The low rate of participation in this meeting was due to the fact that it was held on a Saturday morning, quite apart from the fact that teachers, generally, did not like to attend school meetings. In spite of the fact that it was a meeting with only a few participants, which could have facilitated interaction, the teachers' participation in discussion and suggestions was very limited. After the meeting, I commented on this fact to the headteacher and two other teachers. They agreed that teachers do not like to attend school meetings so that most either do not attend or when they do, they avoid discussion, comments, suggestions and so
on, in order to cut short the meeting.

Four other meetings with teachers were held either during school hours or at the end of the academic year when the classes had already finished. These meetings were also called by school headteacher and in this case the participation was also coerced. The aim of these meeting was to discuss school problems. Approximately 80-90% of teachers participated. The higher rate of participation occurred mainly because these last meetings were held during school hours and teachers had no excuse for not attending. Those who did not come used the same excuses that they used for failing to attend classes - illness or family problem.

At these meetings school problems and ways of tackling them were discussed. Although I tried to keep the dropouts and continuing students' declarations and suggestions in the teachers' minds, these were not considered deeply. With so many questions to discuss and so little time available, it would not have been possible, even if there had been some interest on behalf of the teachers. However, on the other hand, no teacher suggested the need to discuss these questions further. Teachers' lack of interest in educational and students' problems was so pervasive that when I handed out the students' list of recommendations in one of the meetings at the end of the academic year, not a single teacher commented on it. Actually, most of the teachers took the list and without even flick through, put it aside, with their school materials. Almost the same happened when I suggested a list of educational books which were worth reading. Only two teachers (T. 1 and T. 7) showed any interest in looking through it and one of them (T. 1) came to comment on one of the books to me.

Teachers were so averse to meetings that the last meeting of the 1989 academic year needed to be carefully organised, in order to obtain from the teachers as much interest as possible. In order to discuss and organise the last meeting of the year, two previous meetings were hold with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the pedagogic counsellor, the educational counsellor, the school administrator, me and the psychologist who was, temporarily, in the school. As decided during these two encounters, the psychologist would lead the meeting since he was the less involved with the teachers and so, less likely to raise teachers' resistance. As the last meeting of the year aims to evaluate the current academic year, which teachers had always resisted, it was decided to adopt a totally different approach. Instead of discussing the programme, general problems of the school were discussed. This decision was taken during the organisation encounters and it was based in suggestions made by teachers during previous years meeting. The technique adopted was to list the problems and their related reasons and possible solutions, each of them in a different column. The first column - 'problems' - was twice as big as the third - 'possible solutions'. Teachers had no idea what to do in order to solve or minimise the problems, because they kept blaming the government and family for the school's and students' problems. Only one teacher (T. 7) tried, on several occasions, to remember that teachers' actions should not be overlooked in 'reasons' and 'possible solutions' columns.
In Meetings of Teachers and Students

In the middle of July 1989, as soon a reasonable amount of data about the drop out problem had been collected, a meeting, involving evening teachers, students and staff, was called by the researcher who invited all teachers and students to attend it. As it was 'an invitation', it could be said that in this case the participation was induced. However, as it was held during school hours, both teachers and students knew that they were expected to attend it. So, it may be more appropriate to characterise it as coerced.

Although some students failed to attend this meeting, preferring to stay on the sports field, most of them—approximately three hundred and fifty (35 %)—attended it. Teachers of the eleven evening classes and two members of the administrative staff were also present. In this meeting I presented a first account of the problem, based on interviews with dropouts and teachers' and continuing students' questionnaires. After that, participants expressed their opinions as well as their astonishment about both the figures and the explanations. One teacher, for instance, could not believe that students were leaving school because they could no longer put up with the authoritarianism of some teachers. Although some teachers and the deputy headteacher showed their concern about the problem, the biggest number of comments were made by continuing students who neither contested nor seemed surprised by the results. On the contrary, they reinforced the findings and expressed great satisfaction at seeing their problem discussed. Although a number of students made comments, there was a tendency for some of them to express their opinions several times.

In this first data communication, it was not possible to conduct a very organised and deep debate since there was both a great deal of information to convey and a large number of participants who wished to express their point of view. Actually, the main point of this meeting was to promote concern about the subject and the research itself. This meeting had been scheduled to last for a class period—40 minutes—but as the discussion was quite lively, the deputy headteacher allowed it to continue for a further period. It could have lasted longer still since there were several people who wished to express their views. It is important to note that the high number of participants at this meeting was due to the fact that it was held during school hours.

The day before a second teachers' strike (6 Oct.) in the 1989 academic year, a meeting with teachers, students and staff was called by the teachers, in order to discuss the teachers' and students' activities during the strike.

It was supposed to have been attended by at least 11 teachers, who should have been giving classes at that evening. However, the level of participation at this meeting, which can be characterised as spontaneous, was low. As that afternoon's teachers assembly had decided to strike, only seven of them turned up. At the meeting, a student proposed, and it was agreed, that during the strike meetings of students and teachers would be held in the school in order to discuss school problems in general and the dropout question in particular. Both students and teachers agreed with the importance of using these opportunities to discuss these problems, since there were few or no possibilities during school periods and the attempt to have group discussions on Saturdays.
had not been successful. However, in all three attempts that I made to hold a meeting with teachers and students during the two first weeks of the strike I was unsuccessful since teachers failed to attend. Although I had phoned their homes reminding them the meeting and its significance, they simply did not turn up. Only a few teachers gave me a reasonable excuse for not coming. When I asked those who had not given me an excuse why they had not turned up, they answered that it was because they did not wish to give the impression that they were strikebreakers. While this could have been a reason, in my view it was not the only or even the main one, since teachers had originally agreed to the meeting. I believe that teachers 'boycotted' these meetings since they thought I was against them.

Since I was seen as on the side of the students who wanted the classes replaced, teachers interpreted my position as being more attached to the students and consequently as being against them. In fact, during the first two weeks of the strike, there was a cooling in the kind of communication between us. However, when they realised that I was not against their strike, although I was defending the idea of having the classes replaced, the relationship between us started to improve. Actually, it was not too difficult to restore the relationship. In some way, teachers had been aware of their attitudes towards me and the students and, according to Thornley (1977), the acceptance of a legitimate conflict situation by both parties is the first step towards a 'constructive conflict'. On the other hand, although I made it clear that their attitude disappointed both me and the students, which was in some ways a conflict, I also tried to understand and accept the fact and this allowed the conflict to be solved through conciliation. This, I believe, improved their respect towards me, since they realised that for me, school interests were more important than any personal disagreement. This happened in the middle of October 1989.

After that, and before the end of the strike (3 November), a meeting and two group discussions of teachers and students together were held. At the beginning of November I was invited to a teacher's birthday party and in the middle of December to a barbecue organised by a small group of teachers. If on the one hand these informal contacts showed that I had been, at least partially, accepted as a member of the group, on the other hand, it helped to strengthen their confidence in me and cemented our relationship. This demonstrated to me the importance of informal contacts to build up a reliable relationship and to become really accepted by the group.

The third meeting involving teachers and students occurred in the last days of the second teachers' strike (3 Nov.) As some teachers and students were in the school, it was decided, spontaneously, to hold a meeting with them. The number of teachers who attended this meeting was less than expected. As it was a 'last moment' decision, only eight teachers, who were in the school on that occasion, attended this meeting.

As students were very concerned about the length of the strike - four weeks - and the possibilities of replacing the classes, this was the subject of the meeting. It cannot be said that that particular meeting ran smoothly. Teachers were frustrated at not having obtained the salary increase that they sought.
Students were worried about the classes that they had missed and became very resentful and frustrated when the teachers' leader announced that they were not going to replace the missed classes. Students also accused the teachers of being false and hypocritical since teachers had persuaded the students to support their strike because they were not only going to fight for better salaries but also for a better quality of education. However, this question was never included in the teachers' discussions and negotiations. Students felt they had been deceived and questioned the teachers' responsibility and reliability. On the other hand, teachers did not accept that they were guilty of a breach of faith concerning their previous promise to students, and through informal conversation with secretarial staff, I knew that some teachers were blaming me and my support for the students for their reaction against the teachers breaking their promise.

According to Rockwell (in Ezpeleta and Rockwell, 1986) one's conception and practice are generally disjointed and contradictory. The reasons for which are located only in the track of history. If one tries to find the historical reasons why the teachers behaved in such a way, one will find many examples of promises broken by Brazilian authorities. In relation to Santa Catarina, a good example was the failure, on behalf of the elected candidate, to implement the outcomes of the Participatory Planning, as promised during the governmental election in 1982 (Amorim et al., 1985).

The fact that teachers did not recognise their duty concerning their promise to the students generated conflict. Teachers imposed their domination and blocked the achievement of a 'constructive conflict' and so obstructed any possibility of negotiation. Consequently, students had to accept a new schedule imposed upon them by the school administration. Students 'accepted' this new schedule not without a great deal of disenchantment by most of the students and frustration and indignation by those who had planned to take the 'vestibular', that is, the university entrance test. To the later group, any missing content could represent or contribute to their failure on the vestibular.

The teachers' attitude in this particular case as well as in other similar ones revealed their domination over the students. Gramsci (1978c) states that the supremacy of a social group may be manifested either through 'domination' or through 'hegemony'. In the first case, supremacy is exercised by the coercive organs of the state or in Althusser's words, through the Ideological State Apparatuses. Secondly, it is exercised by intellectual and moral leadership objectified and exercised through the institutions of civil society, that is, in the present case through the school and its teachers.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, teachers exerted their supremacy over the students provoking in them two opposite feelings: many students became disenchanted and this increased their apathy, but some others became more conscious of the teachers' power and the need for more radical actions in order to change the power structure. If on the one hand this fact signified a certain setback, on the other it revealed, once more, the existing contradictions in the school and so, the possibilities for change.
Freire (1985) states that the oppressed frequently look to the oppressor as a model to be followed. The behaviour of the teachers seems to agree with Freire and Brito’s (1991) observation that most of the people who want to change the existing situation make use of the tactics, strategies and values of the bourgeois class and so assume their intrinsic authoritarianism. The contradictions between the teachers’ speech and actions can be interpreted within Gramsci’s thought about consciousness. For Gramsci (1970; 1978c), there is frequently an inconsistency or contrast between a man’s conscious thoughts and his unconscious values inferred from his actions. This happens because man has his own conception of the world which he usually manifests in actions, mainly when he acts organically in a group. However, his historical submission and intellectual subordination may influence his actions through the adoption of hegemonic conceptions. So, even in a strike situation which represents a struggle against the present situation or status quo, some teachers’ behaviour represented the hegemonic group’s conceptions and values. This teachers’ behaviour also ratified Freire’s (1985) statement that frequently the oppressor represents to the oppressed a model to be followed.

In 1991 and 1992, I spent some time in Florianópolis due to professional commitment with my employer - the Federal University of Santa Catarina. While there I tried to continue my field work. So, as soon as I arrived there, I contacted the school in order to continue to work with teachers and students. My first and casual contacts were with teachers. Without exception, the teachers were very glad with my return to the school and with the possibility of discussing school problems. In these contacts I knew that a new headteacher and deputy had been elected and both students and teachers were quite disappointed with their authoritarian posture. I, personally, was not surprised and I could not understand how they had won the election. I had known, through the group discussion with students and meeting with teachers during my field work in 1989, that their behaviour was totally inconsistent with their speeches. From teachers, I also knew that they used to obstruct any effort made by the school personnel or outsiders to discuss the school’s educational or pedagogic problems. To them, only the school’s material aspects were of any relevance. Consequently, teachers asked me to hold a meeting in order to break this resistance and to start to discuss the problems.

At the end of October 1991, I contacted the school deputy headteacher with the intention of arranging a meeting with the teachers and students. This was considered impracticable since the school programme was quite tight due to a strike that had taken place earlier in that academic year. As less than two month’s of school activities remained I agreed to hold a meeting at the beginning of the following academic year which would start in March.

To hold the promised meeting was not easy. Several attempts, with the help of school administrator, were made during the first two months of the academic year (March and April 1992). Every time the main excuse was ‘lack of time’, even though, according to the new pedagogical directions, there should have been up to three days of ‘study break’ every two months. The teachers were impatient for a pedagogical meeting and remaining asking me to arrange it. After several unsuccessful attempts and with no collaboration from the headteacher and deputy, at the end of April I contacted the Teaching Board, at the
Secretary of Education, which was responsible for the coordination of the 'study break' in the schools. They were already worried about the headteacher's and deputy's resistance to discussing school pedagogical issues. With their support, a meeting was held on 4 June 1992. This meeting was held in the evening session (16:30 - 10:00) and was attended by the secondary school teachers, headteacher and deputy headteacher, school administrators (3), educational counsellor, school class leaders and members of Teaching Board from the Secretary of Education (3). As it was the teachers who asked for this meeting it can be characterised as spontaneous.

In the first forty minutes, approximately, data from research about the Philosophy Classes, undertaken in the school by a previous teacher who was graduating in Philosophy, were presented. The remaining time was used to present my research data and to discuss it. The decision to present the research data about the Philosophy Classes was taken because of the many data similarities in the data from this research and my dropout study. The similarities were concerned with teacher-student relationships, teachers' methodology, course contents, etc.

For each topic presented in this meeting, I selected some examples of continuing students and dropouts' statements which I considered most significant. Although no teacher's name was mentioned either by me or by the other researcher, a teacher (T. 4) considered some of the criticism unfair to him and questioned the validity of both researches. It was not without some effort that both researchers tried to convince him that although the criticism was intended to indicate the overall situation, it might also refer to a particular teacher, but that it need not necessarily be him. Although during my fieldwork, in 1989, this particular teacher revealed to me his lack of confidence and weaknesses in teaching, he tried, in the meeting, to show that none of those criticisms presented were related to his performance. This teacher's behaviour brought a moment of discomfort to the meeting which was not, however, greatly disturbed, thanks a friend (I, 2) who managed to calm him down.

Due to the time constraints there was little opportunity for discussion in the above described meeting. Even so, class leaders and some teachers were, in some way, glad to see the similarities in both research findings. One teacher called attention to the significance of the similarities saying that

"... it is more than proved that we must stop blaming the Government for all school problems. Both researches proved that we have a lot to do with this situation. Now it is time to examine our conscience, see what we have done wrong and start to act differently, to change the situation. The way things are does not please either the students or us (T. 7)."

Several teachers expressed the importance of having more of this kind of meeting. It was agreed to hold a group discussion in the near future. A few days later one of the school administrators told me that the primary school teachers were asking me to hold a meeting/group discussion with them too; I readily agreed.
In Group Discussions of Teachers

As it was pointed out in the previous section (8.1), there is no clear distinction between a more participative meeting and a group discussion. Even so, there was no group discussion of teachers during my field work in 1989. All encounters with teachers had been more like a meeting due to the limited level of participation. However, in 1992, when I spent some time in Brazil, there were two group discussions with teachers, one of secondary school and one of primary school teachers.

I have limited my research subject to secondary school. However, primary school teachers were very concerned with the increasing number of school-related problems and the lack of opportunities to discuss them under the present administration (headteacher and deputy). So, they saw, in my research, an opportunity of breaking the administration resistance to a pedagogical meeting and asked me to hold a group discussion with them. This took place in the middle of June. In fact, they were so eager to discuss their problems that at the beginning of the discussion all the teachers tended to speak at the same time.

As the primary school was not included in the present research this group discussion is not going to be described here. However, I cannot avoid noting that the specific problems of that group of teachers and students were discussed over a period of four hours. In this first opportunity to discuss their problems, teachers appeared to be more concerned to open their heart than to plan actions to solve the problems. For this reason I believe that this meeting may have represented more a 'safety valve' than a real step for change. On the other hand, it also shows the teachers' need for pedagogic support or guidance.

Primary school teachers showed themselves more ready to criticise either themselves or one another than secondary school teachers. This may be because they knew that they were not the subjects of my research and so, their comments would not appear in any 'report'.

Although many problems were pointed out, though none of them was comprehensively debated, the teachers very much enjoyed the discussion and felt it had been quite profitable. At least they could have a picture of the problems of the whole school and discuss some of the reasons for them. They also arranged with one of the school administrators to have more of these meetings in order to discuss more comprehensively the problems identified and to plan some action to alleviate them.

It is important to say that as in the secondary school, primary school teachers blamed the government and out-of-school reasons such as family problems and the economic situation as the main causes for school failure.

After the meeting of teachers and students held on 4 June 1992 and as a consequence of it, a group discussion with secondary school teachers was held on the evening of 30 June 1992. Approximately 75% of the teachers attended this spontaneous group discussion with the aim of discussing within-school problems and suggest action to tackle them. The teachers who did not turn up were on
duty in another school on that day. In this meeting we used a technique previously and successfully adopted. We divided the blackboard into three parts, under the headings: problems; reasons; possible solutions. Although all of these labels were inter-related, for methodological reasons we tried to discuss them separately. This group discussion lasted for nearly four hours and many suggestions for improving the within-school problems were mentioned.

Unlike the meetings and group discussions of teachers held during the field work period in 1989, in this group discussion the teachers collaborated well. Several reasons may have contributed to this. First, according to a school administrator, the secondary school educational counselor and some teachers, students' consciousness had improved and with it their pressure to have problems solved too. Second, the lack of concern, from the present headteacher and deputy, with pedagogical questions. Third, and related to the second, teachers' dissatisfaction with the present school pedagogical and political (authoritarian) situation and the lack of opportunity for the teachers to discuss these related problems. Fourth, the relationship developed between the teachers and researcher during the field work, mainly during the final weeks when teachers started to accept and trust me.

In this group discussion one teacher (T. 17) who had previously attended only the first meeting of teachers (May 1989) turned up. However, I cannot say that this was progress since this teacher attended the meeting only with the intention of complaining that the headteacher and deputy had not granted him a dispensation to attend a short course. In fact, this teacher and a colleague, new in the school, placed themselves far from the others and talked to each other throughout the discussion, suspending it only for a moment as a result of the glances of their colleagues, the stopping of the discussion and the direct appeal of both the headteacher and the researcher. This teacher's behaviour was exactly the same as with his students and showed that teachers' talk did not necessarily coincide with their behaviour. After this meeting I learned, through another teacher (I. 18), that this particular teacher (T. 17) had said that he "never went to my meeting because he did not have any rapport with me and this should be because we probably had been enemies in an earlier stage". In my opinion the reality was that this teacher was far and away the most criticised concerning his relationship with students and he knew what dropouts and continuing students used to say about him.

In Group Discussions of Teachers and Students
Although I had hoped to have several and frequent meetings of both teachers and students, this was not possible. In fact there were only three. The first was held on a Saturday afternoon, in August 1989. Twelve students and two teachers, apart from the headteacher and the deputy head, attended that meeting. None of the absent teachers sent an excuse for not turning up. Although I knew the resistance of teachers in attending meetings, I had expected a larger attendance, since, during the process of school selection, when they were asked for collaboration, they had promised to do so. It is true that the time - Saturday afternoon - was not convenient for teachers. However, according to them and the school administration, that was the best (or less inconvenient) time at the weekend since Saturdays morning were usually used for shopping and Sundays, they preferred to spend with their families.
Since it was a small group, and the meeting lasted for two hours, the debate was very profitable although a little stressful. This was mainly because both students and teachers had so much to say that all of them tended to speak at the same time. Also, one teacher and two students tried, in expressing their points of view, to dominate the meeting. The lack of practice in expressing his feeling to any authority, led one student to be a bit aggressive. This, however, was solved without too much difficulty since all participants were willing to collaborate for the best and both students and teachers enjoyed the opportunity of speaking openly to each other, although they did not always agree with the other's criticisms. At the end of the meeting one could hear expressions such as:

If we had more of this kind of meeting, I truly believe, the school would be different (T. 26).

It's nice to have this kind of meeting. At least we can express our point of view and see it being considered (CS. 6).

We should have this kind of meeting once a month. Problems wouldn't accumulate and solutions would be easier (CS. 32).

At the end of this meeting, a further Saturday meeting was arranged two weeks later. However, on that occasion, no teacher turned up. Since I was already concerned with the difficulties of bringing teachers to school on Saturdays and as the students had started to become involved with the presidential election campaign, which would bring further difficulties in holding meetings on the Saturday, I abandoned the attempt to arrange further meetings on these days.

During the last days of the strike (31 Oct. and 2 Nov. 1989) two group discussions with teachers and students were held. The first of these encounters was arranged at the last moment, availing to teachers and students who were in school at that time, the opportunity to discuss the school's problems. Since only a few teachers were coming to school, the attendance rate was low (10), yet spontaneous. This group discussion lasted approximately three hours and at the end of it a further one was arranged. Nine teachers attended this one on 2 November; three of them had not attended the previous one. Three of the four teachers who did not attend the second of these two encounters were the most criticised by students and by some of their colleagues and did not give any excuse for not attending. The fourth decided to make use of the last days of the strike to visit his parents inland.

It is convenient to remember that during the teachers' strike, few teachers used to attend their assembly and still fewer to pop in to the school. In fact, many of them 'interpreted' the strike period as 'extra-holidays'.

Only a few students participated in these group discussions, and although some mutual accusations occurred during them, they turned out to be quite profitable. Questions about the relationship between students and teachers, the curriculum and assessment were discussed. Although these questions were not
exhausted, a good insight was obtained from the point of view of both sides - students and teachers. These two group discussions provided additional information regarding the issues mentioned above. They also provided the opportunity to observe a mature debate between teachers and students and how students' power could emerge from their increased knowledge (see 8.2.2).

8.2.2 - Participation of Students

In Meetings of Students
During the fieldwork only two meetings of students were held (5 June and 18 Dec. 1989) and both of them were attended only by students' representatives. At the beginning of June 1989, soon after the first meeting with teachers, I had contacted the school Students' Union and class representatives with the aim of explaining the purpose and methodology of my research. They became quite interested in the research since, for the first time, someone was trying to help them in the issues concerned within-school problems. On that occasion I also asked for their support and co-operation and they readily agreed. Their main help was in transmitting messages from me to the students (e.g., invitation for a meeting or group discussion) and bring messages from students and/or dropouts. As the participation or attendance in this meeting was the result of an invitation, I am inclined to characterise it as spontaneous although I agree that may have had a little inducement.

The second meeting with students was held at the end of the academic year on 18 December 1992 with the aim of discussing and finalising the students' list of recommendations to alleviate the within-school problems. The recommendations were produced based on the suggestions collected by interviews, questionnaires and group discussions. This meeting was attended by fourteen students who represented the seven classes of first and second grade. The third grade was not represented as they were having a graduation party. As this meeting was a natural consequence of a previous work it can be said to have occurred spontaneously.

Meetings of Teachers and Students
Approximately 85% of evening secondary school students participated in the first meeting of teachers and students (middle of July 1989) which was held during school hours. The remained students decided to go to the sports field rather than attend the meeting. As this meeting was held during school hours and students knew they were expected to attend it, their participation can be characterised as coerced.

In the next two meetings of students and teachers, soon after and before teachers' strike (6 Oct. and 3 Nov. 1989), attendance of students was less than 50% although in both cases it occurred spontaneously. The reason for so low attendance in the first case was the news in the media, saying that teachers were already on strike. Consequently, many students who had heard this news did not turn up to school. On the second case, students were not coming to school because of the teachers' strike. Only those who had known that the strike was going to be ended turned up to the school in order to check the
As described earlier (section 8.2.1) the meeting of 3 of November was a bit agitated since the teachers broke their promise to replace those classes missed during the strike. This fact showed, in a very clear way, the teachers' power in school. On the other hand, although disenchanted and frustrated by the about teachers' attitude, students submitted themselves to the situation of seeing their wishes ignored.

The students' passivity to the power of the teachers was a consequence of the 'culture of silence' which developed among the oppressed the myth of a 'natural inferiority' and prevented them from having a 'structural perception' of the situation (Freire, 1985: 50). Apart from this, the authoritarian regime imposed on the Brazilian society for two decades resulted in a submissive society which passively accepted the imposed order from above. Concerning this question, Lima (1980: 51) very well notes that, after an apprenticeship of ten or twenty years of scholar autocracy, to suddenly ask a youth to be a democratic and participative citizen, means poking fun at the power of school and the autocratic structure of families.

Only students leaders attended the meeting of teachers and students on 4 June 1992. For this meeting, I went to classes, explained the aim of the meeting and invited the students' leader to attend it and then pass the information to their colleagues. As the student leaders had the duty of representing their colleagues, I cannot say that their participation was spontaneous. I would say that students participation, in this case, was coerced.

In Group Discussions of Teachers and Students

The first group discussion of teachers and students was on a Saturday afternoon (5 Aug. 1989). Only a few students turned up (8 boys and 3 girls), spontaneously. A further encounter was arranged two week later. However, in that occasion, no teacher turned up. Because of this and at the request of the students, we used the opportunity to discuss the presidential campaign which was going on that time.

Two other group discussions were held during the last days of the teachers' strike (31 Oct. and 2 Nov, 1989). Since only a few students used to pop in the school during the strike period (approximately 8 to 12), the attendance rate was low (8 - 10), yet spontaneous. From those who used to go to school during the strike, some went in order to learn how the strike was going on and to discuss it with teachers who eventually were there; a couple used to go to school to meet and for one girl, it was a way of escaping from her family environment. Although at the beginning of the strike period this girl and the couple were not so interested in discussing the strike question, as time went by they became quite interested and spontaneously participated in both group discussions. Their involvement with people who were interested in discussing school problems and the lack of opportunity to be involved in other subjects of conversation, developed in them a new concern.

In The Modern Prince, Gramsci (1970) emphasises the importance of political parties in the development and propagation of conceptions of the world and ac-
According to Demo (1986) it was within the party that society practices the
debate about its own future, builds up opinions, judges its leaders, etc..
Students' experiences may have influenced the level of debate, since the
students who attended these group discussions were either more concerned with
school problems or were active members of a political party, and so, were more
used to participating in debates and analysis. Some of these students had
already discussed Freire in their political party meetings and one of them had
read a book about Gramsci. On the other hand, only one of the 28 secondary
school teachers had any ideas about Freire's educational thought before the
research started. Two others started to discover some of Freire's ideas in a
course which they started during my field work in the school. When mentioned
by me, none of the teachers knew who Gramsci was. The same happened with other
political or educational writers.

Gramsci (1971) defines intellectuals as those who exercise an organic function
in a wider sense, whether in the field of production, culture or politics. He
also characterises an intellectual by her/his commitment and social function
rather than by their specific academic skills or interests. So, the activity
of an organic intellectual can be socio-political. In this way, I dare to
classify the active participant students as intellectuals since they were
committed both to developing their political academic skills and to social
functions. In Freire's sense, they had already reached the 'critical transi­
tivity' level of consciousness, that is, the highest level, according to the
classification presented by Shor (1993). In this level people think holisti­
cally and critically about their conditions. Some of them were also committed
to praxis, that is, producing knowledge based on action-reflection-action,
since they used to discuss and analyse their political practice.

For Gramsci (1971) a major function of schooling is the development of intel­
lectuals. If the above mentioned group of students can be classified as intel­
lectuals, unfortunately it is not thanks to the school. They had developed
their critical consciousness through membership of their political party,
which reinforce the importance attributed to the activities of political
parties by both Gramsci and Freire. Their level of critical consciousness, in
comparison with the teachers, also proved that teachers and students always
have something to learn from each other. With their practice they are a model
for other students - and teachers - and perform the role of the teachers, that
should be to develop organic intellectuals.

Ribeiro (1987), in analysing the political consciousness of primary and sec­
ondary school teachers in São Paulo - Brazil, affirms the importance of the
political party on the political education of teachers. For her, it is impor­tant for the political education of teachers that some of them be a militant
member of a political party. However, while there were, in the research
school, several students who had been participating on political movements,
there was only one teacher actively involved in political activities. On the
other hand, Ribeiro also recalls that students' political activities are
facilitated by their age and economical situation, which is usually guaranteed
by their families. Apart from this, their uncertain economical condition leads
to a political consciousness of their own problem (Ribeiro, 1987).
For several authors (Gramsci, 1978a; Hall, 1981; Tandon, 1981b; Walker, 1984; Freire, 1985), knowledge is power, and according to D emo (1986), it is not possible to have a participative process if we cannot change the unequal power structure. Political consciousness, that is, the kind of knowledge which these students who used to participate in group discussions of teachers and students had, may have either given them more power or weakened that of the teachers. The fact is that in these group discussions, students revealed themselves to be very confident and less intimidated by teachers' power. They managed to participate equally in these debates. Yet, it is not possible to say that the power structure had disappeared. On several occasions some teachers tried to impose their authority either through the 'validity' of what they were saying or on their insistence on imposing their own views.

In Group Discussions of Students
All twelve group discussions with students only were held during class periods, when teachers did not turn up. These group discussions were attended by an average of 20-30 students. In these group discussions the data gathered through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation were discussed. Although some students were reluctant to participate in the discussion and analysis of the data, others were really enthusiastic. However, this enthusiasm was not always spontaneous but emerged over time, as exemplified by the experience of one of the most enthusiastic participants. The first time that I went to his class for a group meeting, this student, with others, had already escaped to the sports ground. However, a few minutes later they returned to the classroom, since the headteacher had convinced them about the importance of discussing within-school problems. After the meeting, this student came to my side and expressed his feeling saying:

Sorry about that! I was thinking that it would be one more of those silly and boring meetings but I really enjoyed it. Fortunately I was wrong. (CS. 4)

After that event he never failed to attend a group discussion and later on, every time that this student knew that some teachers would not turn up, he used to come where I was and happily acknowledged the fact that we (they and I) were going to have another discussion. Other similar cases which happened with individuals or groups could be mentioned.

On two occasions when I went to a class for a group discussion, students were worried about the next lesson's test. Knowing that in these circumstances the discussion would probably not be very profitable, I proposed, on both occasions, to use half the period for discussing and the other half for studying. In both cases the students agreed with my proposal and collaborated in order to make the most of the discussion. In one of these cases, it was a double lesson period (90 min.) and the next lesson they would have a test in English. The test would be based on a roll of questions already given to them by their teacher. None of the students had answered all of the questions and some were really confused. Working all together and discussing question by question we finished the task sooner than expected. So, I used the spare time to discuss the advantage of working together, sharing experiences and helping each other. In the next few days, several students from this class came to tell me that
they had obtained the best English mark in that academic year or that with
the good mark they had been given they had obtained the required number of
points to ensure they would not be kept back. Although I had already achieved
a good relationship with this class, I can say that this experience strength­
ened even more our rapport. This experience showed me that in order to get or
improve collaboration we must negotiate and that to give way does not neces­
sarily mean to lose. The outcome of a setback can be rewarding. The question
is to know how to take the best profit of it.

Once, when I went to a class for a group discussion, the students had already
started to discuss the lack of a physical education teacher - not a compulsory
subject for the evening classes. It was the second time that I had been in
that class. The first time all students escaped before my arrival. I was eager
to start the discussion with them but on the other hand I knew their interest
in that matter and the inconvenience of changing the subject. So, I decided to
let their discussion go on and helped them in organising the different opin­
ions on that matter. Next time I went to that class all students were waiting
for me.

Normally, when a teacher failed to turn up, students used to try to re-sched­
ule their lessons so that they could finish them earlier. When this was not
possible they used either to spend their free time in the schoolyard or sports
field or escape from the other lessons and leave school earlier. Usually they
used to escape the other lessons only when the free lesson was one of the
last three. With only a few exceptions, students enjoyed having a free lesson
either to play with their mates or to go home earlier. So, if someone intended
to used a free lesson, s/he should be in the classroom as soon as the previous
lesson had finished in order to stop students from leaving the classroom, as
they never liked using the free lessons for other school activities. Conse­
quently, despite the fact that students knew - through the meeting that I had
already held with them, teachers and staff - what I was doing in the school,
the first time that I went to their classroom for a group discussion, I was
received with certain apathy or indifference, if not suspicion. However, after
a while, some students started to be interested and became involved in the
discussions. After the first meeting I was always warmly, if not enthu­siasti­
cally, welcomed. However, not all students were really interested or partici­
pated in the discussion. I can say that one of the key constraints in these
group discussions was apathy or indifference.

According to Freire (1970), apathy or indifference is caused by the lack of
consciousness generated by the 'culture of silence' and it is one of the
constraints to social transformation. It can only be defined in a dialectical
sense, as a response to oppressive relations. In this way, students were
apathetic only because they had been forced to internalise the hegemonic
ideology and to accept a passive role within an exploitative and oppressive
structure.
8.3 - Participation as a Learning Process

Participation has a fundamental role in participatory research, which comprises social investigation, education and action to transform the reality. Participation, in participatory research, can occur in different places or at different levels: only on the return of information to the participants; during the data gathering; throughout the research process; from the educational action which is intrinsic to participatory research.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in the present study, the participation of those under investigation was limited to the period of the field work and was most significant as an educational action or a learning process. Education, in participatory research means fundamentally raising people’s consciousness mainly through the collective analysis of the data gathered.

Although there are several ways of carrying out collective analysis, dialogue was one of the most valued. According to Freire (1972, 1976), dialogue is a method of inquiry and interaction and a method of raising people’s consciousness. In the present research, due to circumstantial constraints, dialogue was exercised almost exclusively in group discussions.

Group discussions were centred on the most significant issues that came up in the interviews, questionnaires and observation and its aim was to help the participants in the understanding of the inside-school problems which could lead to student dropout. The discussion focused on 1) the nature of the dropout problem and why it was a problem; 2) what were its causes and; 3) possible solutions. I tried to consider one dropout’s reasons and analyse them at each occasion. However, this was neither always possible nor easy since the discussion of any problem involved the understanding of several others.

In these discussions, which used the dialogue technique, I tried to follow Freire’s (1976) recommendation of starting the discussion from the daily experiences, going from the students’ ‘common sense’ understanding to a more systematic understanding or ‘good sense’, in Gramsci’s (1971) words. For Gramsci (1969), the common sense, even though inconsistent at a general level, had a value for understanding and articulating everyday practice. Vio Grossi also recommends starting discussions from the points of view of the people concerned. In his words:

What participatory research attempts precisely is to initiate a process of disindociration in order to allow the people to detach the cultural elements that have been imposed on them (…) and the ‘participatory’ component contributes to making this start precisely from the people’s viewpoint or stage of development (Vio Grossi, 1981: 74-5).

Gramsci (1971) emphasised the importance of developing in students the ability to understand reality and the way of transforming it. To achieve this, it is necessary to introduce into education a political purpose which can lead to the establishment of a counter-hegemony. The achievement of this aim requires,
according to Saviani, two different but simultaneous and connected moments. One, which he considers negative, consists in the criticism of the dominant ideology. The other - positive - consists in working over the 'common sense' understanding and extracting from it its 'good sense' in order to transform it into a new conception of the world, which is more appropriate to the achievement of popular interests (Saviani, 1983: 11). In my opinion, this is the real educational process in Gramsci's sense, since both politics and education are involved. Or in other words, the pedagogic process is also a political one.

The problematization of a situation is one of the best ways of provoking dialogue and reflection (Freire, 1972). Taking into consideration Freire's advise, I usually started the group discussions by presenting some research data (figure and/or quotation) and problematizing it. In Freire' terms, data were the 'generative themes'. In order to orientate the discussion and to teach students to think in a logical and more structured way, I usually divided the blackboard into three parts, that is, one for each of the three above mentioned issues.

To convert students' 'common sense' into 'good sense', I tried to follow Freire's (1970) recommendation that to overcome false consciousness it is necessary to have a historical understanding and its cause-effect relationship. So, whenever possible or convenient, I tried to give them an historical insight into what had been discussed, as in the following discussion concerning teachers authoritarianism:

Sa - Teachers are used to coming and say: do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that. It's a pure command. They don't bother to ask us how we feel, what we want, what we would like... We never have the opportunity of saying anything.

(Other students comments)

R. - In your opinion, why do they (teachers) behave in such a way?

(Silence)

R. - Why are the teachers so authoritarian?

Sb - Because they have always been like that. ... They are used to being like that.

Sc - Because they are the teachers. They order and we must obey.

Sd - It is the same as at home. We must obey whether we like it or not ...
Sc - ... They are superior and so they have the power...

R. - How do you think the power-game works between teachers and their superiors? Do you think they have the opportunity to discuss orders given to them?

... 

R. - Why do they act in such a way? That is, do you think this power-game is related to Brazilian History?

Sd - Ah, now I recall! The teacher (T, 19) said that here in Brazil we have always had an authoritarian regime and this was worst during the revolution (Note: he meant the coup d'état).

R. - (At that point I explored the question of power distribution in Brazilian society, comparing the State power with the familiar and scholar ones. I motivated them to analyse teacher behaviour within the Brazilian political and historical circumstances, emphasizing that man is made by history as well as making it. During the analysis/discussion students started to exercise their historical understanding as shown by the following examples)

Sb - Now I can see why we need to study History. ...

Sa - So, if Lula (left wing presidential candidate) wins, we are going to have a more democratic system and teachers and bosses will be more friendly. ...

Sd - Yes, but when this will happen I will be using a walking-cane... (it means that he will be very old)

R. - (Students noted the fact that some teachers were less authoritarian than others. I emphasised the individual's personality traits and motivated them to compare the behaviour of different friends and relatives.)

Other examples of exercising the historical understanding could be presented, such as the discussion about the student movement and its dismantlement during the military regime; the lack of political interest on behalf of most of the teachers and the huge political repression suffered by many of them in their graduation course, which took place during the military regime, plus the political/philosophical concept that education is and should remain neutral; teachers' lack of democratic behaviour and their lack of opportunity to exercise it; teachers' methodology centred on themselves and their academic formation and their lack of opportunity to exercise their own skills of working in groups, etc.

I tried to analyse the students' and teachers' situation as well as that of
the whole society as the result of an historical process. In doing so, I did not forget to emphasise that history is not only given but also produced by people. We are both the product and the producers of our history. It is a dialectical process. I also emphasised a cause-effect relationships in order to develop a critical consciousness.

People or students' knowledge is usually fragmented, incomplete and sometimes contradictory with their practice. The contradictions existing both within the school itself and in the teachers' and students' behaviour was also pointed out, as the following extract indicates:

Sa - Schools should have a more friendly environment. Teachers are so ignorant (sic) they even forget to greet us...

Sb - ... When they arrive they shut themselves in the staff room. Every spare moment they shut themselves there. They never join us.

Sa - The only teacher who spends some time with us is (T. 7).

R. - I wonder if this is really true!

Sc - Other teachers such as (T. 18, T. 2, T. 14, T. 13) also spend a little time with us.

Sa - But not as much as (T. 7).

(Most of the students agreed with this complaint.)

R. - Now, please. Think twice and carefully before you answer my question. Which of you ever greets the teachers either when you arrive at school or when you pass them in the street? Please be sincere and fair when answering.

(Only three out of twenty three students answered yes; five - most of the time; eight - some times; and the remaining - very seldom.)

R. - So, it seems to me that many of you, who complain about teachers, behave in the same way. How do you explain this contradiction?

...(Students' excuses)
R. - And don't you think that teachers may also have their own excuses for not doing what you are expecting? For instance, for many of them, the time they spend in the staff room is the only chance they have to rest for a while after teaching from early morning. ... And they never 'shut' the door, unless they are having a meeting. Apart from this, I frequently see students in the staff room speaking with a teacher. Isn't this true?

(Silence)

R. - So, let's sum up, listing the same complaints we have been discussing, but being fair and comparing students' and teachers' behaviour. After this, we will list some suggestions of how to behave to improve the unfriendly environment.

I emphasised the fact that the school as well as teachers' and students' behaviour had their contradictions and so had its dynamic elements. Thus, change is possible, in spite the existing alienation of both teachers and students which had driven them to passivity or change-resistant attitudes. The students' own behaviour was particularly emphasised since the "comprehension of the social is always determined by the comprehension of the individual" (Freire and Macedo, 1987: 59) and according to Roberto Freire and Fausto Brito, "it is only possible to promote social change if we assume our own individuality" (Freire and Brito, 1991:32).

We discussed the school situations where the exploitative and oppressive apparatus could be identified and the possibilities of changing it. When students complained about the divorce between what they were learning and what they really needed or wanted to know, I put to them questions about the relationship between the school curriculum - formal and hidden - and power, such as: what is considered to be school knowledge and why? which class does school knowledge benefit most? how is school knowledge selected, transmitted and evaluated? how is the hidden curriculum imposed upon students and its aims? I tried to stress, in particular, the question about the lack of student participation in preparing their study plan and in choosing the material to develop the syllabuses; the lack of texts which deal with students experience and youth culture; the dominant ideology inserted in school material, mostly in the stories presented in the reading books of the first half (four grades) of primary school; the lack, in the curriculum of vocational courses, of a syllabus which deal with workers' law or their skills in negotiating with bosses; and the teaching methodology which does not respect students' physical and psychological conditions and denies them the development of a critical understanding, that is, 'consciousness' in Freire's words or 'good sense' in Gramsci's. The connection between the school situation and the broader society was frequently reviewed.

The exploitative and oppressed aspect was also discussed when the question of teachers denying of replacing classes was raised by students. The teachers exploited the students' naivety and persuaded them to support their strike since they were going to struggle for better educational conditions, when, in fact,
they were thinking only of their own salaries. On the other hand teachers have also been exploited by the government through the squeeze on their salaries and the intensification of the labour process through the increase in the number of classes and the reduction in the time available for class preparation.

The power structure was particularly discussed since, according to Freire and Brito (1991), one's liberation depends on the elimination of the authoritarian power relation to which s/he is submitted. So s/he has to be conscious of the political dimension of the social relation to which s/he is subjected and the possibilities as well as the ways of transforming it. But, I always emphasised that they should remember that Freire states that liberation is a painful childbirth (Freire, 1970: 25). Still, according to Freire, for the oppressed to be able to struggle for their liberation, they must perceive their reality "not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (Freire, 1970: 25).

I tried to show them that the students' reality could only be modified in proportion to the extent to which there was a change in their power relation with teachers and other school authorities. I emphasised that any negotiation was more likely to be successful if one could demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge about what had been negotiated and the solidity of the group. Two days after I had stressed this to a class, students told me that for the first time they managed to negotiate the test style and date with a teacher (T. 4). When I asked them how was this possible the class leader said:

First, we asked X (the educational counsellor) when teachers ought to deliver the marks for the class council. Them, we agreed that rather than only one or two students - as always occurs - all of us would insist with the teachers, ... We promised to him that we would do 'well' and that he would not be sorry for this. ... It was not so easy but we made it. (S. 39)

However, they tried the same approach with another teacher (T. 11) and were not successful since this teacher had already made his arrangements and did not intend to change them "to facilitate a group of lazy students". Students were very annoyed as can be seen by the following dialogue extract:

Sa - We lazy? How can he say this? Lazy is he who is rich and never needed to work and if he is now teaching, it is only to have something to do.

Sb - How can he say that I am lazy if I get up at 6 o'clock and never go to bed before midnight?

Sc - And me, who apart from doing the same need to work all weekend cleaning, washing, ironing, ...

... R. - Let's analyse both sides. To start with, how many of you are not employed, at the present?
(Fourteen out of twenty three who were in class were not working.)

R. - And now, how many of these fourteen can't, on average, have at least 2-3 hours a day for studying and preparing the homework?

(Only two boys and four girls could not find 2-3 hours a day for studying.)

R. - And what about the eight remaining students? I wonder if they were 'prepared' to take the test and if on average their marks are better than those who can't afford some hours for studying during the week days?

(Several students answered at the same time. I needed to ask them for to take turns in commenting.)

Sd - (Giggling) Only X, (student) who is the 'genius' of this school.

... 

R. - So, it seems that (T. 11) could be not 'totally' wrong!

(Several students answered at the same time. I remained silent until they were quiet.)

R. - Yes, I agree with you that she should not generalise. That this is unfair for those who are working in a job or at home, or in both places. But, weren't you also being unfair when you said that "he couldn't have said that"? Didn't he have some justification? Weren't you following in the same mistake as him? You should have tried to convince him arguing that most of you work forty or more hours per week and that the last few weeks had been too busy to prepare yourselves for several tests.

Sc - Even so, I doubt that would be able to convince (T. 11) to yield in anything, unless it is convenient for him.

R. - So, you seen that the same argument, in favour of the same cause, can produce different results. Why does this happens?

Se - (The 'genius') To me is a question of a power-game and democracy. We managed to convince (T. 4) because he is less stubborn and so more democratic than (T. 11). There are some people that are not easy to convince and (T. 11) is one of these.
R. - So, now you can see, (T. 11) strongly uses the power granted to her by the school authorities. ... I am not saying that I agree with his attitude. What I mean is that while he doesn't think in a different way, while he isn't a little more democratic, it will not be easy, if not impossible to negotiate with him.

Some days later I saw a group giggling in the school yard during a class period. I went there to ask if they had a free period and if we could have a group discussion. This was not the case. They were out of classroom because they "wished to show the teacher (T. 19) that 'the majority win', since the teacher had not agreed to explain his subject again before the test". Although I was not entirely convinced by the students' argument, they managed to persuade the teacher to explain again the main topics of the subject taught. At the next group discussion with that group I discussed with them if there was not another way to convince the teacher. They said that they had tried all other means possible and at the end had decided to use the same 'weapon' that teachers were used to, that is, a 'boycott' or small strike. Considering that there were frequent complaints about this teacher's (T. 19) teaching methodology and authoritarianism, I had to agree with the students' strong resolution to solve the problem, although I was not sure about the 'weapon' used. I was worried about the possibility of that kind of action coming into fashion and consequently spoiling my relationship with the teachers.

I used to induce participants to express their points of view about the theme in discussion and, usually, only after that I expressed my own, since I aimed both to start from the students' 'common sense' understanding and to motivate them to expose their own points of view. For instance, during a group discussion a few days before the presidential election, the question of candidate was eventually raised, giving the opportunity of discussing different points of view, as showed by the following extract:

Sa - X (a student) is going to vote for Maluf. Isn't she crazy!

R. - Wait a moment! Why do you think she is crazy? Only because she intends to vote for Maluf? Don't you think that she can think the same of you who had chosen Lula?

Sa - (Smiling) Oh, teacher! I know that you are thinking the same as me.

R. - I wouldn't vote for Maluf at all, but before judging, we have to know why she thinks that Maluf is the best candidate. But since this question was raised, let's discuss it further. However, before I ask any questions, let's prepare the blackboard to work out this matter.

(I divided the blackboard with an horizontal line, leaving a part for PROS and another for AGAINST and with a vertical line, we separated candidates.)

R. - Now, X, could you tell us why do you think that Maluf is the
best candidate for directing our fate in the next five years and what do you think about the other candidate? Let's start with the 'pros' of each one.

(Very reluctantly she started to point out some reasons, but was questioned by other students. The discussion became so exciting to the students that I could not control them and had to let them work it out together instead one by one as planned. We had not enough time to finish the exercise on that occasion. As the next meeting occurred after the first round election, we continued the exercise discussing only the two remaining candidates.)

The opportunity to discuss different points of view or 'versions' from the sociological and historical perspectives, helped students to have a more comprehensive understanding of the question.

According to Freire, the horizontal relationship between teachers and students did not take from the teacher the biggest responsibility in the educational process (Freire and Shor, 1987). Although I had the opportunity to clarify and modify the point of view of many of the students, it was not my intention to impose my own. However, I am not so sure that I was successful in doing this since on many occasions students had only little or no idea about the discussed subject and they had no further opportunity to discuss the subject with others or to read about it and develop their own ideas.

The dialogue exercise developed in group discussion seemed to encourage students to use it with other teachers. Although only one teacher (T. 14) commented to me that he had the feeling that some students were becoming more critical, more demanding and less inclined to accept instructions, I knew, through the secretarial staff, that some teachers were blaming me and the group discussion for changing the behaviour of some students and/or classes. As this occurred after the strike, when students became very annoyed with the teachers because they had broken their promise of replacing the missed classes, I cannot be sure what had influenced them more: the group discussion exercise or the students' indignation towards the teachers' behaviour. Teachers may have preferred to blame the group discussion exercise rather than admit their fault and so students' resentment and the consequent change in their attitudes. The appeal for a more democratic and fair society provoked by the presidential election may also have influenced students' behaviour.

I encouraged students to use ‘dialogue’ in every possible situation, not only in school but also at home and work. One evening, before the classes started, a girl came to speak to me (S. 51). I knew that she was having huge argument with her father, over the fact that he was drinking. In that occasion, she said that instead to yell with her father every night when she arrived at home, as she was used to do, she was now ‘dialoguing’ with him, ‘problematising’ the reasons and consequences of his drinking. She added that this was not easy to reach and she was still yelling, once in a while, but both their relationship and his problems have been improving. I asked her to what she credit her achievement. She answered that she started to question...
matise, in Freire's words) her father the reasons for and consequences of his drinking and this conversation or dialogue helped him to work out the situation and improve his behaviour. Another girl (S. 37) said that since she started to problematise her husband excuses and dialogue about his behaviour, he started to have more respect to her.

Group discussions of teachers and students led some teachers to question their own ideas and behaviour and to desire to change their conservative pedagogy, adopting a less authoritarian posture which would pay more attention to the interests, needs and capability of the students. However, this was not easy and required time and lot of practice and the students' co-operation. The lack of teaching guidance on the part of the teachers' counsellor was felt by these teachers who started to lose confidence about what to do and how to behave. On the other hand, students who were not used to a more democratic relationship, did not know how to behave either, as mentioned by one of those teachers:

Today I tried again to be more friendly, more understanding with students. However, when I distributed the test, they were not able to remain quiet, as I had asked. I got mad and couldn't control myself. I ended up yelling at them. ... They want to change our behaviour. And what about them? Why don't they do the same? Why don't they collaborate with us? ... I don't know what more to do... (T. 4).

In fact, several teachers revealed that they lacked confidence in their own ability to deal with conflicts and be more flexible. This lack of skill or lack of confidence in dealing with this kind of situation may be a direct consequence of a lack of democratic practice which they had had no opportunity to develop within the family, school, work (which in this case compounds the blemish of school authoritarianism) and the socio-politic environment.

Although dialogue cannot transform society or the school by itself, according to Gramsci (1971) it can help in the perception of the prior understandings and the practice of a new perception. In other words, it is fundamental for moving toward change. So, I tried to emphasise the possibility of changing the school and I encouraged the participants to reflect over the way they acted and suggested what could be done in order to transform the situation. For instance, when they complained about awful aspects of the school, I recalled that they were not responsible for some aspects of the school such as the mould, the need for a new painting on the walls etc., but nobody else than some students were responsible for scratched walls and furniture, broken furniture and so on. I suggested that the school aspect could be improved at least a little with their help. This could be on a daily basis helping to keep classroom and school yard cleaner and through organised action or 'mutirão' to improve the school garden, to clean or even to paint the walls, etc. Unfortunately, I did not see any improvement either on a daily basis or through 'mutirão'. In a paternalist system, where many if not most of the people think that this kind of improvement must be provided by the government through more money and more cleaning staff, this kind of responsibility is not easy to achieve. It also showed that just as the teachers, students tried to escape from their own responsibilities and blame others for their problems.
In order to understand an action and try to change it, it is necessary to have a thorough reflection both of the situation itself and of the measures proposed. If this is not taken seriously it can result in a naive activism. This was particularly stressed with a group of students who were proposing to fire a teacher. In one occasion, when I arrived at their class, they were already discussing the problem of a physical education teacher (T. 20). He had been in sick pay for more than one year although during this time he had been working for a politician. So, some students were planning to start a campaign to expel him as a teacher. Although most of the students agreed that that particular teacher should be expelled, they disagreed in the procedure to be taken. A small but very active group was planning to send a letter to the educational authorities 'demanding' his expelling on the ground that he was not sick and so all his leaving were a 'fraud'. They had already required the headteacher to do this but he denied on the ground that there was no legal way support for expelling him. This was because his leavings were backed up by a doctor, even though the doctor was his close friend. I tried too to lead them to understand that since he had a formal sick pay confirmed, legally there would be no way in which they could contest his absence. That is, since his absence was backed up by a medical document he was entitled to take it. Since he was able to work in another job, the case would be to contest his inability to work. So, instead of questioning the teacher's right and honesty, they should contest the validity of the medical diagnosis and that would imply questioning either the doctor's skills or integrity. As this would be a very sensitive and difficult lawsuit they would need to hire a lawyer. As they concluded that this would take a long time and would need a lot of effort and persistence, apart from a lot of money, they dropped the question.

I tried to encourage serious analysis, so, I debated their answers, provoking a new or deeper reflection. Comments were initially sparse because the students had no experience with such dialogue and they may have felt overawed by the status of the researcher. At the beginning only a few students used to speak; this exemplifies Freire's remark (Freire and Shor, 1987) that students tend to be passive when the class starts. This passivity, according to Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987), is a consequence of the 'culture of silence', that is, the internalisation of the passive roles scripted for them by the traditional pedagogy or the so called 'banking' education, which sees the student as a mere listener or as an echo of the teachers rather than a critical and collaborator. This contributes to students' apathy and lack of criticism and participation. This may also be explained by Gramsci's remark that popular philosophers may 'feel' the situation but are not always able either to 'know' or to understand it (Gramsci, 1971). Without knowing or understanding a situation, it is difficult for one to express oneself. So, when necessary, I gave relevant information in order to encourage them to develop a critical view of their reality.

After some time more students participated on the discussion. In practice, some students were more willing to speak in informal conversation or in a small group than in a large group discussion. On several occasions a student or a small group of students came to me, after a meeting, to talk about what had been discussed. The same occurred with the teachers. It was easier to
obtain some information in an informal conversation than in a meeting. It never became clear to me whether this was due to a separation between the friend and the researcher or just a difficulty in speaking publicly, or both.

Dialogue implies the absence of authoritarianism and "does not mean that everyone involved in it has to speak". Student silence is a consequence of the authoritarian system and pressure to speak creates a false democracy (Freire and Shor, 1987: 102). So, I carefully avoided forcing anyone to participate. In one class two boys used to sit apart from their colleagues, near the windows, and did not participate either in group discussions or in class discussions. According to one of their teachers, they use to spend classes looking through the window, chatting, or rummaging either in their desk or in their school materials. Although I respected their 'alienation' and never pushed them into dialogue, I made an effort not to forget their presence. I tried to give them a sense of participating by involving them by eye-contact and when possible, with some comments. Whether because they felt themselves involved or because they became interested in the subject, I am not sure, but the fact is that by the third group discussion they started to show some interest by glancing at colleagues when these were speaking. By the fourth and (unfortunately) last group discussion, one of them made some comment about the reason why one of his colleagues had dropped out and some days latter the other approached me during a break time, to tell me that his uncle who was working at the university, knew me. Asking him how his uncle had known about my name and my work in the school, the students, a bit embarrassed, said that he had commented on my work with his uncle when he went to visit them. Although less emphatic, a number of similar examples which happened with other students could also be mentioned.

Students and teachers were not always conscious of the problems and the roots of them. Although some of the students were very concerned with the problems and their reasons, usually most of the students' analyses were narrower than those of the teachers. This seemed to illustrate that their 'good sense' was less developed than in the case of their teachers. Many students had difficulties in identifying within-school problems or in seeing dropout as a consequence of several variables. Sometimes they were concerned only with minor or personal questions such as the lack of a mirror in the ladies' room. On the other hand, some students had a more comprehensive understanding of the facts and its roots than many teachers. However, it is important to say that these students were, with few exceptions, engaged in some kind of political movement such as the students' movement for a public and free school and/or performed an active role in a political party.

8.4 — Understanding Participation

It is not possible to understand people's participation in the present research on student dropout without considering their participation in the broader society. For Freire and Brito (1991), it is not possible to understand one's behaviour without an analysis of the political mechanisms to which s/he is submitted. Consequently, participation in the research must be observed in its link with other forms of participation such as the participants' adher-
ence to a specific system of values, their understanding of the political structure of the society, the relations of productions, etc. (Vio Grossi, 1984) or, in Gramsci’s (1971) words, to know how hegemony is produced and maintained.

Two common ways of practising political participation are through unions and political parties where people either strengthen or change their opinions, practise discussion, and decide about their future. In short, it is mainly in the unions and political parties that people exercise their civil rights, practise political participation and build their historical identity. Yet, the Brazilian experience of political participation is limited. In Brazilian society power has always been hierarchically determined from the top to the bottom. It was the same with decision-making. People had no opportunity to participate except in a very few cases. One of the most recent and profitable experiences with popular participation was in the early 1960s when left-wing intellectuals, students and the Church launched some educational movements such as Basic Education Movement (MEB), Popular Cultural Movement (MCP) and Popular Cultural Centres (CCP). These grass-roots organisations were largely involved with people’s interests and social changes. However, the 1964 coup d’etat inaugurated an authoritarian regime which reduced political participation. Although a more democratic and participative system is now in operation and the grass-roots organisations and political parties existing in Brazil in early 1990, are, despite their weaknesses, "more vibrant than those of most countries in the third world and some in the first world" (Blank, 1992: 87), the consequences of the military authoritarianism can still be observed. As pointed out by Blank, “Brazil’s break with its military past has been gradual and has remained incomplete” (Blank, 1992: 86). Many workers are still not members of a trade union. On the other hand many trade unions look after the employers’ interests more than those of the employees, and this does not stimulate participation. In relation to the solution of problems concerning the public interest, with very few exceptions, there is no collective participation since people are still impregnated with the paternalist ideology and so wait for the government to take any initiative. On the other hand, as recalled by Demo (1986), most of the Brazilian experiences in participation were, usually, imposed and alienating, apart from being politically inept. In many cases, when people had shown their interest in participating, they have been restrained by the political authorities. This was what had happened with participatory planning in education in Santa Catarina (Amorim et al., 1985) in the 1980s.

The main participatory opportunity that teachers in Santa Catarina state had had was an exercise in Participative Planning promoted at the beginning of the 1980s and which was intended to set up the Educational Plan for the coming years - 1984-1988. It was a process promoted by the state educational authorities and was strongly influenced by the ruling party candidate, who, when inaugurating his administration, failed to implement what he had promised, that is, the outcome of the Participative Planning exercise. When the educational authorities realised the eagerness of people to participate, community participation was either made difficult or prevented by the state institutions which co-ordinated the process at community or regional levels. After this, a further disappointment occurred in 1983, when teachers went on strike for ten
days in protest, since the government was not fulfilling its electoral promise concerning teachers' salaries. On that occasion, apart from not having their demands considered by the Governor, many teachers had their salaries cut by one third. Others had a further punishment for striking such as being removed to another school or having their right to choose to transfer to another school denied. These experiences at the beginning of a transition period, when democracy had been promised by both military and civilian authorities showed the real intention of the campaign strategy.

As far as teachers are concerned, at least in Santa Catarina, until a few years ago, most of them did not belong to an association and most of those who did belong, did not play an active role (Scheibe et al., 1989). Similarly few people are either formally associated with a political party or are active militants. So, the possible experience that a political party might have given was very limited both in terms of numbers and in terms of quality.

In November 1989, when I was doing the field work for this study, the first direct presidential election for nearly 30 years took place in Brazil. Despite the significance of the event, few people from the research school were directly involved in the campaign. Most of these were students. Only one teacher was actively involved in the street campaign and few others used to discuss the candidates' programmes and ideas during the school breaks. Some of them were not interested at all. This may have been a consequence of many years of dictatorship and alienation from politics, plus the notion that education must be 'neutral'. Teachers' frustration with their experience in the participative planning exercise may also have contributed to the teachers' alienation and their lack of trust in the candidates' speeches. It is true that one cannot expect a massive participation even in a more democratic system, as pointed out by Berelson et al. (apud Thornley, 1977); usually only a minority are interested in politics and according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 1975), there is considerable evidence that participation seldom occurs spontaneously in populations that have been excluded from the decision-making process.

Historically, people have become attuned to regard participation as only a collaboration in the solution of some problems and as usually induced by the authorities. As they do not take part in all parts of the programme, according to UNDESA (1975), it can be classified as a passive kind of participation. Most of the few examples of participation in Brazil can be categorised as 'mutirões', that is, the joining of forces for the solution of a community problem. In fact, it is more often an imposed collaboration than real participation. At the government level it is generally promoted or induced by the city Council in order to get the people's help in the building and/or restoration of some city service or facility. It is also used by the Church and schools when they need to build or repair some properties. The ideology implicit in this collaboration is the need to mobilise people in order to solve the problem of scarce resources (Oakley and Marsden, 1984). Consequently these experiences have neither a lasting consequence nor lead to a real change in people's consciousness or of their political or economic reality.

Participation is strongly related to power and democracy. Since participation
is a form of power, people's participation is not well regarded by the ruling class. In a paternalistic system such as the Brazilian, with a still recent experience of dictatorship, democracy is still to be found more in speech than in actions. This is true in society as well as in schools. In this way, teachers' authoritarianism or lack of democratic understanding resulted in their uneasiness about students' and dropouts' participation in the research. Most of the teachers had difficulties in accepting students' criticisms or resistance. In this way, when teacher-student relationships and teaching methodology were criticised in the first presentation of the research findings, most of them 'cooled' their relationship with me, even though it was only for a while. A similar response occurred when I defended the students' right to have the classes replaced after the strike.

If one takes into consideration the students' and teachers' previous experience in participation, one cannot be surprised with their difficulties or resistance to participation. As Freire (1970; 1972; 1974) recalls, Brazilian education has been domesticating and has not led to criticism and participation. So, teachers' and students' resistance can be seen, in part, as the result of a lack of experience in participating in group discussion and in planning their own lives. However, although their historical background partially explained their resistance, this does not mean that it is impossible to promote real participation in school. Albertini and Almeida (1982), for instance, managed to promote student participation in the educative process in a secondary school in São Paulo. Yet, they state that student participation was not achieved easily. In fact, it was a long and uneasy process which required a lot of effort by the whole school community. According to these researchers, it was not easy for teachers to accept that students could criticise, discuss and make suggestions. On the other hand, it was not easy for students to overcome their apathy and excuses. Albertini and Almeida's (1982) experience supports Freire’s (1972) and Layman’s (1987) statements that the fact that people must learn and change in a mutual process means a painful, emotional learning process for all teachers, organisers and decision-makers. This fact may also explain the difficulties that teachers and students in the research school had in participating and in changing their attitudes. Most of the students' suggestions for improving within-school conditions which were seen to be linked to the reasons for dropping out were not implemented either during the fieldwork period or during the following academic year.

Apathy or indifference is a key constraint on participation. According to Freire (1970) apathy is a common response to oppressive relations. So, teachers' and students' inertia can only be understood in terms of the historical role they have been performing in school and society. In this way, they are apathetic because they have either been forced to internalise the oppressor or ruling class ideology or to accept a submissive role within an exploitative structure.

Time has been pointed out as one constraint on participation (UNDESA, 1981) and in participatory research in Tanzania, time limitations resulted in the fact that researchers could not always wait for the group to acquire the desired level of consciousness and understanding about particular problems before moving to the next issue (Bryceson and Mustafa, quoted by Jackson et
In the present research, time was insufficient to allow analysis and action to operate cyclically and dialectically during the participatory research process.

Participation usually requires that people limit or abandon other activities. For most of the teachers and students, the only free time they had was at weekends. This was the only time they had to spend with their family and friends and to look after their everyday concerns. These difficulties plus the lack of a culture of participation and political consciousness constituted a challenge it was not easy to meet.

The question of tiredness is also related to the obstacles of people's participation. With a heavy load of work on the part of many teachers and both work and study on the part of many students, to be willing to participate is not easy. Apart from this some students also had an additional obstacle. Students' homes were not concentrated near the school but dispersed over a very large area. Large distances of travel may have limited some students' participation and the lack of spatial concentration may also have inhibited their mobilisation.

8.5 - Conclusion
Participatory research comprises social investigation, education and action to transform reality. Although some authors recommend people's participation in the participatory research process, others do not consider this as an important factor. For the latter, the researcher's true commitment to the people is the fundamental issue and people's participation can be limited to only a part of the research process. For reasons such as time constraints and temporary distance between the researcher's residence and the school, people's participation in the present research was limited to the period of fourteen months in two spells of field work and was most significant as an educational activity. Real action to transform reality did not happen, or at least not in the dimensions that was expected.

Meetings and group discussions provided occasions where data were analysed. The dialogue technique based on Paulo Freire's methods, was the main approach used to facilitate the analysis. The reason for using this technique was the fact that it was considered a useful instrument in the building-up of the participants' consciousness, and because of the value of this, its educational outcomes are different from those of traditional or banking education.

Through group discussions I tried to make students conscious of their situation; to discuss students' consciousness and values and confront with others; to raise in the students the wish to change reality through a more democratic/participative relationship in the school. Some students were quite conscious of the problems and reasons for them - that is, they related the problems to the socio-economic contradictions in society; others had a naive consciousness - they were aware of the problems but failed to make connections either with the causes or with other related problems; other students were almost totally alienated - they were not able to mention problems in school
and when they did, these were more individual or less fundamental such as the lack of a mirror in the lady’s room.

Meetings and group discussions gave a greater confidence to the data gathered through interviews, questionnaires and participant observation since through discussion I could ratify the information and have a better understanding of it. The political aspects of education and the possible spaces for within-school changes were always stressed, without, however, forgetting the relationship between the school and the whole society.

In the data analysis I tried to show the different factors which could contribute to dropping out as well as the different points of view. Opinions given by dropouts, teachers and continuing students were compared and analysed. Although most of the students’ contributions in the meetings could be classified as elementary ‘common sense’, their views were the starting point for the construction of a more systematic comprehension, or the identification of ‘good sense’. Contradictions existing in the school itself and the teachers’ and students’ behaviour were emphasised with the aim of making explicit both the possibilities and difficulties of resistance and transformation. In fact, it was in the perception of the contradiction that students showed most improvement of their critical consciousness, as for example, of the teachers’ behaviour after the strike.

During the dialogue/analysis process some obstacles and limitations as well as some opportunities did take place. The fact that part of the research occurred during the first presidential election after almost thirty years offered brought both obstacles and opportunities. One obstacle was the participation of some of the students who were interested in the election meetings. As these students were politically engaged in the campaign and weekends were both the peak of the campaign and the only opportunity for their participation, they suggested giving up the discussions. As the second stage of the election voting took place only on December 17th 1989, there was no further possibility of reconvening these meetings during the 1989 period of field work. However, on the other hand, the campaign itself and the debate between the candidates in the media helped to create in the teachers and students a greater openness to debate and shared decision-making.

At one stage the teachers expressed a certain animosity towards me since they interpreted my position as being more sympathetic to the students’ interests than to their own. However, after a while when they realised that to be sympathetic to the students did not necessarily mean I was against them, this resentment ended and good interaction was possible again.

The attempt to hold meetings of teachers and students on Saturdays did not succeed. Cultural influences, tiredness and time constraints may be seen as the main reasons why teachers failed to turn up. Another factor that influenced their decision was the students’ wish to participate actively in the electoral campaign and weekends were their only opportunity of doing this.

If on the one hand the great variety of data collected helped me in reaching a more comprehensive understanding of the dropout question, on the other hand it
created difficulties in achieving a deeper debate on each topic. In the same way, there were occasions when the participation led to a broader understanding. But there were also occasions when problems and solutions pointed out by students were either of only immediate interest or reflected only an individual rather than a collective interest. Students also demonstrated a tendency to be more interested in solutions than in analysis. In the same way, both teachers and students tended to concentrate discussion on practical issues rather than theoretical ones.

For Freire (1970), emergent consciousness requires an historical understanding, a clear perception of cause-effect relationships and an overcoming of false consciousness. It is also necessary to transform 'common sense' into 'good sense'. According to Freire (1970), an authentic dialogue should lead to action. One of the limitations of the present research, was that critical consciousness reached only the level of being aware of school problems and the possibilities of solving them rather than the level of action. Criticism reached only the theoretical level. It did not reach the level of praxis or the action-reflection-action process. The most important actions were some attempts to transform the quality of relationships between teachers and students and to negotiate the time and content of tests. Time constraints, among others, prevented the completion of the action-reflection-action process. Particular attention was drawn to students' individual behaviour since the comprehension and transformation of society are always determined by the comprehension and, probably, the transformation of the individuals.

Comments were initially limited mainly from the students who were probably affected by what Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987) calls the 'culture of silence', that is, the lack of experience in reflecting upon and expressing their opinions. At the beginning some students were also a little afraid about the consequences of their comments and/or suggestions. Despite the fact that I promised not to reveal their names, they were afraid about the teachers' reaction to their comments. On the other hand, some teachers also expressed, through informal comments, their fear that the research outcome could influence students' behaviour by giving them more power.

Following Freire's recommendations (Freire and Shor, 1987), students were not forced to participate in group discussions and to express themselves. Although their participation was weak at the beginning, it increased both in quantity and quality after every group discussion. Consequently, the most significant outputs from the research process came at the final meetings and group discussions.

The lack of opportunities to participate in school due to the teaching methodology and power structure curb in the students the capacity to develop the skills to participate in school decision-making. Yet it is important to develop the ability to participate in the social level where their own futures are decided. If on the one hand the lack of group activities and debates in the classroom may have inhibited students' participation, on the other hand one cannot attribute the reason only to the school but also to the historical and political situation where people have not had the opportunity or encouragement to participate.
Students who were participating in political party activities at the presidential election of 1989 or in any social movements were more active participants in group discussions and meetings and showed a greater interest in the research. Students also seemed to be more interested in political activities and political debates than teachers. If it is primarily in the sphere of the political parties that society carries out the debate about its future, designs its development model, builds up opinions, judges its leaders and forms its historical identity (Demos, 1986), then it is necessary to encourage more political affiliation and activities on the part of both teachers and students. In fact, Ribeiro (1987), analysing the political formation of secondary school teachers in São Paulo, recommended that the political formation of teachers must be improved constantly. The same can be applied to other Brazilian teachers.

On the one hand a certain level of political consciousness and criticism is necessary in order to be an active participant, on the other hand, I believe that a certain minimum level of information is necessary in order to have some level of criticism and political consciousness. So, both have to work together and to many students, school represents the only opportunity to do this. However, with so many teachers not interested in political issues, one cannot expect too much.

Students, in general, were more willing to participate than teachers. The most interested students were those who were already participating in other social or political movements. The fact that group discussions were held during class periods, when some teachers had failed to turn up, facilitated students' participation.

Time was the main constraint for having more group discussions and since some classes had more group discussions than others, this created difficulties in comparing classes. However, with the classes which had more group discussions primary objectives had been met. A critical and reflective attitude on the part of some students started to be developed to a limited extent. These students had benefited from a broader and contextual discussion of school and particularly dropout problems, and a number of outcomes could be observed. Dialogue increased students' consciousness about the research aim - students started to understand the reasons for and consequences of dropping out and the possibilities of avoiding it. Some of them also started to behave differently, being more critical and less submissive both in school and at home. They started to link school problems with the social, political and economic national situation in such a way that a few students started to demonstrate a new political vision about the school and the society as a whole. They also started to regard themselves as individuals rather than a 'class' or a 'group' and began to be more confident in fighting for their rights in school. They also realised that collective effort was more profitable than individual struggle. However, due to a several factors such as time constraints, cultural influences, and tiredness, the influence was not enough to generate lasting and productive results. On the other hand, change in school depends, to a great extent, on the transformation of the power relations between teachers and students. It is also necessary that more students incorporate critical
thinking into their daily lives. This is only possible as part of a more systematic, constant and long-running exercise which needs the collaboration of several teachers if not all of them. So, both teachers and students have to understand and work together more over their daily social relations in school, work and home.

One of the major ways in which participatory research promotes class struggle is through the process of collective analysis (Jackson et. al., 1981). As an indirect benefit of group discussion or collective analysis, some students started to acquire a greater sense of self-confidence in dealing with teachers. So, they and I hoped that after the discussion and preparation of a document with recommendations to be implemented by the teachers in the next academic year, they would be treated with more consideration. However, this did not occur to the extent that students were expecting. One and a half years after the original field work, when I spent a second period of seven months in the school, I verified that many of the recommendations had neither been implemented nor discussed, such as: the setting up of a laboratory for studying Biology and Chemistry, to promote a campaign to raise the students' consciousness about the importance of a vocational training/certificate, to include parents in the school activities and so on. However, some improvement in the relationships between teachers and students were apparent and the recommendations about the material aspects of the school had been fully implemented. Nevertheless, while the present school administration looked after the material aspect, it almost totally neglected the didactic one, and this caused a severe disagreement between the administration (headteacher and deputy) on the one hand and the teachers, counsellors and PTA, on the other.

Some teachers started to become resentful about the kind of questions students were asking which were mainly concerned with teaching methodology and students' and teachers' relationships. After some resistance, some more progressive teachers accepted the challenge and tried to modify their behaviour. However, new conflicts arose between teachers who were no more certain how to behave and students who were not used to the new behaviour of the teachers. To help to solve this conflict it would be necessary to have a constant teaching orientation course or retraining given by the teachers' counsellor. The lack of an effective service of teaching counselling was very much felt by teachers who were trying to change their teaching methodology and relationship with students. Unfortunately not all the teachers responded to the students' appeal for change. Some of them, more conservatives or close-minded (T. 6, T. B and others), neglected the increase in the level of political consciousness of some students, accusing them of being fanatics (xiitas) who wanted to destabilise the existing order. These teachers also blamed me for motivating the students' 'upheaval'.

Any change in school will depend a great deal on the progressive teachers who can influence the others. Consequently, there is a need to reinforce this group. The same is true in relation to the students. If a greater number of students had actively participated in discussions and activities, the results might/would have been better.

One can only contributes to social transformation if one is prepared to change
oneself. Some teachers would like to change the kind of relationship they have with students but they had difficulties in changing their own behaviour, as indicated by some of them. Teachers' dissatisfaction with the school situation plus the fact that the research school was considered to be one of the most progressive in Florianópolis may have contributed to the teachers desire to change their own behaviour.

Despite the fact that all teachers agreed with the need to tackle school problems, it became clear that although they were prepared to discuss the problems they were a little reluctant or resistant in planning actions to improve the situation. This may have been due to the fact that they had really few opportunities to discuss their problems, to open their heart, to point out their own situation and to compare it with that of the other teachers. On the other hand, their reluctance in planning action may have been influenced by a lack of theoretical knowledge and/or because any different actions would require changes and possibly would increase their work load which was already considerable.

Since most of the teachers were more prepared to open their hearts than to plan action, the meetings and group discussions may have represented more of a 'safety valve' than a real step to change.

In the group discussions of teachers and students, within-school problems, mainly those concerned with teachers' and students' relationships, curriculum and teaching methodology, were discussed. Although students who participated in these group discussions had a clear idea about the issues which needed to be changed within the in school (teacher-student relationships, teaching methodology, power structures, students' participation in school decisions, etc.) it was not clear either to them or to the teachers what kind of school (curriculum, methodology, etc.) it should be adopted. Although one of the students (CS. 19) knew about Gramsci's (1989) proposal for a single (unique) school and had read Kuenzer's (1988) thesis about secondary school education, other students and teachers had no clear idea what the school should be like. In fact, this is a very controversial and difficult question even for specialists. To students and teachers who know very little about the technical and philosophical implications of their choice, this is a much more difficult task. However, the fact of discussing it helps to develop some ideas and to motivate to know it a little more.

An open dialogue and students participation in school decisions usually generate conflict. Yet, this conflict has a positive side since it generate transformative and educational action. Positive aspects of these actions include the following:
- the realisation of the existence of different class and or group interests;
- developing respect or at least tolerance of different ideas and interests;
- the critical questioning of personal and other values;
- developing the ability to produce alternative solutions for problems;
- developing the skills of negotiation;
- developing a consciousness of the value of collective work;
- experiencing the exercise of democracy;
- generating resistance and to contributing to a more democratic society.
The interest in having a more democratic, more dynamic and more efficient school manifested by the students, showed the potential for change. In this way, I dare to say that participatory actions can transform a school into a more democratic institution in the same way that conservative ideas and actions help to preserve school authoritarianism and contribute to maintaining the status quo. However, in order to change a school more than the good will of some students and the acceptance or contribution of a few teachers is necessary. It is necessary to banish, in the school, student apathy and the resistance of many teachers, and, at the same time, to combat the State's resistance and bureaucracy. It is not an easy task since many obstacles need to be won. However, although difficult, it is necessary and I believe, possible.

The democratic and transformative exercise at the school level (micro-social) has as its main purpose to reveal the possibility of changing what for so long it was considered unchangeable. It shows the power that man has in making his own history. However, one has to bear in mind that the democratisation within a sector of the society requires the participation of its people in the decisions of this institution. It is convenient to recall that because of tradition and group and/or class interests this participation was excluded for a long time and so, it will be not easy to achieve. A lot of effort will be essential, because the achievement of participatory actions for effective democracy is a complex process which comprises oscillations, gains and drawbacks.

Although by itself a democratic school is not sufficient to produce a democratic society, it is essential as according to Lima (1980) it is difficult to conceive a democratic macro-structure composed of authoritarian micro-structures. Still according to him,

"It is in the micro-structure, where the daily life of the individual takes part, that the citizen learns to take possession of the POWER, to negotiate the relationships, to liberate himself from the FATHER psychological image, to get DEMOCRACY" (Lima, 1980; 107).

According to Vio Grossi (1981) and Pigozzi (1982) not all outcomes of participatory research are necessarily positive. They also warned that participation can be manipulative. According to Pigozzi (1982:15), it is suggested that researchers may induce behaviour desired or "may guide and direct discussion so that certain perspectives or types of information are emphasised". While I can honestly say that I tried to avoid any manipulation, it is difficult to affirm that there was not any. The fact that this kind of research is clearly not value-free and that I was committed to helping the students, could, at least indirectly, have led to some form of manipulation, mainly in the dialogue process. However, it is difficult for me to evaluate the nature and the degree of manipulation that may have been involved in raising the students' 'consciousness' through the group discussions. Given the research process and objective, some manipulation was inevitable to reach the aim. On the other hand, I truly believe that it did work for the benefit of students.
I may also have induced students' participation and conclusions, if not intentionally then at least by the fact that students could have thought that I was better equipped to interpret the reality and have considered my analysis more reliable than their own. I may also have, at least indirectly, guided and directed discussions leading to a certain perspectives or conclusions. Any researcher knows that the form of asking a question can influence its answer (Thiollent, 1984). In this way, another researcher, with a different set of beliefs than mine, could have had different results.

Although I tried to reach a balance in the opinion of the different groups of participants, this may have been a bit distorted. Due to time constraints and the difficulties in locating dropouts, the bulk of interviews were carried out with those who had dropped out in the current year. On the other hand, as group discussions depended on teachers' failure to turn up, these were held more with the first grades than the second and third.

The importance of informal contacts became very clear during the field work. I believe that if I had had more informal contact with the teachers before starting the research, I would have had more collaboration from their both in quantity and in quality.
The purpose of this chapter is to review the main reasons for students' dropping out from school, to present questions concerning participation, to draw some final conclusions and to make some recommendations for action. I intend to provide practical recommendations, based on the students' interests, which the school studied as well as other schools could implement within their current educational programmes.

The reasons why students dropped out was gathered through focused interviews. The reasons why continuing students have, at any time, thought of dropping out were gathered through questionnaire. Questionnaire surveys of teachers, interviews with teachers and parents, meetings with teachers and students, group discussions and participant observation also helped to complete the data collection. Students who were taking courses in the school during the field work period, 172 dropouts, 10 parents and 18 teachers participated in this study. Data collected over a period of fourteen months, in two spells of field work, revealed several reasons for students dropping out.

Although within the exogenous factors only one reason tended to be mentioned, within the endogenous group a combination of factors were mentioned in most of the cases. Dropouts tended to mention exogenous reasons, while continuing students emphasised more the within-school group of factors. Teachers also emphasised the outside school factors as the main reason for quitting school.

The findings demonstrate that students left the school because of multiple factors combined in a variety of ways for different students, yet the economic one, usually employment, was the most serious and prevalent factor. Each student reacts to a particular circumstance in a different way and this creates an individual picture for each dropout. The findings in this research support the premise that with very few exceptions, no a single reason can fully explain dropout from school and no a single portrait can be drawn. Despite this fact, many similarities exist.

Employment was the most frequently mentioned reason for dropping out, although in some cases, the main reason for choosing between a school certificate and a job was other than economic. The desire for more freedom and independence was, in some cases, the main reason for taking a job and leaving school.

The second most frequently mentioned reason either for leaving or for desiring to leave school was the kind of relationships existing between teachers and students. Teaching style was also a significant contributor to leaving school early, followed by difficulties with study and problems in the family. Yet, difficulties with studies can be more a consequence of other factors (e.g. employment, family problems, teaching style, etc.) than a reason by itself. Although less significant, other reasons were also mentioned, as showed in
Economic pressures have been mentioned as the most significant factor in dropping out. This seems to be the case not only in Third World Countries since several American researchers have reached the same conclusion (Beck and Muia, 1980; Colli, 1987).

To many students school is considered the only way to prosper in life even though several of them have to choose between a job and a school certificate. These students see a diploma as a way to succeed, to free themselves from their subordinate condition as it was enough to get a diploma to ensure a better life and to reduce social inequalities. Human capital theory and its ideology, widely spread during the 60-70s decades, was absorbed by them without any criticism. Most of the students were not able to realise the importance, for the ruling class, of inculcating in the working class their ideology, and so, they continued to believe that class differences are caused by individual differences which lead to different academic or intellectual abilities. So, if on one hand these students internalised the value of school as a way to succeed, on the other, they left school either because of their poor economic circumstances or because they believed they were not tailored for this.

Some of those who left school because of their economic or family and personal problems declared that they intended to return to school later. In fact, this is the attitude recommended by Dore (1976) in order to lessen the problem caused by the 'diploma disease'.

To others, the school does not ensure any job since it does not give any job competence. This group of students was able to realise that the economic and political system had other criteria of selection. And this is particularly true in Florianópolis which is the capital of the State and so it is a political-administrative city and where there is practically no industry. These students were clever enough to realise that their chances of getting a job were very limited, when competing with those who had a private school diploma.

Although some students identified the lack of value in education as an justification for leaving school, some doubt remains concerning whether this was only a student excuse for their poor academic performance or for some other reason. On the other hand, continuing students declared the importance of having, in the school, talks about the importance of education and a certificate. This was one of their recommendations in the document delivered to teachers at the end of 1989 field work.

The lower and working class students, who are those who particularly need a certificate as a way of improving their conditions, are those who more frequently quit the school. However according to Sexton (in Colli, 1987), dropout rate depends more on the particular school were students were enrolled than on their socio-economic situation. Accepting Sexton's conclusion, one must also accept the role of the school in determining the dropout rate.

Concerning employment, the consequences of leaving school before graduation
are really considerable for the dropout. Apart from the economic disadvantages that most of them will find, at least in the medium or long term, they will also have social consequences as a secondary school diploma is a necessary prerequisite for nearly all kinds of white-collar job.

As in Delgado-Gaitan's (1988) research, some parents whose children dropped out of school were concerned about the consequence of this fact in their children's future lives. They know what are their children's chances of getting a white-collar job but agreed that their daily social and economic pressures after did not leave any alternative to dropping out.

Not all students who left school because of employment were forced to do this by economic circumstances. Personal freedom achieved with the money earned through employment was the actual reason for their decision. As recalled by Nayal (1986b) and Birardi (1988), adolescence is a period marked by the adolescent's wish to be independent.

The freedom sought by dropout can be from their parents but can also be from the school. However, during the field work I did not consider the second hypothesis, So, I would recommend a new investigation into this issue.

Family problems, especially those related to family have been found to be significant in students' decision to withdraw from the school. Students' own physical condition was another factor which caused dropout. The stress and tiredness caused by a day's work of 8 to 10 hours, plus up to three and a half hours of studying and a journey to and from home up to 3-4 hours, is too much for several students, even though they are quite young. In this particular case, the lack of a proper diet is often crucial.

A major component which helped students to stay in school in spite of the day-by-day conflict with teachers and boredom, was their desire to get on in life and their family's support. According to continuing students, families can play a significant role in helping students confront their problems in school. This support is usually given more by verbal encouragement than the parents' presence in the school.

The quality of education was mentioned by all categories of respondent as contributing to leaving or desiring to leave school early. The lack of an obvious link between school knowledge and job was most frequently mentioned by dropouts while continuing students wished to have a smaller gap between school knowledge and their personal interests. This last group wished to have the opportunity to discuss, freely, the subjects of their day-by-day life, such as sex, drugs, AIDS and so on.

As in Delgado-Gaitan's (1988) study, cultural compatibility was shown to be crucial to students if they were to feel comfortable and remain in school. However, the students' own culture was never considered by the school or by the teachers. To Freire (Freire and Shor, 1987), it is important to consider the students' own culture. Teachers' practices that do not consider students' reality provoke a lack of interest and understanding (Scheibe, 1982). When denying or devaluing students' own culture, teachers practise a symbolic
Ignoring students' cultural experiences, the dominant educational theory also separates culture from relations of power. It de-politicizes culture and does not consider culture as the shared and lived characteristics of specific groups and classes "as these emerge within inequitable relations of power and fields of struggle" (Giroux, 1986: 56).

Concerning the preparation for a job, there is a divorce between the theory and the practice within the school. Without material resources and lacking better professional training, teachers are not able to give more up-to-date courses as well as make the connection between theory and practice. Many teachers in their period of professional training have not acquired the intellectual tools they need in order to give adequate training to their students. On the other hand, as recalled by Ruddock, (1991), after many years of "regarding knowledge as something that lies between the covers of the textbook or that exists in the teacher's mind" (p. 34), students have difficulties in questioning teachers' knowledge or in making the classroom an arena for exercising critical thinking. However, as recalled by the same author, there are some individual teachers and particular schools which demonstrate a commitment to real quality in education.

For Gomes (1990), work preparation is more than the simple acquisition of knowledge and skills for executing tasks. It must be seen in a broader sense, concerned also with the preparation for participation in society and action to transform nature and history. Yet, according to Silva (1990), although most of the secondary school students are already working, the meaning of the work in the individual and social construction is not discussed in school. As recalled by Pucci and Squissardi (1989), if school is not preparing a work-citizenship trained to deal with the needs of the contemporary labour market, it is surely preparing a work-force by the experience of discipline, moral and collective work, which is of interest to the capitalist. In this way, the educational system is still able to reproduce some cultural conditions necessary for reproducing social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). However, teachers are not yet conscious of the fact that they are reproducing the dominant ideology. Their lack of theoretical background and the objective conditions they meet in their day-to-day working activities do not let them to analyse the outcomes of their practice.

In order to improve the quality of education we need not only better trained teachers and better equipped schools, but also to increase teachers' salaries and to give a higher valuation to the teachers role. The question of the quality of education must be considered but the differences between the day and evening students cannot be forgotten. It is not possible to behave and require the same things of day and evening students, since their conditions are quite different. On the other hand, teachers must keep in mind that in lowering the quality of education of evening students they are also lowering the quality of their training and so their chances of success in the labour market.

If the fact of the low quality of education is quite clear, the chances of
changing this fact are not. On one hand some educators proclaim the need to improve standards, while on the other there are those who argue that more stringent standards will increase the number of failures and dropouts.

If quantity leads to quality (Gadotti, 1983), and education is paramount for economic, political and cultural change, teachers must do their best to try and keep students in school.

The lack of school organisation may influence the behaviour of its students and influence their decision to drop out. In her study about dropouts, Callan (1988) demonstrated the possible interrelationship between the organisational character of the school and the psychological character of particular groups of students. The findings in the present research also suggests that the structure and rules of the school influenced students' decisions. Students felt difficulty in coping with the impersonal atmosphere, the number of teachers changed during the academic year, the lack of material resources and the lack of a good working environment. Noise in particular was mentioned as disturbing the working/study environment. However, freedom to go in and out of the classroom, which is one of the causes of the noise, was evaluated in different ways by students. While some wanted more freedom in school, others preferred to see a more controlled environment.

Noise, in school, can represent a type of resistance to school culture. Yet, as observed by McLaren (1986), students' resistance is not always conscious. Noise, a possible unconscious form of resistance, can disrupt classes and bring to students some relaxing moments. However, on the other hand, it also brings some restrictions to their learning since it interrupts the learning process and as pointed out by Willis (1977), in doing so they are limiting the possibilities of social mobility. However, they fail to recognise this limitation.

As not all oppositional behaviour has the meaning of resistance (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985), but can be simply a matter of self-confirmation (McLaren, 1986), it is convenient to study more deeply the question of students' resistance and how much they are conscious about the meaning and consequences of their actions.

As in Moraes's (1989) research, students complained about the superficial relationships with their teachers and the administrative body. The administrative style and the lack of friendly contact between school administrators and students were also mentioned as influencing the work environment. Yet, although the headteacher was disliked as the school administrator because his authoritarianism and cold relationships with teachers and students, students and teachers revealed much admiration for his work as a teacher. His behavioural change may have been caused by a lack of confidence in how to behave in his new role.

Since top-down control seldom produces in workers the intended result and often produces unintended consequences (McNeil, 1984) it is recommended that the school adopt a more participative form of administration, in which both teachers and students feel themselves involved. In this way they can, I be-
lieve, improve their involvement and responsibility and hence improve the work environment and consequently the quality of education.

Students' individual problems are not adequately considered by the school although there is a common belief that the counselling service is an important factor in limiting the potential dropout rate in the school (Pangotra, 1986). The student counsellor tried to help students with their personal problems but this was not enough. All school staff collaborate in order to improve school conditions and keep students until graduation.

Teacher-student relationships were the most criticised within-school factor. Both dropouts and continuing students gave a lot of emphasis to the affective relationships with their teachers, which directly affect the students' apprenticeship. As in Colli's (1987), Feldens and Duncan's (1988) and Rowley's (1989) researches, students expressed a strong desire to be treated with more respect. They would like to have a fairer and more friendly treatment and a more liberal and satisfying curriculum.

There is a gap between the rhetoric of democracy of some teachers and the reality of domination and oppression. When students refuse to accept this kind of domination teachers generally face problems of control. In this way it is not surprising that while some dropouts were considering going back to school, they were also afraid of having the same school experiences, specially their relationships with some teachers. In fact, they described these relationships with sadness and resentment.

In school relationships there is an unequal distribution of power as in the whole society. Dropouts and continuing students complained about the strong domination exerted by some teachers. According to Pollard, teachers, as many other workers, wish to control their work situation and so try to guaranty their classroom autonomy by any means (Pollard, 1980). On the other hand, students try to resist teacher domination. However, as observed by McLaren (1986), working class students rarely resist school and/or teacher power through legitimate channels such the as students' union, but usually in an informal, unwitting and unconscious way. In this way they resists teachers' authoritarianism through truancy, noise in the classroom or sabotaging lessons. These transgressions represent to students a steam valve to school culture in a general way and teacher authoritarianism in particular.

In relation to teachers' authoritarianism, they should consider Freire's (Freire and Shor, 1987) statement that education is a dialogic action and so, learning occurs within an horizontal conversation rather than a top-down instruction.

If some teachers tried to ignore the student resistance, mainly when it was passive such as escaping the classes or staying quietly reading a magazine, others felt their authority threatened and intensified their power. An extreme case was Teacher S, who used to praise himself for reproducing the way he was brought up. However, power is never onedimensional and can be used as a mode of domination as well as resistance (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). In this way, students showed their power when they organised a signed petition in order to
Another demonstration of student power was the students' boycott of a test, collectively abandoning the class.

Unfortunately many teachers have no framework for understanding what determines the students' and teachers' behaviour in day-by-day classroom life and they depend more on tradition and their colleagues' concept of 'good' practice. Their practices are based more on what Gramsci characterises as 'common sense'. What they need to know is how to transform their 'common sense' into a 'good sense' (Gramsci) or philosophical consciousness (Saviani, 1983). In order to do this, the curriculum of teachers' training courses must be reviewed and short in-service courses should be offered to teachers.

While many students contested teachers' authoritarian behaviour, others believed that teachers and other school staff are authorities and that they were in no position to question their function and actions. This is, in Freire conception, a consequence of the 'culture of silence'. Apart from this, the prevailing teaching style does not encourage debate and critical thinking, but rather helps to reproduce the existing situation. Although some teachers are more open-minded and have made a point of encouraging students to express themselves either in the classroom or in the class council, most of them always had an excuse for students' criticisms.

An improvement in the quality of education can be achieved only when the relationships within the school change. Having a more democratic, participative and critical education, students can improve their interest and consequently their level of achievement. In this way, curriculum, class, gender, culture and ideology can be properly analysed and treated in order to develop in the students the skills needed in the struggle for a democrat society. Students must learn the knowledge and skills necessary to create a critical democracy in school and in society.

The educational system cannot be considered democratic if teachers still remain a narrow-minded, which greatly influences the subject taught and the teacher-student relationship. Teacher-student relationships should be thoroughly re-evaluated and changed in order to avoid the dominator-dominated kind of relation. It is necessary to shake of the dogmas of traditional pedagogy and introduce permanent dialogue. Students should be considered as subjects rather than objects. A critical and dialogic relationship in the classroom might lead teachers and students to know better the needs and ways of changing the within-school reality. A simple change in teacher-student relationships is naturally not enough to change school and society but it can help to create a critical consciousness, the starting point for change.

Teaching style was also widely criticised by dropouts and continuing students. As in Rowley's (1989) study, they felt teaching style boring and that class assignments and essays were useless.

The teaching style, rarely, encouraged participation or discussion. Only a few teachers, and then occasionally, used any technique other than talk and chalk. The lack of knowledge about different techniques and the lack of time or energy to prepare a different form of class were the major contributors to
this fact. On the other hand, the teachers’ counsellor performed a corrective rather than preventative role.

Formal education must give an opportunity for young people to express themselves in logical ways and to explore others people’s perspectives in relation to their own. However, lectures and other forms of authoritative instruction or individual study could not be expected to generate either critical thinking or democratic relationships. The teachers’ counsellor must work closely with teachers in a way that helps more than ‘inspects’. This is the real role of teachers’ counsellors.

As in Rowley’s (1989) study, dropouts and continuing students felt a difference in teaching style both between the primary and secondary schools and between the evening and afternoon sessions. If on the one hand secondary school evening students wanted to be treated as adults, on the other they also felt that they must not be left on their own. They expressed the wish to have both teachers’ help and teachers’ attention. However teachers and counsellors declared that it is really rare for students to speak about their intention to leave school with them. This demonstrates either teachers’ lack of interest in students’ problems or students’ lack of belief that school can help them. Both possibilities should be studied and actions to implement the situation planned.

Most teachers were unwilling to provide additional assistance since they considered themselves already as victims of the work conditions and did not want to spend more time with students. They felt that they had already fulfilled their duties by giving classes. Those few teachers who used to care for the students’ academic performance as well as their personal problems were highly respected by both dropouts and continuing students.

It seemed quite clear that some teachers really had a wish to be good teachers, to help students and to contribute to the transformation of the society. However, they were not sure how to achieve their aim. On the other hand, teachers’ organisational constraints and ideological conditions, left them little room for collective work and critical pursuits. Their teaching hours were too long, they operated under heavy class loads, numerous bureaucratic tasks, and a squeeze on their salaries. Having a heavy workload teachers had no time to discuss educational problems with their colleagues nor to look for answers in the educational literature. They grounded their actions in their colleagues’ examples and in their own experience without any connection to educational theories. Since teachers are not familiar with keeping themselves up-to-date with educational literature, they need to be stimulated to do so. A possible way to motivate them is to involve them in educational research or a problem-solving project.

Disruptive effects caused by teachers’ failure to turn up, teachers’ leaving and the teachers’ strike were revealed as damaging the learning process and leading to a reduction of student morale and commitment. In turn this led to some dropout.

Although for Gramsci and Freire education is a political act and the teachers’
strike could have been a good opportunity to develop in the students their political and critical consciousness, this did not occur. There was not either during nor after the strike a thorough analysis of it and discussion about its procedures, gains and possible disadvantages. On the other hand, even though only an occasional event, it revealed the conflict and power-game existing within the schools' daily routine and the class interests of the teachers. The teachers' behaviour and disregard of their promises to the students provoked in them a lack of confidence and trust in the teachers.

Rector (in Moraes, 1989) in a study undertaken in Brazil, observed that the young were against the school either because of the lack of freedom and quality or because they did not trust in the teachers' commitment or the efficacy of their teaching. The same can be said about the research school.

In spite of all the criticism about institutional and teacher-related factors, teachers emphasised external factors as the main reasons why students left school early. In fact, this tendency to blame the victim was found not only by Brazilian researchers (Rasche, 1979; Mello, 1982; Scheibe, 1982; Davico, 1990) but also by McLaren (1986) in his research in Canada. By blaming the victims, teachers may see themselves as less accountable for student failure and this may lead educators to neglect the importance of internal factors (Davico, 1990).

Both dropouts and continuing students pointed to difficulties with study as a factor which leads to dropout. Although this reason was located within-school, it has a strong relationship to economic factors. Without time to prepare the lessons, students fall behind and end up dropping out.

Regarding teachers' explanations for students' difficulties, there was an extraordinary emphasis by teachers on the students' socio-economic background and the effect of this on their learning abilities. It is true that family background influences both student interest and abilities and those students who work eight hours a day have little or no time to prepare their classes. It is also true that not all students are able to manage their free time well. However, the role of the school in reproducing the work force and the teachers' contribution to this showed not be forgotten.

Gramsci stated that one's interests are related to one's historical experience and with one's background as well as one's immediate environment. Growing up in a dictatorship form of political system, being educated in an alienating school and being constrained by several economics and organisational limitations in the school, one cannot be surprised by the teachers' lack of interest and commitment to both the quality of education and to students as individuals with their own problems and interests. The same historical-political influences can explain teachers' lack of participation in meetings and group discussions held in school during the field work.

The school must not establish itself as totally subordinated to the broad society but as a transformative institution. In order to achieve this aim, teachers have to be educated for this role. This education requires an understanding of the political role of education and educators.
According to Giroux, school is not only a place for reproduction. It is also seen as a contradictory site, split between the ideological imperatives of liberal democracy and the dominant values of capitalism. Inherent in these contradictory ideologies there is a place for political and ideological struggle (Giroux, 1988).

For both Gramsci and Freire, school has no power to transform the social reality since it cannot eliminate social classes. However for them, school plays an important role in the democratisation and transformation of the present reality. In the same vein, Betti (1976) reinforces the interdependence of the political and educational aspects. So, for him, a new society can be built up in the school benches but only when it gives greater emphasis to the political aspects.

For Gramsci (1971) and Betti (1976) the reality is dialectic and the movement inside school is decisive to establish a new hegemony. For them, the new hegemony must be built up from the bottom and school is a place to start. However, this is only possible with a new kind of educator. These new teachers must be 'transformative intellectuals' (Giroux, 1988), that is both teachers as well as educators. However, as observed by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) neither teacher training institutions nor public schools have considered themselves historically as important sites for educating teachers as intellectuals.

A lot as been said in the literature about education concerning the school as a means of reproducing the ruling ideology. Now it is time to overcome this criticism and change the reality of the school. In trying to change the school, one must see the school as an instrument of social transformation, where the contradictions of the social system are alive and reflected in its membership. Changes have to be done inside the school.

It was my intention, in the present research, not only to study the causes for dropping out but also to collaborate in the improvement of within-school problems which directly or indirectly were related to dropout. Participatory research, which comprises investigation, education and action to transform the reality, was the methodological approach adopted. Because of several constraints, participation was limited to the field work period and was most significant as an educational activity.

The dialogue technique, based on Paulo Freire's method, was the main approach used to discuss and analyse the data during the group discussions and at the same time to raise participants' critical consciousness. In the data analysis I tried to discuss the main within-school reasons for dropping out as pointed out in the interviews and questionnaires.

In a general way, students were more willing to participate than teachers. They also showed they were more interested in politics and in solving students' problems, than the teachers were. The most active students were those who were involved in political party activities in the presidential election of 1989 or any other social movement outside the school. Students also seemed
to be more resistant to school culture than teachers. However, as stated by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), both students and teachers have a contradictory consciousness that must be treated dialogically. In this way, I believe in the possibility of change in the school through changing teachers' and students' consciousness.

If political activities help to increase the critical consciousness of the working class (Gramsci, 1971) and if it is primarily in the sphere of political parties that society carries out the debate about its future, designs its development model, builds up opinions, judges its leaders and forms its historical identity (Demo, 1986), then it is necessary to encourage more political affiliation and activities on the part of both teachers and students. In fact, Ribeiro (1987), analysing the political formation of secondary school teachers in São Paulo, recommended that the political formation of teachers must be improved constantly. The same can be applied to other Brazilian teachers.

Both students' and teachers' participation increases over time. Usually, in the first encounter with classes I found at least a little resistance or apathy. However, when students realised that their problems were being discussed and solutions were being sought, they started to become interested and the quantity and quality of participation increased considerably. The spirit generated by the first presidential election after thirty years may also have influenced the increase in students' interest in debates and participation.

There were occasions when students' interests were other than the discussion of dropout questions, such as studying for a test, discussing the expulsion of a teacher or the presidential election. Negotiation and/or submission proved to be a good tactic in these cases. The fact that I submitted myself to a momentary students' interest, strengthened our relationship and improved students' collaboration in the subsequent encounters.

Students' initial resistance to participation may be a consequence of the apathy generated by the school curriculum and by 'banking education'. Teaching methodology centred in the teachers gives no or few opportunities for student participation in debate and analysis in the classroom. Student assessment, which consists basically in restating what teachers have said, does not help to improve creativity, analysis and critical thought. The 'culture of silence', or the imposition of the dominant culture, may have also influenced students' lack of participation in the beginning of the group discussions.

Teachers' lack of participation was influenced basically by their work conditions, their lack of political concern and critical consciousness, as well as the 'culture of silence' and the remaining consequences of the still recent twenty years of dictatorship. The fact that I was seen on the side of the students' interest during the strike period, brought, on the behalf of the teachers, a certain animosity towards me and my research. When the teachers realised that being in favour of student rights and interests did not necessarily mean I was against teachers, the resentment faded and a good relationship started again. Informal contacts in parties promoted by teachers, and to which I was invited, contributed greatly to the improvement in our relation-
Through experience, I learned the importance of informal contacts with the participants both during the research and before starting it. For instance, when walking home late in the evening, I learned facts that probably teachers and students would have not commented on meetings or group discussions. In these informal contacts, they also had the opportunity of getting to know me better and to check my true personality and intentions. The importance of the researcher and the researched knowing each other was also evident in the second spell of my field work. At this time, teachers' collaboration and trust was much better than when I first started the research. Consequently, I recommend to any participatory researcher to make informal contact with the researched group before starting the research itself.

Participatory research aims to know the reality in order to change it through the development of people's critical consciousness. According to Vasquez, theory and the transformative practice are mediated by a work of critical education of the consciousness, by the organisation of material resources and by concrete plans for action (Vasquez, 1968: 206). Due to time constraints, in the present research, it was not possible to reach the stage of praxis or action-reflection-action. Yet, a critical and reflexive attitude on the part of some students started to develop. They started to understand the reasons for and consequences of dropping out and to link school problems with the social, political and economic national situation. They also started to regard themselves more as individuals than a class or group and to demand to be treated such as. They also realised the power of collective work. The most important actions were some attempts to improve the quality of teacher-student relationships, the teaching methodology and to negotiate the timing and content of tests. However, these outcomes were limited in both the number of students involved and the quality of the results.

The literature review about participation and group discussion recommends working with small groups in order to increase the opportunities of participation. During my field work I had the opportunity to work with small groups and see how easy and profitable it is. However, in the present study I opted to work with 'natural' groups, that is, with the whole class. This decision was based on both pedagogical and a political factors. Pedagogically, I decided to keep all students inside the classroom and so avoid noise on the corridors. Politically, I decided to opt for quantity rather than quality, since, according to the fundamentals of the dialectic logic, the transformation of quality is acquired through the transformation in the quantity (Badotti, 1983).

Considering the time constraints and the outcomes of the present study I believe that it is possible to promote school change through participatory research. Students demonstrated both a resistance to school culture and a desire for changes in the school. This was promising. However, I would recommend more time in the field in order to develop a critical consciousness in a greater number of students, to have time for praxis or action-reflection-action, and to generate lasting and productive results.
Apart from time constraints, my unrealistic or too idealistic expectations about changes to be reached in school were other factors that must be considered when analysing the reasons why I did not entirely achieve what I had hoped.

Evening secondary school students usually work during the day. This is an objective constraint to student participation in activities outside school hours. For this group participation in group discussions and/or other activities promoted during the class period would be the most indicated. Considering the enthusiasm and level of participation of some of the more politically conscious students, I would recommend involving these students more directly in the entire research process. Their help and their influence on other students could improve the research outcomes. I would also recommend working directly and more closely with those teachers who are more open-minded and more concerned with school and student problems. Their actions might influence the action of their colleagues.

Vio Grossi (1981) and Pigozzi (1982) warned about the possibility of some manipulation in participatory research. They suggested that researchers may induce behaviour or direct discussion and thought. Although I tried to avoid this and overcoming my political, historical and cultural background, which is the same as that of the teachers, I might not have achieved this all the time. Group work with the students and teachers who had already reached the 'critical transitive' level of consciousness (Shor, 1993) or were on the way of reaching it, may help to avoid the danger of manipulation in further researches as collaborative analysis and planning may help to avoid manipulation.

As a last observation, but not the least important, I cannot leave without mentioning that the analysis of my findings made me reflect on and analyse my own practice as a teacher and I have discovered a great deal about it. This proves the importance of being both a teacher and a researcher at the same time, and having the time to reflect and discuss our own practice. Unfortunately, due to several constraints, few Brazilian teachers have this opportunity. A good way to give them this opportunity it would be to involve them in some research project about teachers' practice or within-school problems.
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### General Education Course

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Appendix B - Student Questionnaire About Dropout

Demographic Data
1. Name __________________________ Gender F___ Age ______
2. How many years have you been in the secondary school? ____________
3. How many years have you been in this level?

Questions
1. Several of your colleagues dropped out from this school this year or in a previous year. Write in the appropriate space, what was (were) the reason(s) for their dropping out and tick the box which corresponds to the level of influence of each reason.

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2. Have you ever thought of dropping out?
   yes !__! no !__!
   (If 'no', please go to question no 5.)

3. Why have you thought of dropping out?
   Write in the appropriate space, what was (were) the reason(s) and tick the box which corresponds to the level of influence of each reason.

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4 - Why did you give up the idea of dropping out? Write in the appropriate space, what was (were) the reason(s) and tick the box which corresponds to the level of influence of each reason.

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<th>Reason(s)</th>
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5 - In your opinion, which measures should be taken in order to avoid dropout?

6 - Any additional comments and/or suggestions.
Appendix C - Teacher Questionnaire About Dropout

Demographic Data

Name: ____________________________________________

Subject taught: ___________________ Classes: __________

Number of years teaching this subject: ________________

Number of years teaching this subject in this school: __________

Questions

1 - In your opinion, which is (are) the cause(s) of students dropping out? (If more than one, list in order of importance)

2 - Which measures could be recommended to improve the situation?

3 - Did you take any measure to avoid dropout?
   Yes: _i_ No: _i_
   If yes, which measure(s) was (were) taken and what was the result?

4 - Did you take any measure to bring back dropouts?
   Yes: _i_ No: _i_
   If yes, which measure(s) was (were) taken and what was the result?
5 - Has any continuing student told you his/her intention of dropping out?
Yes ✗
No ☑
If yes, which was (were) the reason(s)?

6 - Did any dropout tell you his/her intention to leave school?
Yes ✗
No ☑
If yes, which was (were) the reason(s)?