REFIGURING ASPIRATIONS: YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRAZIL AND ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explain how Brazilian and English young people from working, middle, and upper class backgrounds shape and construct their aspirations in life. Aspirations here refer to projections of the self onto the future, forms of becoming which can only be assembled, selected, left out, in non deterministic and non absolute ways. The articulation of aspiration can only be understood properly if Ricoeur's notion of temporality is considered, in other words, the past through memory, the present through attention and experience, and the future through expectation.

Aspiration is a central concept of this thesis, defined as a narration of future projections that articulate different identities in the arena of young people's daily routine. The most relevant aspects to be debated throughout this thesis are the following: (a) to go beyond the fixed categorisation of youth culture as an homogeneous category within society, by showing how young people are highly differentiated and inherently unstable; (b) to understand aspirations not as consequences of wider social and cultural transformations like modernity, late modernity, and risk society. I attempt to define the ways which people re-create and reproduce meanings and expectations in everyday life, taking into account their categories of identity and their space of location, which intersects the local, the regional, the national, and the global, across time; and (c) to address young people's life-opportunities, challenges, and creativity encountered in their daily routines. From this perspective, I aim to identify young peoples' 'tactics', their more definite strategies to cope with obstacles, fulfil their lives, care for the well being of others, and participate in the more institutionalised sphere of politics. Possibilities of innovation are explored within the arena of young people's daily experiences.

To my loved ones, Lourdinha, Antonio Carlos, Michael, Bruno, José Carlos
Carolina, vovó Cotinha, Minu and vovó Lourdinha (in memory) who have taught
me in different ways, that even confronting hard times, it is still worth
participating in making a fairer world, a better place for all human beings.

Also, this PhD was made possible due to your support and faith in my ability to
keep going when things got tough.

'If I don't have a profession I'll be a nobody. When I die I will not leave something that remains. I want to plant something that lasts in people's memories'. (Antonio, Colegio Dom João)

'I just don't like to be away from home or anything. I like the support from my family, because they really help me. They support me with my education you know, pushing me, and saying "come on Sue, don't give up", and this you know… I just feel comfortable having them with me while I am going through that stage'. (Sue, Nottingham College)

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Acknowledgements

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Foremost, I thank 'a constant presence', always with me, caring and supporting in every second, in such a lonely 'journey'- My God, whose love and justice are fulfilling.

Introduction

This thesis explores the aspirations of young people, their hopes, plans, fears, frustrations and wishes, in two different social contexts, England and Brazil. Aspiration is not a psychological category alone or a social determinant, since it intersects with the more individualised aspects of living in the socio-economic, and political contexts in which a person exists. In this thesis I understand aspiration as a complex subjective construction made up of plans, desires and fantasies, based on hopes of the imagined future. The concept of aspiration developed in this thesis takes into account Ricoeur's intersection of fiction and reality in the configuration of narrative. In this sense, I borrow Ricoeur's' (1988) account of the relationship between fiction and reality and stress that aspiration in this thesis is not only configured in the context of dominantly prescribed goals, but takes into account the dynamic relationship of fiction and reality. In agreement with Ricoeur (1988) I argue that life imitates fiction as much as fiction imitates life. Aspirations then involve life-prospects, opportunities and constraints, which aspirants identify in the process of thinking about their future. Aspirations are embedded in life practices, which are the daily experiences of negotiating possibilities and constraints. Life-experience is the basis on which aspirations are composed. Studying aspirations therefore entails a commitment to understanding aspects that impact on people's lives in more 'structured' ways, such as gender, race, ethnicity, national culture, and social class. These social embeddings relate to experiences that are also influenced by time, space (its connection to the local, the national, and the global) and power relations. I examine in this thesis the limits imposed by material conditions, which especially affect the socially disenfranchised as difficulties and sufferings, but also stress the tactics (De Certeau, 1988) and strategies articulated, by the participants, throughout the processes of narrating their aspirations and interacting with me.

Aspiration can only be understood by examining the research subjects' specific 'belongings', experiences and locations across time and space. This approach has allowed me to perceive how the subjects are 'situated' in the world (Haraway, 1991). Being 'situated' in the world, their knowledge, practices, and experiences are partial and intersect with social embeddedness across

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time and space. Aspiration is not interpreted as primarily cognitive, or the reproduction of prescriptive goals that may guarantee or facilitate social inclusion. The perspective on aspiration developed in this thesis innovates in this field of research, by breaking with the idea that aspiration involves only the dissemination of dominant life plans within the context of social transformation. This is why I emphasise the differences of circumstances and social embeddings.

It has been central to this research to take account of theoretical trends, which generalise characterisations of contemporary societies and people. These reinforce, for example, the minimisation of State Welfare provision, the impact of consumption and globalisation, the flexibilisation of work (Sennett, 1998), the increased prospects of risk (Beck, 1992), and the consequences of individualisation, or the fragmentation of human bonds (personal and collective ties). I develop a concept of aspiration that aims to go beyond generalised and abstract approaches regarding both macro-changes and micro dimensions of society. These studies of late or post-modernity often fail to take account of the concrete setting of subjects' lives, always specific in place and time. My subjects' positions in the world are always specific in terms of more subjective aspects of living and 'social positionings' in which they function, and this means that it only makes sense to consider their configurations of aspirations as specific too, by also including possibilities of innovation, alternatives, ruptures, sedimentation, and continuity of traditions (Ricoeur, 1988).

I theorise aspiration by alluding to different aspects of people's lives in time, what is called by Ricoeur (1988) 'fusion of temporalities'. This means that our lives intersect with the past through memories, with the present through experiences and with the future through expectation. Anticipations of people's future lives can only be put together, selected, and configured by the fusion of temporalities. This will be further explained in Chapters 1 and 2 of the thesis. As well as the 'fusion of time', aspirations are also connected to the relationships of subjects with others (individuals and institutionalised others) that permeate the domestic sphere (the space of the family), friendships, schooling, work experiences, political and collective spheres and other forms of identification. This research examines the ways young participants re-create and reproduce

meanings and expectations in their daily living with parents, in attending school or college, in dealing with frustrations, in commemorating achievements, and in celebrating happy moments, while planning their future lives. My purpose is to identify the participants' experiences of coping with challenges and constraints, at the same time as they prioritise opportunities and construct future possibilities for their lives. Aspirations are mediated through motivations and desires for autonomy, selfhood, social integration, and through relations with and expectations of others. Young people's aspirations in life are only examined properly if one looks at the interaction between dependence on others (including institutions) and assertions of independence. As we shall be seeing throughout the thesis, the assertion of independence is deeply related to categories that embody and shape people's identities, alongside anticipations of future lives.

This thesis is not primarily a study of 'youth cultures', but a research into aspirations carried out with young people. The central element of the thesis is on understanding the ways aspirations are built and revisited. As a study of aspiration I could have developed the research with people from different age groups. In Chapter 1 the choice of the specific age group is explained. Having decided to carry on the research with young people, I examine in Chapter 2 the importance of taking previous youth studies into account. In this thesis, however, research subjects' narratives are not treated as representative of youth subcultures, nor of youth deviance (young people's involvement in crime and social behaviour). Also, young people here are not identified in the light of psychosocial developmental theory (life-stage). They are not grouped as passive consumers or in terms of any sort of homogeneous group or category.

Young people's articulations[1] of aspirations (Hall, 1996; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) in this research are not reduced to those of a generalised individual or youth group as a separate category in society. Aspirations are articulated, configured and re-figured, (Ricoeur, 1988, 1992) by flesh and blood subjects, who experience specific and differentiated lives. This study looks at young people as heterogeneous subjects who are impacted by 'local' values and

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[1] These concepts of articulation, configuration and refiguration are discussed in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

experiences whilst at the same time being able to revise such values and experiences. The local is understood, however, always in the context of processes that are global. This entails an interest in focusing on global differences. I achieve this by highlighting the distinctions of life experiences and aspirations of the research participants in Brazil and in England.

I decided to develop this study in both Brazil and England so as to examine not only the range of differences of social positionings, but also national cultures. These two countries are different in all sorts of aspects: in their economy and human development, i.e. between the developed and the developing worlds, the degrees of social and political inclusion both within and outside of national boundaries and in their cultural dimensions. Britain has a leading role in international affairs in comparison with Brazil, but is not without its own inequalities. One important aspect of this research is to observe the extent to which the differences between Brazil and England are expressed in young people's articulations of their aspirations. Another fundamental element of cross-cultural research is the intention to depict the 'dominant' global representations of young people as not universally applicable. On the contrary, in configuring their aspirations, young people draw on local and individual forms of identification, as well as larger social and cultural formations. Cross cultural research in this thesis stresses how the representation and feelings of the nation are produced throughout the narratives of young people and incorporated into their aspirations. By stressing the national we can look at local as well as global relationships. In agreement with Massey (1998, 2000), thinking about nationality and/or globalisation means referring to constant mediations of the local, the national, and the global. In doing so, I question, throughout the research, whether the generalised accounts of people and society today, as framed by contemporary social theories, are (not) too centred within the privileged contexts of developed western countries. At the same time, the differences between Brazil and England, along with their national cultures, are linked to relationships of all kinds, with other 'spaces' and peculiar dimensions of people's categories of identity. Otherwise the national differences could end up becoming the main category of my participants' life experiences and aspirations. This is not the case. National identification is one category among a number. This means that similarities and differences of narratives will not be

divided or addressed primarily in the sense of cross-national comparisons. First of all, there are many other aspects, besides national identity, that are present in people's life-experiences and aspirations. Secondly, national identity is embedded in many 'taken for granted' situations. Comparisons of similarities and differences between England and Brazil may become very arbitrary and over simplified if the overall heterogeneous contexts of these two countries and the participants' lives are not considered.

This thesis draws upon aspirations as articulations in process, open to the possibilities of configuration and refiguration across time and space, within the specificity of the participants' experiences. The research includes the narratives of young people from a specific city in Brazil and another city in England, as two case studies, but not primarily as a comparative research. A full comparison would have involved research in other regions of Brazil and England. It would also have had to have a narrower theme to make such a comparison possible.

Having clarified that aspiration is the central element of this research I trace here the most relevant issues to be discussed in the thesis and how those relate to the order of treatment.

As this thesis has been developed as deeply connected with my personal experiences, concerns and differentiate theoretical involvements I chose to explain the process in which the research and the thesis was produced in its beginning. In addition, the need to move from an abstract and theoretical account of today's society and young people to a descriptive plan of the different ways life experiences and aspirations are articulated and interpreted, in specific places and times, led on logically to a chapter on method, Chapter 1: Methodology and the Research Process. This chapter includes a description of the research process, that is the choice of the research topic and of young people as the research subject; the choice of cities where the research was carried out; the research sites within the cities; the relationship of the researcher with the participants; the researcher's 'positionality' in the process of interacting with the participants and in interpreting the narratives produced; the challenges which were faced; the justification of the qualitative methodology, including

some aspects of the epistemologies of Ricoeur's hermeneutic, and the chosen methods of research.

As it is briefly addressed in the Chapter 1, from the light of my lack of satisfaction with some of the accounts of social theory, there is a body of contemporary social theory that labels people's prospects and goals in life, in today's societies, from the perspectives of macro dynamic changes, particularly reflections on modernity and on what is recognised by the social theorists as 'post-modernity'. In this context, I felt the need to review the main aspects of these theories in Chapter 2 of the thesis and then, throughout the other chapters, analyse how these theoretical 'speculative' outcomes relate to young people's experiences and anticipations of their future lives. In this same vein, I tried to break with the concept of youth as a homogeneous, undifferentiated social and cultural category. Also, by linking the social theoretical aspects, the traditional youth studies and the more contemporary ones, I configured my own concept of aspiration in a third part of this chapter. My understanding of aspiration draws on two sources, Laclau and Mouffe's theory of 'articulation' and Ricoeur's discussion of time and narrative.

After defining the methodology of the thesis and its theoretical backgrounds, I then move to the remaining four chapters, which are empirically based. The selection of the topics addressed in the subsequent chapters has been chosen for two main reasons. Firstly I wished to reflect on the abstract 'representations' traced by social theorists in relation to careers, intimate relationships, and social concerns in the context of individualisation theory. Secondly, the topics considered in these chapters were also the ones that came out of the young people's narratives.

Whilst recognising that many contemporary social theorists exclude social class (Giddens, 1992a; Featherstone, 1995; Bauman, 2003) from their analysis, I have chosen to examine how social class appears in relation to the choice of careers and jobs by young people in my research. Chapter 3, Anticipating Careers and Jobs, considers the ways narratives of aspirations integrate with projections of future plans in terms of careers and jobs. As the socio-economic differences between Brazil and England proved to be fundamental in

understanding the particularities of the participants' work expectations, I developed a brief outline of both countries' social and economic situations at the beginning of the chapter. This chapter also shows that the expectations of future careers and jobs are likely to reflect the social class of the research participants.

In Chapter 4, Hopes of Family Ties and Friendship, I combine the wide range of studies that are available concerning contemporary intimate relationships in the light of the emphasis given to the topic by the young people I interviewed. I examine how family ties and the daily experience of relationships in the domestic sphere with parents, including other family members and friends, are incorporated into the accounts of the research subjects' aspirations. This chapter is also chosen because the form of intimate relationships in late or post-modernity figures strongly in macro social-theories (Giddens, 1992a; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2003).

Having identified the exclusion of national culture in contemporary social theories (Lash, 2002; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2003) and in the early tradition of British Cultural Studies (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979) I decided to examine it throughout the thesis. The aim here was to observe whether national cultures remain present in the articulations of the young people interviewed. Chapter 5, Locating Aspiration: The National and the Global, draws upon the ways in which national cultures, as internalised presences and feelings, influence the design of aspirations, including the allusions to short and long term plans. Also, the inter-relations between the local, the national, and the global are incorporated into this chapter as possible experiences and imagined future plans.

Much theoretical analysis tends to focus on the emptiness of the political and collective spheres of contemporary societies (Sennett, 1998; Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2003). Some research about young people propagates post-sixties nostalgia for student and other youth movements (Abramo et al 2000; Peralva and Sposito, 1997). I therefore decided to structure a chapter that links the subjects' narratives to the collective and to the political. As a result, in Chapter 6, Aspiration and Justice: Political and Ethics, I analyse

whether social and political activisms and 'responsibilities' are incorporated into the narratives of the research subjects' aspirations. Activism and social responsibility may take different forms. In particular I include both engagement (or disengagement) with politics, as institutionalised, and more dispersed social attitudes, which involve concern for the well being of others.

I re-state that this thesis aims to question the dominant views on aspiration that propagate the privileged patterns of the middle and upper-middle class' social goals, and that I consider aspiration as embedded in specific social positionings and locations. From this perspective aspiration takes wider cultural and social forms, but is also shaped by the more subjective aspects of my research subjects' lives. The thesis ends with a summary of the main findings, including questions, which remain, as yet, unanswered. It is hoped that they may prove to be fruitful lines of inquiry for future studies of aspirations and intersecting topics.

Chapter 1: Methodology, the Researching Self and the Research Process

I start by explaining the reasons why I chose aspiration as the topic of this thesis. In this chapter I describe the processes of empirical research and explain some of the main methodological choices that have shaped this thesis. Since methodology also includes aspects of theory, I also discuss elements of Ricoeur's account of 'mimesis'. After clarifying some of the more subjective aspects that influenced the process of choosing aspiration as the research topic in the first part of this chapter, I then address the direction in which the research developed in detail.

I first clarify the reasons why I choose to carry out a cross-cultural research, as two case studies, one in England and the other in Brazil. I then follow in detail the order of the research process itself: the choice of the research subjects (of the empirical studies), the way I accessed the research participants, the choice of the research sites and issues of access and interaction with my research subjects. Overall I explain why I adopt a qualitative methodology including more epistemological reasons for choosing group discussions and in-depth interviews.

It is central to say that the account of aspiration is profoundly interactive. The accounts produced by the interviewees remain incomplete in a sense until read and interpreted by myself. Similarly, it is my presence and questioning that evokes them. I am not saying that my interpretation is superior but that aspirations tend to be expressed in less articulated fragments of narrative. I am especially aware that relations of power and difference enter into the dynamic of interviewing. According to Haraway (1988, 1991) all social research is socially 'situated' and so involves our spatialities and our embedded belongings (Bhabha, 1994; Brah, 1996; Hall, 2000). In this chapter I discuss how interactions with the research participants, and also my interpretation of their narratives of aspiration need to be analysed by considering the challenges and possible cultural differences, including the 'self-prejudices' I had to confront.

1. Choosing Aspiration as the Research Topic

My interest in aspiration dates back to my last year at university, as it was a significant time for my family, friends, and myself. My friends and older brother, having graduated, were confronting the contradiction that existed between, on the one hand, the desire to make a contribution to bringing about a more just and equal society in Brazil, and on the other hand, facing up to the reality of having to earn a living. At the same time my younger brother was just entering university with great enthusiasm and idealism for his chosen career, while my sister was deciding which course to take at university. Her 'pragmatic' approach was to choose a course, which interested her and at the same time opened up the possibility of a career that in time would provide her with a reasonable standard of living.

In order to understand how decisions are made in the light of ideals versus realities, I decided to carry out a piece of empirical research as part of my degree. I examined the career choices of the *vestibulandos*[2] in relation to the culture of narcissism (Lasch, 1979), and individualisation theory, briefly illustrated in the introduction. In the research I questioned the straightforward relationship between career choices and the individualistic side of narcissism, by interacting with the hopeful, though not alienated, narratives of the *vestibulandos* (Maciel, 1998).

Aiming to extend my research into other aspects of life besides career choice, I wrote a research proposal for a PhD. In it I proposed to work with life plans, by going beyond the limitations of theories on structure and agency, individual and society. I wanted to develop the concept of life plans and intersect it with life-practices and life-prospects[3]. At that time my definition of life-plans focussed on the ideals of life and the hopes of the imaginary future. Life-prospects were opportunities and constraints, identified by the research subjects while they considered the future. Life practices were the daily experiences of dealing with

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[2] Vestibulandos are those students in Brazil who are doing university entrance examinations.

[3] The concept of aspiration became central to the research at a later stage. I had already started the PhD, and I was attempting to include in one conception the intersection between life-prospects, life-plans and life-practices.

prospects, constraints, opportunities, and ideals. The objective of working with meanings, that form and shape aspiration, was already clear to me when I was in Brazil, but at the time, aspiration was not conceptualised as such[4]. Before starting the PhD I knew that I was aiming to understand peoples' plans and experiences not as actions or meanings, as if they were purely individual, that is psychologically driven, but as related to dominant cultural dynamics or changes of macro social structures.

In my dissertation (Maciel, 1998) I had already identified that middle-class Brazilians were still choosing careers in spite of high rates of unemployment and the impact of flexibilisation of work, as pointed out by Sennett (1998). I decided to expand my research into other spheres of life, by including differences of social class, national culture, gender, race and ethnicity, I examined how Brazilians were facing constraints, in living their daily lives, and shaping life-ideals and/or creating forms of agency. When I left Brazil and for the first two years of the PhD in England, my plan was to carry out the empirical research only in Brazil.

Having already developed my previous research, though with a limited scope, with young people who were in their final year of secondary education, I decided to continue researching the same age group. As these students were living through the process of finishing secondary education and attempting to enter university, they were making and testing choices. These were young people whose short-term and long-term plans were yet to be defined, or were in the process of being constructed.

I ended up choosing, as subjects of the PhD research, middle and working-class students who were in the last year of the secondary education i.e. the upper sixth form.

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4 The conceptualisation of aspiration, as a definition that incorporates prospects, ideals, and practices, was developed through my theoretical engagement with Ricoeur. Aspiration then became meaningful through processes of narration. In this chapter some of the aspects of Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle are examined.

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2. Confronting the Limits of Social Theory

Being unsatisfied with the deterministic approaches of some of the social theories mentioned in the introduction of the thesis (Lasch, 1979; 1984; Giddens, 1991; 1992a), I decided to come to the Theory, Culture and Society (TCS) Centre at Nottingham Trent University. I was aware that one of the main topics of the TCS Centre was consumption from a cultural perspective, which influenced my choice of TCS as the place to carry out my PhD research. England appeared to be the ideal country to develop this research, given that a number of university departments were at the forefront of developing theoretical analyses of consumption, of work, and the impacts of global politics. I was also aware of the English tradition in empirical work and ethnographic research with young people, so studying for a PhD in England gave me the opportunity to increase my knowledge of theoretically oriented empirical research. I also thought that temporary distance from Brazil would enable me to perceive Brazilian socio-political and cultural realities from a different perspective. I would make home distant, and more unfamiliar as the anthropologists tend to say.

However, arriving in England I felt that individualisation theory and its consequences were still being analysed in a very abstract and generalised fashion, lacking engagement with the differences and particularities produced in everyday life. Theoretical frameworks developed by Giddens (1991, 1992a), and Bauman (1995; 1998; 2003) continue to be widely propagated, without substantive engagements with empirical studies. As I clarify in the following chapter of this thesis, these theoretical frameworks attempt to understand people's lives and anticipations of future plans as consequences of wider, social, economic and cultural transformations, without focusing on specific settings. They exclude from their abstract analyses the material ways in which human beings can meet opportunities by being creative and through confronting constraints.

Participating in seminars, workshops and conferences often increased my uneasiness with the way in which local, regional and national issues were discussed as if we were truly living in a kind of 'homogeneous' global community. I felt that some of the discussions I participated in were only interested in considering the similarities whilst denying the different power

relations between countries. This became very clear at a conference I attended about globalisation and cosmopolitanism. One of the main speakers, a Peruvian lecturer, started his speech by questioning the adequacy of the concept of globalisation. He criticised the concept by exemplifying the problems he had with the Immigration Service whilst trying to enter into the UK. Having a letter from the university, which had invited him to speak, was not sufficient evidence for the immigration officials; he also had to show his bank statement, proof of employment, evidence of his home address and the amount of money he had brought with him. The speaker clearly showed how differences between 'First World citizens' and the citizens of the rest of the world still matter. He went on to stress that the concept of globalisation needs to incorporate the unequal power relations between nation states. In pointing this out the speaker made other lecturers and members of the audience feel uncomfortable. One of the European professors replied that it was problematic to question the validity of globalisation, because it was already happening 'whether people wanted it or not'. I felt that the professor's statement was arrogant and parochial, as it foreclosed the possibility of engaging with the Peruvian's argument. It is not difficult to see how control over mobility reinforces power and nation states, and makes visible the inequalities of global trends, including the different power relations that impact upon global trade.

In my opinion that conference reproduced the ways in which social theories on individualisation ignore differences. I noticed the tendency of some contributors to engage with approaches that neglect the social, political, and economic exclusions, which impact on the daily lives of people from 'Third World countries'. Abstract concepts of individualisation and globalism are often illustrated from a one-dimensional approach, as the counter-examples outside of Europe and North America tend to be excluded.

Living in Nottingham and using public transport, I witnessed the 'segregation' that exists, with the middle classes resorting to private car use whilst the users of public transport are drawn predominantly from the poorer sections of society. Also whilst shopping in supermarkets in Nottingham I could see the differentiation by social class, of the clients of various supermarkets. These experiences made me aware of the significant social differences that exist

within England, and suggest that the homogeneous descriptions that characterise some contemporaneous analyses not only misrepresent Brazilian realities, but the English context as well.

Finally, I had to go beyond my dissatisfaction with the social theories and look at aspiration as contextualised in particular settings. I recognised that my participants' narratives of aspirations were composed of multiple elements connected throughout the process of narration in specific moments. Aspirations were not pre-given. The subjective and objective realities narrated by the participants of the research could not be pre-listed. As aspirations were far from being constructed in abstractions, they required a human ontology of engagement, a practice of engagement that was not only a formal process undertaken by my participants in sharing their narratives with me. Indeed, my epistemological position had to consider two aspects of the practice of engagement: my interactions with the interviewees, and my interpretations of their narratives. The practice of engagement required my participants' and my own involvement in the process of research. My self-reflexivity identified that the power of the researcher to produce knowledge is higher than that of the participants. Even when I struggled to engage with my participants' accounts, I was aware of the differences of power to represent and produce knowledge between my participants and me (Foucault, 1979, 1980; Walkerdine et al, 2001).

3. Deciding upon a Cross Cultural Study

As previously addressed, my original intention was to carry out the research in Brazil. However, by acknowledging that homogeneous and abstract theorisations of individuals' opportunities and global trends not only misrepresent Brazil, but England as well, I decided to develop the empirical work in two particular locations in Brazil and in England. I concur with Bhabha (1994) that cross cultural studies help in clarifying moments or processes that are produced in the articulations of cultural differences, the 'in between spaces' (1994:1-2).

Not only the more remote historical moments, through processes of colonisation, imperialism, interventions and boycotts, imposed by the 'super

powerful' countries against the poorest ones, but also recent historical events, have shown that national culture is shaped by interactions with other nation-states. The consequences of globalisation in the contemporary world, though far from being homogeneous, cannot be denied. This means that the best way to understand national culture singularities is by looking at the intersection between the local, the national and the global, as illustrated by Massey (2000).

My intention in developing further the relationship between the local, the national and the global in this thesis through the articulations of aspirations of the participants of the research is to discuss the alternatives, the innovative possibilities that could expand the life-opportunities of my interviewees, besides recognising the different impacts of globalisation across the world. In interacting with the experiences of my interviewees and their anticipations of future lives I want to know how far they envisage that transnational identities, cultural global processes may become ' tools of solidarities in the postcolonial world system' (Gupta, 1997:197). Intersecting Gupta's view with recent events, we can exemplify a mechanism of solidarity through the implementation of a new bloc, formed by developing countries, and strengthened in the meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in Cancun-Mexico in September of 2003. This bloc is called the G21, and it is a counter-force, led by Brazil, China and India to pressurise the developed countries to make bigger efforts to cut subsidies and free agricultural trade.

This thesis can be perceived in the context of an effort to take up 'the specifically cultural issues surrounding the mapping of otherness onto space...' as acknowledged by Gupta and Ferguson (1997:50). Having examined the reasons for carrying out cross-cultural research between Brazil and England I re-stress that I chose the Brazilian and English students, who were finishing the upper sixth form of the secondary education, as the participants of this study. As Brazil and England are very different from each other, the decision to study both realities made it interesting to observe the peculiarities of both countries' relationships between the local, the national and the global. I could observe the ways in which aspects of living conditions communicate and intersect, in their own terms, with one another, and reveal specific dynamics of integration and disintegration. I could analyse throughout the thesis, the dynamics of integration

and disintegration, observed in England and in Brazil from the located narrations of my interviewees. As global trends integrate with the local, my participants, sometimes spontaneously and at other times encouraged by me, tended to illustrate their aspirations as specific situated processes, though relational.

The specific relationships between the local and the global were illustrated in the empirical research, reaffirming the relevance of the cross-cultural study. In the case of unequal societies, such as Brazil, globalism tends to be related to social, political, and economic exclusion and the appeals produced by the promise of integration with the developed world. On the other hand, in England, with a much greater degree of social and economic equality than in Brazil, it was interesting to see that the global appeals for mobility came across with claims for tackling local community problems. By developing empirical research in both countries, the abstractions of theoretical frameworks on individualisation and globalism can be questioned, refined and qualified.

Further reasons for developing research in both countries was the fact that I was confronting ethnographic questions with regard to English culture, which stimulated my interest in further research. I also wanted to look at the specificities of aspirations across social classes. I wanted to observe how differences in class were produced and reproduced in a developed country and compare it to that in a developing country. I was also aware of the limits of developing the study just in Brazil as the research would be open to the criticism that it centralised aspirations, without taking into account 'stages'/'phases' of the country's economic development. The aspirations of my participants could be understood from the perspective of Brazil's stage of development in relation to 'modernity', and 'post-modernity'. The Brazilian experience could be seen as irrelevant to contemporaneous social theories given the fact that participants are from a developing as opposed to a developed country. I decided to make the critiques of social theory more widely applicable by basing the research on two case studies, one in England and the other in Brazil.

It is important to stress here that the way in which English and Brazilian narratives appear throughout the thesis is not as homogeneous national 'categories', as if they belonged to two different and opposed systems. By conducting qualitative research I could only approach my participants' accounts, within and between countries, as illustrative of specific realities and locations. I do not claim that the participants' narrations are representative of their respective countries.

4. Choosing the Location of the Empirical Research

Making the decision of working with the articulation of aspirations, as embedded in life and fiction, life-practices and ideals, led me to choose urban centres as research sites. In urban places, my research subjects were likely to be living with diversity and flux and a certain cultural density, arising from the mediation of traditional cultural practices with international arenas of cultural production (Susser, 2002). From the context of aspiration, I aim to study the tensions between tradition and innovation, and question the extent to which the rupture with tradition has in fact occurred, as currently claimed by theories of late modernity. I decided to examine closely relationships between the national and the global, highlighting their different impacts on young people's locations and life-choices. Focusing on the impacts of urban dilemmas is much more conducive to exploring the social theories of individualisation and reflexive modernisation, which I shall be looking at after this chapter. This meant that I could look at how the impact of the dynamics of speedy, life-styles, the coexistence of long working hours and incentives for leisure, the flexibilisation of work, and the unpredictability of life are dealt by my interviewees.

It is fundamental to stress that the articulations of aspirations illustrated in this research were shaped by my research subjects, including their memories, present experiences and expectations in the urban contexts of Nottingham and Recife. Urban centres tend to offer opportunities in wider spheres of life, but also high degrees of polarisation in structural inequalities between poverty and wealth. They offer a wider range of educational opportunities, but also greater inequalities. They offer a wider range of jobs opportunities, but also much casual and low paid labour with a high cost of living. There is a great expansion

of urban places, but also many people who cannot afford to take part in them. Throughout my subjects' articulations they emphasised either their direct involvement with or awareness of access to different life-styles, illustrated in terms of music, food, cinema, and the Internet. However, particularly through the narrations of the Brazilians, the insecurity of life under threats of crime and violence were highlighted as consequences of increasing gaps between people who can choose among different possibilities and those who are excluded even from making limited choices (Waiselfisz et.al, 2004).

For these reasons, and also for ease of access and prior familiarity, the empirical research was carried out in Nottingham, a city located in the East Midlands of England and Recife, a city in the Northeast of Brazil. Historically Nottingham was a city made rich through the local lace industry, whilst its hinterland was characterised by coal mining. Nowadays, the city is reinventing itself as a centre for leisure and service industries, particularly financial services. Nottingham has two universities, several colleges of Further Education and English Language Schools, which collectively attract students from all over the world. Apart from a significant student population, the city is also home to a number of ethnic minority communities, particularly those from India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean. The city has also recently housed asylum seekers through the Home Office's dispersal programme. Nottingham's ethnic diversity stimulated my interest in carrying out my empirical research in the city and besides this, Nottingham is the place where I have been living, since I arrived in England.

A further reason for conducting the research in Nottingham was the ease of accessing young people through their schools and colleges. This was facilitated by a member of the teaching staff at Nottingham Trent University.

Recife is a port city and is the state capital of Pernambuco. It is also my home city, which facilitated access to the participants of my research. One of my reasons for doing research there was the fact that the city combines traditional and modern cultural aspects. Recife has been visibly influenced by the traditional structures that characterise the production of sugar, particularly the culture associated with its fundamental unit of production, the sugar plantation.

The patriarchal tradition has impacted on the local culture in many ways: a culture of 'machismo' and the importance given to the extended family for example. These are aspects that still influence social relationships in the city. Recife is also a capital that is highly connected to popular culture, art movements, including dance and music, which are highly 'articulated' and shaped in its urban space. Recife is one of the oldest cities in Brazil and, as a centre for the sugar industry, was once one of its richest.

Although Recife has lost economic power, it is still retains cultural influence, for example it is the birthplace of cultural movements, such as the 'mangue beat' movement. This movement created a style of music that combines images of rural poverty from the Northeast with local cultural images and 'cyber' influences. According to Ben Ratliff (2001) 'mangue beat' is a music that meshes regional rhythms like the *maracatu* and the *ciranda*, with the sound of the surdo drum, the rustic violin the *rabeca*, along with hip-hop and punk influences. Due to its place as a centre of traditional, local, regional, national and international cultural influences, Recife represented a very interesting location for developing social research.

5. Characterisation of the Research Subjects

The participants of the research were male and female from working and middle class backgrounds. As shown throughout the analytical chapters, social class and gender became central to the process of understanding the components of young people's aspirations.

It is relevant to clarify that social class is not understood in this research as a given category, restricted to notions of production and structure. Class is dynamically produced in daily-life relationships, expressed over a wide range of social and cultural sites (Hollands, 2003). Class relationships are entwined with different forms of exchange, including exposure to circuits of symbols. Although class is shaped by continuous processes of inscription, exchange, and evaluation, it is always made by and in the interests of those who have access to power and the circuit of symbolic distribution (Skeggs, 2004). By contrast, the inscription of social class in so-called 'late-modern' societies is dissipated by

social theories of reflexivity (Giddens, 1991) and individualisation (Beck, 1992). These neglect inequalities of access to cultural symbolic circuits, which indeed are more significant in contemporary class formation. Similarly, participation in symbolic cultural exchange via mobility across spaces is a valuable resource in terms of moving upwards in the social scale. The problem with these theories of late modernity is that class ends up being described or rather disguised by the equation of personhood skills and personal investment, in other words, the individual ability to deploy things as resources (Skeggs, 2004).

The concept of class adopted in this thesis considers its dynamic process of being produced in relationships, including its manifestation in shaping identities. However, I stress that class is far from being produced by a rational calculating self, able to access opportunities depending upon individual ability to invest and to choose. Certain forms of exchange may facilitate or restrain access to resources. With this I am not attempting to say that individuals' and social groups' means of exchange are exclusively rooted in terms of their economic possibilities. In modern societies there are forms of exchange, for example, the participation in sports, music, leisure and political activities, that are not entirely restricted by economic locations. One should not forget that even people's experience of consumption reflects their broader social experiences (Miles, 2003).

Throughout this study it became clear that the young people interviewed, particularly the working-class ones, perceived professional careers as resources, entailing a wide range of opportunities in life. Even the Brazilian participants, identified as working-class by their lack of access to qualified[5] education, revealed in their narratives the hardships faced by their family by the fact they are in full time education. The working-class Brazilian participants by the time the interviews took place were in the process of finishing the secondary education (seen as a great achievement in their social context), but were unsure whether they would be able to start a university course some day. I noticed that the participants' years of schooling and interaction with different

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[5] As it is later described in the thesis, my participants' narratives show that the lack of teachers in their school prevented them from studying all the subjects requested by the Brazilian national curriculum.

cultural practices from their local neighbourhood[6] had already expanded their plans in life, marking differences from their parents' expectations. For example, some of my participants mentioned their dreams of becoming a media producer, a journalist, a social communicator, and so on.

Hoping, however, that their motivation and effort would allow them to start a university course, these young people acknowledged that in order to realise this dream they would have to choose a less competitive field of study. Reinforcing their identities as members of the working-class, though not from the very bottom of the scale, they perceived medicine as not really feasible to people like them. This example actually shows how the identity of these young people as working-class forced them to leave medicine out of their horizons of expectation. At the same time, coping with the difficulties of remaining in full time education and dedicating extra time to preparing for the university exams open possibilities, normally not experienced by people from their communities. We can see that the hope to initiate a career that demands fewer years of studies may be a tactic to change at least their family's and their own class location. This research intends not to present aspirational choices and class reproduction as straightforward; at the same time, it is important to emphasise that moving upwards entails non-linear and contradictory routes. Social class mobility is more difficult in Brazil than in England, because of Brazil's more unequal distribution of resources. However, English working-class participants have also shown degrees of insecurity in their process of moving upwards.

With regard to race and ethnicity, even though they have appeared in a few specific narratives, they were not as central to this specific research as were gender, national culture and social class. The lack of stress on race or ethnicity, especially by the Brazilian participants, may have been to do with the choice of schools, and the fact of interviewing sixth form students who are planning to start a university course. The relative absence of accounts of race and ethnicity by the participants is discussed in the Chapter 3 of the thesis in the context of race and ethnicity, along with the access to Education.

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[6] I accessed a working-class school that takes students from a wider catchment area. This school is located in an active working-class area, characterised by busy commercial activities, communitarian organisations, religious and political associations, and so forth.

On average the research participants were students aged 16-19 years old, the exception to this were some male students from one of the colleges in Nottingham, where there was a considerable number of mature students in their mid-twenties[7].

I chose young people in their last year of the secondary education as research subjects, as I had previous experience of working with this section of the population and I had observed the ways in which the configurations of aspirations in relation to aspects of life, impacted on these students. I had seen how the topic of aspiration was introduced to a section of the population that was already living through the process of configuring and selecting the elements of their anticipated lives.

To ensure that the young people whom I interviewed were indeed formulating aspirations, I decided to select students who were at school/college and in the process of preparing to go to university. I decided not to interview young people who were completely excluded from the educational system. To have included this group would have made a 'dialogue' between English and Brazilian young people very difficult as educational exclusion in the two countries are very different social phenomena. By choosing sixth form and college students, I found a wider degree of commonality between the participants of both countries.

Bearing in mind that aspiration incorporates the possibility of making decisions and of being pro active this research was carried out only with participants who had, to a certain extent, the possibility of making decisions. My interviewees were likely to struggle to establish their life-plans, while confronting difficult realities, and testing choices in the process of entering into the world of adults. All the participants interviewed were confronting anxieties that resulted from the process of deciding on their choice of career.

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7 The names and characterisations of the Education institutions accessed are mentioned in the other section of this chapter.

The research did not disregard the forms of inequality and dominance existent in Brazilian society, which lead to impaired life chances and more pronounced social class divisions when compared to England. To understand the ways in which young people's aspirations emerged it became crucial to focus on the wider cultural and social formations of these young people.

6. Choosing Educational Institutions as the Place of Research

Having chosen students in secondary education, who were doing their A-levels in England, or preparing to take the *vestibular* exam in Brazil, as the subjects for the research, I had to resolve the issue of access to the subjects.

I had already experience of interviewing the *vestibulandos*, i.e. the students preparing for the vestibular exam, when I did the empirical research for my Bachelor dissertation (Maciel, 1998). The first strategy I used, for my previous research, proved not to be very practical. I tried to meet students in the street, especially in the vicinity of tutorial or 'crammer' colleges, which prepared students for the vestibular. First of all, the young people who are likely to attend these private courses tend to be middle-class students; hence I would not meet working-class students with this approach. Secondly, the students I approached in the street did not feel comfortable about setting a time and a place for an interview; consequently many students did not turn up. Also I was someone the students did not know. I realised that I needed to change my strategy for accessing the students so I decided to interview them at the place where they studied, which were institutional locations.

Throughout the previous empirical research I had to constantly deal with the lack of free time among 'the vestibulandos'. They were living through a very busy part of their lives. Their busy routines and the lack of time for leisure activities came out throughout the accounts of the participants of this research, both in England and in Brazil. My experience in Brazil indicated that the best way to interact with this group of young people was during their school day. On the other hand the working-class students had to reconcile their working time (within or outside the home) with their studying. With the exception of one

interviewee, all of the interviewees opted to be interviewed during the school day.

Although I had experienced difficulties in accessing students in Brazil outside of their respective educational institution, I wanted to adopt a more spontaneous approach in carrying out the research in England. I attempted to speak to young people on buses and in Nottingham's Market Square but I only just managed to arrange one appointment through this approach. Once again I realised that without an 'introduction' to young people it would be very difficult to convince them to participate in an interview, so again I decided to approach young people via the school or college where they were studying. I realise that accessing students through schools can be limiting, as they are likely to reproduce the dominant patterns of expected goals and common prejudices.

From the accounts of theorists, who have researched at schools sites, or through contact with schools, it is clear that schools are far from being neutral sites due to the way the unequal, hierarchical distribution of power is produced and reproduced at these sites (Nagle, 2001)[8]. In agreement with Nagle[9] (2001) middle-class expectations are incorporated into the values of the school, while the 'worlds' of the working-class are in general, completely dismissed. This is to say that in order for a working-class student to succeed he/she has to adapt to the models of literacy recognised, produced, and reproduced in schools, which are often the middle class ones. The practices of the school staff tend to lead to processes of empowering some students (recognised as the clever ones), and disempowering others (labelled as 'slow' students) (Nagle, 2001).

Reflecting upon the ways the participants of my research could be identified in terms of failure or success by their school systems, I assured the interviewees that anonymity was guaranteed, and that I was an independent researcher,

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[8] To look further at the ways schools produce empowered and marginalized subjects see also (Walkerdine, 1997; Walkerdine et al, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frosh et al., 2002).

[9] Mac an Ghaill (1994) stresses in his research how schools normalise heterosexuality and 'pathologise' homosexuality. I met only one student who shared with me his homosexuality, and he gave accounts of his difficulties in socialising in some environments. His fragment of narrative appears in Chapter 4.

without any links to their schools. Wherever possible I interviewed the students in places, which they chose, to ensure that they, as the participants, played an important role in the interview process.

6.1 Gaining Access to the Participants

Without the support of somebody to introduce the researcher, it is difficult to gain access to students, particularly in English schools. My initial attempts to contact the Sixth Form co-ordinators of a number of schools were in vain. It was only after one of my supervisors made contact, on my behalf, that schools responded.

The choice of the schools in both countries was made taking into account the differences of gender and social class. The names of the schools used in this thesis are pseudonyms. Firstly, St. Joseph's, a mixed Catholic Comprehensive School, in Nottingham, was chosen, because it is a state school with a wide geographical catchment area that takes in students from a wide range of social classes. St. Joseph's is a school with a good reputation and it accepts Catholic and non-Catholic students. The second school, Magdalene, a private school for girls was chosen, because of its middle-class female students. My intention was also to carry out research in a private school for boys, but unfortunately this was not possible. I overcame this problem by selecting male students, who were clearly from middle class backgrounds, at St. Joseph's school. Finally I also carried out research at Nottingham College. This offers vocational education and A-levels. Nottingham College was chosen due to the social class of its A-level students. I needed access to more working-class students, given that I did not find enough working-class participants at St Joseph's school.

Both at St. Joseph's and Nottingham College I had access to a large group of students. I informed them of the research and asked who was interested in participating in the research. The 'A' level Co-ordinators helped to arrange the meetings with the interested students. At Magdalene school I did not have the opportunity of contacting the students directly in the first instance. The sixth form coordinator contacted the young women directly and then I was put in contact with those who had agreed to meet me. Not being able to contact the students directly in their classroom was a disadvantage for the research,

because I did not want students to be chosen based on their academic performance, behaviour, and so on. Seeking to minimise any possible 'bias' in the process of selecting the students I emphasised to the co-ordinator the importance of interviewing a heterogeneous group of students with regard to ethnicity, school performance, family background, and so on. Another problem I found with the arrangements for the interviews, set up in England, was the shortage of time. The majority of the interviews had to be carried out during the lunch break or in free periods. The majority of the interviews that took place in England were restricted to one hour, sometimes a bit longer if the student agreed to stay longer. In some cases, the students offered to continue the interview in other free periods or in different venues, but this did not happen often. I accepted all the opportunities given by students to extend the time of their interviews.

In Brazil, my cultural familiarity certainly helped to speed up the process of gaining access to schools. As I had previously studied at a private school in a middle-class suburb of Recife (Colégio São Francisco), I approached, in person, a member of staff who I knew at the school. As a result, I was given direct access to the students. I went to the classrooms to inform students about the research and asked for volunteers. I then arranged the interviews with the interested students. All the interviews took place at the school. However, I had more time to interview the Brazilian students. The majority of the middle-class students not only met me during their school breaks, but also during school hours. The interviews with the students from *Colégio São Francisco* lasted from one to three hours. The choice of São Francisco was made not only because of my familiarity with the school, but also because of its middle and upper class students.

I also gained access to the working-class students from the *Colégio Dom João*. This is a well-known state school, located in a working-class area of the city, and the vast majority of its students are from working-class backgrounds. The school's Co-ordinator of Secondary Education arranged the interviews with the students who had agreed to participate in the research. I did not have any problems in finding an appropriate number of research subjects either in São Francisco or in Dom João. Indeed, I had more students interested in

participating than I needed. I then decided to carry out a round of pilot studies, following the previous one I had already conducted in England. During the pilot studies, both in England and in Brazil, I gained access to the students in the way I have described above. The only difference between the main empirical research and the pilot study was the more definite format of the interview schedule during the 'proper' fieldwork. The pilot study pinpointed changes in terms of framing questions and the inclusion of additional topics in the interview schedule.

6.1.1 The English Schools

Magdalene School is a girl's school, located near the city centre. The students are overwhelmingly from middle or upper middle class backgrounds. The whole structure of the school reinforces the idea of a privileged group, where young women are trained in preparation for high performing careers. The interviewees are expected to get, on average, four A' levels, and many hope to take up places at prestigious universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, the London School of Economics, and so on. These young women are encouraged to learn at least two foreign languages, play at least one musical instrument, be well informed about current events and participate in organised activities concerning, for example, Human Rights and Environmental issues. School uniform is not obligatory for sixth form students. As the young women have choice over what they wear for school they spend considerable sums of money on their school clothes. The majority of them did not state that clothes were an important aspect of their lives, but there was a relationship between being able to buy clothes and the images they enjoyed propagating of themselves. It was evident that the young women interviewed were likely to invest in clothes that 'made them feel good', so that they did not feel 'lower' in comparison to other girls. All of the young women research participants were between 16-18 years old. In total I carried out three focus group discussions and six in-depth interviews, excluding the four preliminary interviews, which counted as part of the pilot study.

St. Joseph's is a mixed, Catholic Comprehensive School, located in a middle class neighbourhood of Nottingham. Being a Catholic School St. Joseph's

accepts students of a wide catchment area, so it accepts students from a wide area, well beyond the local area, hence it has students who are not necessarily from middle-class backgrounds. As a religious school, it attempts to combine religious education and ethical values with academic achievement. The school tends to motivate a more balanced approach to life in terms of work and the pursuit of a meaningful family life. Indeed, the school stressed the need to reconcile career and family formation. The students seemed to be subject to stricter rules in comparison to other schools. The participants were likely to say that in other schools students studying for A' levels were treated as adults, in the sense of having more autonomy, whereas at St. Joseph's they felt that they were treated as 'adolescents'. Students are not allowed to leave the school, either during their free classes or lunch breaks. Another aspect that is different from the other schools is that the young men, even in the sixth form, have to wear blazers, formal shoes and ties. Even though the young women do not have to wear school uniforms, they have to respect some rules regarding what clothes can be worn. For example, they are not allowed to wear any designer label clothes with tags on, jeans, or trainers. In addition, the majority of the students from St Joseph's are expected to enter a 'respectable' university, but they are unlikely to mention the names of the institutions they attempt to enter, in contrast to the girls from Magdalene School. In total I carried out three in depth interviews with girls, excluding three that happened during the pilot study, and nine interviews with boys. Furthermore there were two focus group discussions, one with the boys and the other with the girls.

Nottingham College is a mixed, Further Education College, located in the city centre. It offers a wide range of academic and non-academic vocational courses to full-time and part-time students. I decided to use the college for research due to the lack of students interviewed at St. Joseph's, who I could clearly identify as being from working-class backgrounds. Unfortunately, access to students at Nottingham College turned out to be very difficult. Many of the A-level students were mature students who were also working and they tended to frequently miss classes. A number of students at the college are taking part in the government's New Deal for the Unemployed programme. Nottingham College, in comparison to the other two institutions where I carried out the research in England, offers less straightforward routes towards academic careers.

As previously mentioned I decided to carry out the research with students who were studying A-levels and who were planning to enter university. By the time I started the research at Nottingham College I had already decided to stop using focus groups, though I decided to organise a focus group at the College for the young men, as they did not want to take part in one-to-one interviews.

The organisational infrastructure of Nottingham College was very different to the other two schools. Due to the greater number of students and the more dispersed structure of the college, the staff involved with the A-level students were unlikely to know the names of many of their students. Also there was a considerable difference in the age of the students in the classroom. In one case I met a student who was 28 years old whilst others in the class were in their late teens. Also several students had previously dropped out of school and had made a decision to return to education. There was also a higher proportion of students who were from ethnic minority communities at the college, than at the other two institutions.

The college appeared to be very flexible and did not impose many rules. The students of Nottingham College were more likely to live in the more deprived areas of the city. Although students were applying for places at university there was no emphasis on any particular institution where students should apply. Students did foresee a time in the future when they would incorporate some middle class privileges into their lives. One of the examples cited was the possibility of doing a job they enjoyed. This is considered further in Chapter 3. In total, I carried out four in depth interviews with male participants, and the same number with young women. I also did one focus group discussion with male students. As already mentioned, those students were unwilling to participate in individual face-to-face interviews.

6. 1. 2 The Brazilian Schools

Colégio **São Francisco** is a mixed, private, Catholic school, with an excellent academic reputation, located in a middle class neighbourhood. In addition to offering the full range of the National Curriculum subjects, the school also offered a good infrastructure for extra-curricular activities, such as sports, theatre, and so on. Due to the provision of extra-curricular activities many students went to the school outside of lesson times. As the school offered the full range of primary and secondary education it was very common to meet students who had studied there since they were three or four years old. As a result, students tended to know all the other students, even from different age groups, the teachers, and the other employees of the school. One of the common complaints of the research participants was the lack of time to go to school for the extra curricular activities, because of the amount of time that was needed to study for the vestibular. The students had to wear uniform, even those who were in the last year of secondary school. If they did not wear their uniform they were not allowed to attend classes.

The entry requirements for São Francisco do not relate to the religious affiliation of the students, or their parents, but to an entry exam. As a consequence only a proportion of the students were Catholic, which was reflected in my group of interviewees.

As I had already conducted the research in England I did not feel the need to carry out many interviews for the pilot study. I decided to do a pilot study just to observe if the topics included in the interview schedule were adequate for a different culture like Brazil. I ended up doing three preliminary interviews that counted as the pilot 'sample', two with male students and one with a young woman. In addition to the pilot I carried out twelve in-depth interviews: six with male participants and an equal number of female participants.

Colégio **Dom João** is a mixed, state school located in a working-class neighbourhood. Here there are not enough teachers to teach the subjects required by the National Curriculum. Students felt that in subjects such as

English and Geography, they were well behind compared to other schools, due to the lack of teachers. Another complaint students made was the lack of commitment of some of the teachers. Although the students recognised that their teachers received low salaries, they complained that many teachers missed classes without justification, arrived late, or were not motivated to teach. Some of the participants mentioned that the school had promised for years to give access to computers and to the Internet, but the school was still without computers. One of the complaints which students made was concerning the level of noise due to the school's location near a busy street.

From what students revealed in their interviews, they were unlikely to have access to the basics, therefore they had to make extra efforts to study the National Curriculum subjects. This is one of the reasons why the majority of the participants from Dom João felt unable to take the *Vestibular*[10] exam. Throughout the research, the participants pointed out that even when their teachers had some level of commitment to teaching, the students felt unable to compete with students from private schools. According to the participants they are not even taught the whole program requested by the National Curriculum. These students were also unable to afford extra-tuition for the specific subjects, unlike the students from São Francisco. The students from São Francisco, besides benefiting from high standards of teaching within the school, the majority of them also paid for private tuition for the specific subjects which form part of the *Vestibular* exam.

All the students I interviewed at Dom João School were from working-class backgrounds. At both schools there was no restriction regarding the duration of the interviews. On some occasions the interviews extended to three hours and in the case of some students from Dom João, the interviews were even longer as highlighted in another section of this chapter.

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[10] As already mentioned Vestibular is the name of the pre-entry exam required by all of the Brazilian universities. The Vestibular consists of an elementary general test that includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum for Secondary Education .In addition there are specific tests that include the subjects more relevant to the course chosen by the candidate. The level of the specific tests is expected to be higher than the general one. The majority of students who can afford to pay for private tuition for the specific subjects, requested in their field of study, by the Vestibular, are from middle or upper class backgrounds.

Finally, I carried out three interviews as part of the pilot study, two with young women and one with a young man, in order to introduce changes in language, topics and become familiar with the daily routine of the students from Dom João. In addition to the pilot I carried out twelve in-depth interviews: six with male participants and an equal number of female participants, the same number as at São Francisco.

A breakdown of the total numbers of the participants in both countries is shown in **Table 1.**

Table 1.   **Summary of Students Interviewed: England and Brazil**

Methods	Schools in England								Schools in Brazil						Total number of students
	Magdalene		St. Joseph		Nottingham College		Total		Colégio São Francisco		Colégio Dom João		Total		
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Focus Groups	3	--	1	1	--	1	4	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	6
Interviews	6	--	3	9	4	4	13	13	6	6	6	6	12	12	50
Pilot Study	4	--	3	--	--	--	7	--	1	2	2	1	3	3	13

7. The Foundation of the Choice of Methods

The way aspirations are approached in the thesis is by combining the relationships of people's subjectivities with larger cultural, social and spatial contexts. This influenced my choice of methods. Understanding aspirations, through articulations, configurations and refigurations of people's fragments of living experiences, requires close attention to the subjects' narratives and interpretations. To make sense of the subjects' aspirations I had to meaning the fragments of narratives, situated in the immediate context of my interaction with the subjects, and going beyond their limits. In doing so I acknowledge what Gramsci (1971) calls 'common sense', which is the embedding of cultural and social forms that are uncritically absorbed.[11] Only as historically and culturally located beings can we articulate ourselves in relation to others and the world in general' (Crotty, 1998:91).   This is exactly the embeddedness of linguistic,

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[11] I clarify Gramsci's notion of common sense further in Chapters 2 and 5 of the thesis.

symbolic and all other sorts of cultural, social, political, in other words, the subjective and collective 'presences' of our life, that Ricoeur[12] (1988) refers as the 'prefigurative' moment of the hermeneutical circle. In making the link with aspiration, young people's experience of life and anticipations of their future are influenced by material conditions, mental and emotional aspects, including passion, despair, frustration, suffering, happiness, fantasy/imagination, hope/expectation, lived as individuals personally either through experiences of others, or as cultural and collective experiences at a given place and time. Aspiration is then situated in social, political, cultural, historical and biographical events and experiences. It is in this context that the relevance of Ricoeur's work to the concept of aspiration, which I develop in this thesis, can be explained. For Ricoeur the only possible way in which narrative can be understood (equal to my concept of aspiration) is by reconstructing the arcs of operations of human understanding and actions, in other words, the stages of the hermeneutic circle.

To narrate implies a mimetic[13] activity, which is explained by Ricoeur as 'the active process of imitating or representing something' (Ricoeur, 1988:33). Narrating also implies the action of 'emplotment' defined as the organisation of events and their re-arrangement. Emplotment includes practices of schematisation and refiguration. By 'emplotment' heterogeneous elements, aspects of our lives and memories are brought together, and then a process of schematisation starts to take place as a synthesis of heterogeneous elements. Emplotment is seen by Ricoeur as the act of judgement and the productive imagination that mediates the interplay of sedimentation, the more definite forms of narrations, embedded in traditionalities (most of the time not completely consciously as is the case of Gramsci's common sense) and innovation, the forms of narrations that are more open to change, and agency.

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[12] It is relevant to emphasise here that Ricoeur in his own work does not define properly the components of the prefigurative, also called by him the pre-narrative moment. His definition of the pre-figurative components, what are included in the concept and excluded, remain missing, without clear connection with the everyday life. By borrowing his abstract definition of the prefigurative moment and intersecting it with Gramsci's common sense, I relate these two concepts to my own one of aspiration.

[13] It is fundamental to bear in mind that mimesis is not simply a copy, an imitation, but entails creativity in which 'plots', the unity of the fragment of narrative, are organised in order to be narrated (Ricoeur, 1988:45).

The process of narrating, similar to the articulation of aspiration, which is examined in the following chapter of this thesis requires three stages of mimesis: Firstly, mimesis 1, that is the prefigurative moment, which precedes processes of composition and configuration. It is grounded in the pre-understanding of the world of action and suffering. The process of acting and suffering that characterise mimesis 1 is figured before narration. For Ricoeur the mixture of acting and suffering constitutes the very fabric of life (Ricoeur, 1984). Mimesis includes our symbolic competence and multiple embedded belongings, since it is a form of articulation.

Secondly, mimesis 2 characterises the practice of emplotment, a form of selecting, putting together the plots, the unities that compose the fragments of narrative. By putting together those unities and selecting them narratives are composed through squematization. This process of squematization includes the mediation of functions, activated by acting and suffering (prefigurative moments) and the openness to history and fiction across temporalities, that occurs during the mimesis 2. This is called by Ricoeur configuration [the configurative moment]. Both fiction (stories told to us, read, and imagined by us) and history play a role in our lives. In agreement with Ricoeur, fiction imitates human lives as much as our lives imitate fiction. Life is then embedded in history and fiction. This means that aspiration is mediated by fiction and history, in other words, the more 'imaginative', 'idealised' aspects of living and the more 'realistic' ones.

From this perspective, the concept of aspiration developed throughout this thesis, involves the practice of assembling and articulating people's fragments of experience and anticipations of their future lives. In this sense, I am less concerned with the description of events as actually happened and more interested in what my participants make of those past events or memories. In this thesis what is at stake is not the past, historical 'event' of my participants' lives or their 'experiences' in themselves, but the link with what remains in the young people's memory. It is in this context that Ricoeur's borrowing from Augustine in relation to the threefold present has a strong relationship to the process of articulating aspiration. From this notion of the 'being of time', the present and the future, in other words the aspirations of my participants can

only be contextualised in relation to the past (memory), the present (attention, action and experience), and the future (expectation and anticipation).

Finally the last stage of mimesis is the mimesis 3, which marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader. This intersection of these two worlds is what Gadamer (1989) calls 'the fusion of horizons'. It is through the mediation of imagination and the practices of understanding and acting, the intersections of the world configured in the text and the world wherein real actions take place that new experiences are brought to language. In this sense, the research participants' attempts to understand their embeddedness in the world, by selecting and putting together the various units, which compose their fragments of narrative, are refigured when my world and their world become relational, throughout our interactions.

In summary, from the perspective of the hermeneutic of narration two processes are undertaken: the internal configuration of the world of the text and the external refiguration of life. In relation to the most important aspects of the hermeneutic circle that need to be retained throughout the thesis I emphasise the following: the entanglement between the prefigurative (the pre-understanding moment), the processes of mediating, the practice of putting together the plots, the understanding of them, and the re-construction (refiguration) of the fragments of narrations, in the light of young people's articulations of their aspirations. In addition, it is also important to consider as embedded in aspiration the association of fiction and life; the interplay between sedimentation and innovation; the temporal character of every human experience; and, the 'circularity' of human actions, including the process of figuring, configuring, and refiguring. I highlight here that my participants' narratives of aspirations is only undertaken through our interaction and my interpretations of their articulations, configurations of aspirations.

Finally, in agreement with Ricoeur I quote that 'hermeneutic circle of narrative and time never stops being reborn from the circle' (1988:76), formed by the stages of mimesis. In the process of narrating, the participants of the research along with me will be re-activating the circularity of the narrative: configuring the components of their narrations by undertaking the process of schematisation,

interpreting them, organising them through narration, interacting with me, and entering into new processes. These new processes entail new practices of interpretations. They happen from contexts of schematisation of new experiences and/or new articulations, and configurations.

7.1 The Choice of Methods

From what I examined in the previous section of this chapter it becomes clear that the engagement with my participants' responses is central to this thesis on aspiration. Only through the interactions with my interviewees can I then access the articulations of a 'net' of information about their lives, verbalised by them to me. In this light I chose empirical research methods, which would allow me to engage with and interact with the participants and would then enable me to listen to and understand their narratives (Silverman, 2000; Nagle, 2001). This type of research requires methods that enable close interactions with the participants and allows for interpretations of the subject's narratives. These methods are applications of qualitative research, as they also include elements that cannot be identified and codified before the empirical research takes place (Silverman, 2000). The specific information needed in this research (Patton, 1990) can only be configured during the interview within 'contextualised meanings'. The data produced in the research requires an in-depth analysis, quite different from that used for structured questionnaires in quantitative research.

As the qualitative methods require interpretative and analytical procedures, during and after completing the empirical research, researchers too are subjective partners, who are active in the process of producing knowledge through interactions and are involved 'in the literal creation [or] evaluation of data (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 110). For the in-depth analyses to be possible, the data has to be registered as 'limited to a particular set of interactions, [allowing] one to examine how particular sayings and doings are embedded in particular patterns of social organisation' (Silverman, 2000:83). The data produced is not only textual 'discursive' stories, but incorporates all the happenings, including the non-verbal articulations, that took place during the interviews.

The analytical framework used in this research goes beyond an essentially interpretative method (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) and objectivist views of knowledge (Johnson et. al, 2004). The specific contours and facets of the data are not prescribed in the way that structured multiple choice questionnaires are in quantitative research, but are expected to emerge from the research context. Due to the volume of information produced in the interview, I asked the participants, for their permission, to record their interviews on audiotapes.

As well as recording the interviews, I also incorporated into my work what Clifford Geertz (1973) has called a ' thick description'. He suggests that the researcher should observe the details of the research environment and the people to be studied and take as many notes as possible, so that it becomes easier to remember the information produced.

To understand the specificities of the research subjects' lives, as well as Gramsci's common sense (1971), I also needed to locate their experiences to come to terms with how they are situated in the word (Haraway, 1988, 1991; Lather, 1992). The 'situatedness' of the participants' knowledge and understanding of their lives, mean that they are partial and limited by a particular time, space and social horizons, and motivated, more or less consciously, by desire, interest and power (Haraway, 1991; Johnson et al, 2004). From this perspective, Foucault (1980) stresses how knowledge is rooted in power relations that are produced within spaces of experiences and larger cultural and social formations that impact upon lives and interfere in the ways people understand the world.

One of the basic outcomes of the qualitative methodology is to produce a deeper understanding of social phenomena, which exceeds the interpretation of people's narratives. The researcher has to ' read between lines' and make sense of the larger contexts of the participants' lives. This type of analysis implies working without a statistically significant quantitative sample. This empirical research was developed with a limited number of participants. It did not seek to produce knowledge that may be more objectivist, 'universally valid' or generalised. The principal purpose was to consider specific contexts of experiences and work with them in detail. At the same time the limited number

of participants does not imply problems of reliability. The seriousness with which the interviews were carried out along with the accuracy of the description of the participants' narratives, the non-verbal articulations and the attentive interpretation of the interactions between researcher and participants, guarantees the reliability of the research. Although the claims about the research have to be limited to particular sets of interactions, as particularities are related to specific patterns of social organisation (Silverman, 2000:83), particular cases may, nevertheless, illustrate Gramsci's notion of common sense. Finally, throughout the empirical chapters it is noticeable that there were moments where I adopted a more general approach as other theoretical accounts and empirical cases studies were used as sources.

7.2 The Failure of the Focus Group Discussions

In the light of the aforementioned requirements at the beginning of the empirical research, I decided to do in-depth interviews along with focus group discussions. In September of 2001 I started the research in England. I undertook the first focus group discussion in order to elucidate the narratives of aspirations that emerged from a collective venue and from the interactions of the participants. The focus group method attempts to make sense of group dynamics, interactions and understandings. According to Bloor et al. (2001) the focus group is 'an advantage in researching topics relating to group norms, the group meanings that underpin those norms, and the group processes whereby those meanings are constructed' (2001:90). In addition these authors point out that the focus group method has the advantage of researching where group norms, meanings, and processes are hidden or counter-cultural. For Janesick (1990) the main positive aspect of the focus group is that it allows the researcher to moderate, by posing questions and 'managing' the group dynamic and observe the interactions among participants. The focus group is a research option that provides a different perspective on the research problem (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) and another level of data gathering in addition to individual interviewing.

At the same time it is recognised that the focus group has its limitation in mapping differences in individuals' accounts, particularly in terms of sensitive

topics. This may explain why I found that my participants had difficulties in opening up their individualities during group discussions. As schools are not neutral places, but microcosms of the larger societies beyond the classroom (Nagle, 2001), relationships among peers are often influenced by different students' positions of power, including the admiration of schoolteachers for those who are 'very bright'. There is a social hierarchy among peers that may or may not coincide with the ways the school classifies and positions students. The fact is that normally the dynamic created and lived by students creates some sort of hierarchy. The existence of peer groups, with visible and non-visible hierarchical structures, requires students to 'perform', or act, replicate, and report on things, in order to maintain the approval of peer groups. As pointed out by Nagle (2001), being different in school means being isolated. This may explain the limitation of focus group discussions throughout this research. Even in relation to the more descriptive topics, such as the participants' routine, their school experiences and similar issues, they did not generate sufficient information. Due to the lack of useful data being generated through group discussions, the meanings that lie behind the group assessment (Bloor et al, 2001) could not be put together.

As I was disappointed with the limited interactions that were produced throughout the group discussions, I ended up by carrying out only six focus group discussions at the three institutions in England. The group discussions did help me in familiarising myself with English culture even if they did not help me access the multiple aspects involved in the configuration of aspirations. I felt that the discussions that took place through the focus group did not flow easily in comparison to the one-to-one, face-to-face, interviews. In spite of the limited time made available by the schools, approximately an hour on average, the participants avoided revealing the more personalised experiences, or even future anticipations, that did not fit in with what was expected of them by their peers.

As I felt that the participants were not comfortable enough to talk about either the more individualised aspects of their lives or the collective ones, the discussions of future anticipations and hopes in the focus group seemed very superficial. The superficiality that appeared throughout the focus group cannot

be explained only in terms of depth, but also due to the restrictive field of topics the participants were willing to address. Throughout the focus groups some of the male participants were likely to tease one another and me and were unwilling to take any sort of discussion seriously. The part of the focus group discussion illustrated below happened in St. Joseph's School.

> Ana Maria - How do you feel at this moment about the fact that you are all soon to finish school?
>
> Joe - Disappointed, because Forest lost last night...
>
> Ana Maria - Sorry, I didn't understand what you said. What was that?
>
> Fred - It's about the football game, because all of us want to be football players...
>
> Simon- Yeah, I think everybody would like to be that!
>
> Ana Maria- Why then?
>
> Bill- You play a sport that you love, score a goal and you are like a god! You have popularity, money, nice car, big houses, a beautiful woman, what more do you need?

The male participants tended to reproduce images associated with the most dominant ambition: those linked to fame and money especially when connected to the world of sport. The image of 'being a football player' appeared on a number of occasions during group discussions, where all of the participants were male. Young men readily expressed attitudes of 'coolness' and showed a tendency to find fun in the focus group context. It was very difficult to encourage them to engage seriously in any conversation, because all they wanted to do was to 'have a laugh' and give the appearance of carefreeness. In the dialogue above it can be seen how the discussion on aspiration was turned into a discussion of the previous evening's football game, in which the local team, Nottingham Forest, lost. Following on from this, the group of male participants collectively stressed their dream of being 'professional football players'.

> Ana Maria- What else are you thinking about at the moment?
>
> Steve- To have lots of money, to win the lottery, to be popular and have a sexy woman with me.
>
> [Everybody laughed]
>
> Simon- We don't worry about much, do we?

The world of a famous football player was the world to be discussed in the group (' money, nice car, big houses, popularity, with a beautiful and sexy

woman'), along with the attitude of not worrying much about things. In contrast, when I carried out the individual interviews with some of the members of this focus group, although they continued to attribute a positive value to a comfortable, material life, the interviewees clearly indicated that their priority was to have 'stable' and 'enduring' ties in life.

In another focus group discussion, this time with young women from Magdalene School, it was clear to me that they were not keen on talking about the more sensitive topics, such as personal and intimate relationships, their goals and ideals in life, etc, which they had done in the one-to-one interviews. For example, during the one-to-one interviews, every time a participant said that she had 'never thought about this', I would re-phrase the question in another way and the participants would engage with me. Throughout the one-to-one interviews, the participants demonstrated an interest in taking part, whereas in the focus group they did not show any enthusiasm, even in talking about their immediate 'practical' plans after finishing school.

As the focus group discussions failed to illuminate the articulations and the transformative issues associated with the refigurations of aspiration, I decided to stop using this method. Organising focus groups can be very demanding, and as the results were not very revealing, I decided to 'go even deeper' during the one-to-one interviews. Dissatisfaction with the focus group method is the reason I did not use it with the Brazilian participants.

The empirical research in Brazil started in August 2002, following the conclusion of the research in England.

7.3 Carrying out the in-depth interviews

I made efforts to create constructive interactions with my participants by allowing them to feel comfortable in my company. I tried to let them speak as freely and as spontaneously as possible, but at the same time I had to maintain their interest in the research topic, which meant re-orientating the discussion, every time they changed the topic.

The in-depth interviews were developed by reflecting on the many aspects of the participant's life, stimulating the participants to remember past issues, then consider present issues before anticipating 'views' and 'images' of the future. I often introduced the topics to the participants, but the themes were not chosen based only on my 'thin, rationally driven accounts' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000:155). The topics were elicited throughout the literature review and the pilot studies carried out in England and in Brazil respectively. The topics of the empirical research were related to the consequences of the work, the work expectations of the research subjects, the manifestation of personal bonds and collective interests (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2002; Bauman, 2003) as perceived from the subjects' life experiences.

I used an interview schedule with a series of open-ended questions, which I covered during the course of the interview. The nature of the questions were such that they allowed the participants to spontaneously articulate their narrations[14]. The interview schedule was used as a guideline but was not followed strictly.

The technique of in-depth interviews is not based upon random sampling, where selection is made in order to provide a representative, demographic reflection of the general population (Silverman, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). My concern was to interview a group of students preparing to enter university and that the group show diversity in terms of gender, social class and ethnicity.

Throughout the process of research, all of the participants had the opportunity to put together components of their lives in a different order and to add issues that were relevant to them. As the interview schedule was only semi-structured, the participants had the freedom to focus more on one specific aspect than another, and to feel comfortable in dealing more fully with the most significant aspects of their lives. Having a semi-structured plan, with open questions,

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14 To see the questions from the interview schedule, see appendix.

rather than closed questions[15], allowed me to draw attention to the most delicate and sensitive aspects of people's lives, particularly, those which were marked by intense feelings of anxiety. These latter elements tended not to appear spontaneously in the research. They had to be carefully introduced by me.

All of the interviewees had the chance to express their opinions as to whether the topics presented in the interview schedule were relevant to them and their lives or not. Usually at the end of the research process I asked the participants to what extent they thought the questions raised by me were significant to the specific moment of their lives which they were living through, and if they had anything further to add to the discussions. This allowed the participants the possibility of incorporating further issues. In general, the issues which some of the interviewees were likely to add related to the particularities of their personal lives. All of the participants felt that throughout the process of the interview we had covered the major aspects of their lives, which were likely to influence and impact on their decisions in life.

> Ana Maria- Is there anything else that you would like to discuss that is relevant to your future life and plans?
>
> Carlos - Não. Gostei muito da entrevista e penso que nós conversamos sobre tudo que é importante pra mim no momento. Há muito tempo eu não tenho uma conversa boa como essa. **No. I enjoyed it a lot and I think we talked about everything that is important to me at the moment. It's been a long time since I had a good chat like this** (Dom João).
>
> <div align="center">**</div>
>
> Manoel- Essa entrevista tocou em mim. Fez com que eu pensasse na minha vida como um todo e me estimulou a trilhar o caminho dos meus projetos. Foram tocados os meus sentimentos vocacionais e os outros fatores que me impedem de realizar o que quero. **This interview touched me and it made me think about my life as a whole. It encouraged me to go for my plans. It made me think about my career and the factors which prevent me from achieving what I want** (Dom João).
>
> <div align="center">**</div>
>
> Alexandre- Eu acho que essa pesquisa é assim muito completa. Eu pensei que a gente só ia falar de política, mas acabou falando sobre coisas que eu nunca imaginava. A gente fala com muitos detalhes e eu terminei falando sobre tudo que engloba a minha vida. **I think that the research covered everything. I thought that we would only talk about politics, but we ended up talking about things that I never imagined. We spoke in a lot of detail and I ended up talking about everything that makes up my life** (Colegio São Francisco).

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15 The type of interview that is shaped by closed questions often aims at collecting precise data of a codeable nature in order to explain the happening within pre-established categories (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

> Chris- I enjoyed talking to you as well. It made me think of many things that I was not expecting (St. Joseph's School).

> Susie- I really enjoy chatting to you. It did not feel like being in an interview, with somebody talking about unattractive subjects. I talked about my life, my concerns, problems that affect England, the world in general and me. It was very interesting. I would certainly do it again (Magdalene School).

As pointed out by the participants, they were often surprised with the number of themes, which we covered in the discussions. In Carlos's and Chris's accounts, the in-depth interviews focused their attention on things that were important to them, but at the same time, the interview for them felt like chatting. For Susie the interview connected her life in the world through her interaction as an existential, flesh and blood, bodily subject. Manoel like Susie felt that the interview not only made he think about his career, but also think about his 'life as a whole'.

The method allowed the participants to articulate aspiration not only from dominant expected goals, but also through ambiguous and contradictory articulations. The in-depth interview was far from being schematic. I tried to draw the participants' attention to the contradictory and paradoxical arguments of their narratives and observed the points at which they remained silent. I also brought in counter-examples (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). The contradictions, silences and other difficulties that were present in the subjects' articulations were likely to be linked to self-defence, lack of awareness, partial knowledge, uncertainty of future prospects and embodied elements which tend to be internalised as natural.

The in-depth interviews also offered the interviewee the possibility of reflecting on the peculiarities of their composition of aspirations. By recognising this, I am not claiming equal relations of power between my research subject and me. I acknowledge the power of my situation in being able to pose questions, of being able to put together their fragments of narrative, and reconstruct connections to the larger contexts of their lives.

It is important to emphasise that the practice of interacting entails an epistemological position of not only understanding people's narratives simply by hearing their fragments, and putting them together. It also entails the doubt and insecurity which assails us – that is the research subjects and me - in the process of dealing with experiences, emotions, putting them into context, sharing them and contributing to the interpretative moment. Throughout our engagements the participant's insecurities in sharing their conflicting narratives were present, along with their desires to choose the most 'impressive' fragments.

Also, throughout our moments of interaction and my interpretations of the participants' narratives, I had to recognise and reflect upon my limitations in fully understanding the research subjects' narrations. My limitations may be explained by different personal values, experiences that are embedded in different categories of identity, common painful experiences, and even prejudices. As acknowledged by Freire (1972) the incursion of values into human activity is inescapable. In this sense the interview process is often marked by practices of self-reflection, the intrusion of the researcher's experiences, memories, and power relations (Crotty, 1998; Walkerdine et al, 2001; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Foucault, 1979).

Thinking of self-reflection and the intrusion of my subjectivity to the research process, it has been very important to recognise the challenges I have to confront, along with 'my power' as the researcher, to produce knowledge. On the one hand I had the 'power' to interpret my participants' narratives. On the other hand I had to be aware of how my interpretation is embedded in internalised power relations that have impacted on my life, in other words, the ways in which *my* life history may influence *my* interpretations. With this I want to stress that in order to understand the meanings of people's aspirations, their silences, contradictions, ideals, and absences, I as the researcher, or interpreter, had to adopt a commitment to understand them. I had to observe my own practices, by trying to be aware of elements of my own aspirations entering into the research process (Gadamer, 1989).

7.4 Transcriptions and Translation

I recorded my interviews on tapes. The fact that I could count on a resource which provided me with the data in a form, similar to how it was produced made me work with the whole data, paying attention to sequence, links and the contradictions produced during the process of interviewing. At the same time, I know that the transcription of recorded data is far from being a straightforward practice. It is not a total reproduction of the research environment; it is also a time-consuming activity. In agreement with Silverman (2000), the transcription was as precise[16] as possible to what was heard, as well as to expressions of non-verbal responses.

Even though I wanted to transcribe the actual happenings of the interviews, in the process of transcribing, it is not easy to deal with the details of actual events (Silverman, 2000). In order to do so, I had to study the tapes intensively, listening to the recordings many times. On many occasions I had to look at my notes, written after the interviews, in order to check the identity of some of my participants. Most of the time I could relate the name of the interviewee to his/her interview, but in those cases where I was in doubt, my notes were a very valuable source.

At other times it was very difficult to trace some of the fragments of the narratives, because of background noises and people talking at the same time, particularly in the focus group. Additionally, it is difficult to be precise in interviews conducted in English when the researcher is not a native English speaker. There were times when I was transcribing the English narratives when I had to confront the problem pinpointed by Silverman 'when linguistic and socio- cultural resources of the participants are not shared' (2000:44). On these occasions I not only listened several times to the tapes, but I also tried to retrace in my mind the sequences of the conversation, to make sense of the words, which I was unable to understand. In this case I used in my notes the symbol suggested by Bloor et al. (2001: 62): '(attempt)'. When I could not

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[16] By using the word precise I am actually saying that I tried to transcribe the interviews in their entirety, using the exact words of the participants·

understand at all what my participants had said I used Bloor et al. (2001:62) symbol: '( )'.

It is important to highlight that the production and analyses of transcriptions are essentially research activities, and not only a technical detail (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). There are times when the repetition of the practice of listening not only identifies a word or a fragment of a narrative, but also reveals previously unnoticed recurring features of the conversation (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984).

In relation to translation, my experience has been easier than for the majority of researchers. I decided to incorporate, into the main body of the thesis, the narratives of my Brazilian's participants in Portuguese, followed by the translation of their fragments of narrative into English. This decision was made, because I wanted to illustrate the Brazilians' narratives precisely as they actually verbalised them to me, in the same way that I did with the English participants. I am aware of how the most perfect translation can change expressions that only make sense in specific locations and cultures.

This decision has facilitated my process of interpreting the Brazilians' narratives. The whole process of configuration, re-figuration involved in the process of understanding and analysing data happened in Portuguese, my native language. In so doing, the problem of translation did not interfere in the research analysis as much. The practice of translation only happened with the specific fragments I chose to incorporate into the thesis.

8. Challenges faced throughout the Research Process

The practice of investigation, particularly using face-to-face methods, and of cross-cultural research is not merely an intellectual one. It also involves a relationship of some intensity and duration between the researcher and participants, including the practice of self-reflection.

Engaging with in-depth interviews allows the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the society being studied from the inside, by creating a

stronger link between the study of society and 'real'[17] society itself. In this way, the researcher actually participates in the social context that surrounds the research ' with the very texture of social life as people live it' (Bertaux, 1981: 32).

By opening myself to engage with others, I acknowledged my own preconceived opinions through the process of struggling even with my own difficulties. According to Gadamer (1989) 'to reach an understanding in a dialogue means to be transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were' (1989: 379). Being open to be transformed and to accept others' positions, without prejudice is not easy at all, particularly when we are living in a foreign culture, very different from our own. I had to recognise my 'Brazilianess' every time I felt identification with my cultural belongings or when my very homesickness was preventing me from constructing empathic interactions with my participants. As a foreigner I had to learn appropriate ways to ask questions and search for further details throughout my interactions with the English participants, without intimidating them. There were also cultural codes that I had to learn in the process of living in England. Indeed I realised that there were times when I misunderstood some of the English students' attitudes and responses. For example, when I first arrived in England I could not make sense of the reply English people tend to give when asked how they are. They often answer: 'I'm not too bad'; and this response often made me wonder if something bad/negative had happened to that person. After living in England for a while I realised that people here use this expression to say that they are fine. There was also the element of formality in English culture that I had to adapt to. In Brazil I felt that it was easier to interact with the participants in a more spontaneous manner, posing questions in more direct ways about ambiguous or sensitive matters in their lives. In England, I did not feel comfortable to confront these aspects/matters in a direct way. I had to construct a non-superficial way, from my perspective, of interacting with the English participants and at the same time allow them to feel at ease. During the research process, I developed better ways of posing questions and enabling the participants to talk as freely as possible. Many authors have mentioned the difficult task of asking questions cross-culturally (Deutscher, 1968; Wax, 1960). There are different

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[17] Real is used here from the perspective of concrete and specific examples.

ways of saying things and certain things should not be said if the researcher takes into account the link between language and cultural manifestations.

On the one hand, being a foreign researcher I had definite limitations in understanding some specific cultural codes and meanings. At the same time, this lack of awareness impelled me to familiarise myself with the culture. On the other hand, my position as a foreigner allowed me to ask about common practices that were unclear to me. I could dare to ask obvious questions, even being a bit indiscreet, since my participants knew about our different cultural codes. Some times being a foreigner can be turned into an advantage and it might become a tool to broaden understandings. I felt free to present myself as a learner.

Even so, I had to deal with the difficulties of interviewing people in English, a language in which I occasionally experience difficulties in expressing exactly how I feel. Although I learnt how I could use some cultural unawareness as tools in the research process, some challenges continued to confront me.

The process of research cannot be completely predicted, since every interview opens up new discoveries and challenges. The discoveries were not only about my participants, but also about myself, as the researcher's experiences, emotions, and frustrations get entangled in the process of interaction. This shows that challenges need to be faced at the moment of interaction. The process of researching often opens up to challenges, even if the interviewee belongs to the same culture as the researcher. This happened to me during my last visit to Brazil when I stayed there for ten months. After living the difficulties of being away from home for almost two years and facing the challenges of re-adapting to my own country I felt very happy to be back home[18]. However, I had to reflect upon my excessive happiness while interviewing some of the Brazilians. I was aware that I had to express less how I was feeling at that moment of my life in order not to inhibit my interviewees in talking about their

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[18] Even learning how to use the non-awareness of local dynamics as a research tools, a problem that I did not manage to confront without pain was the practice of travelling back and forth between England and Brazil. Before engaging in the cross-cultural research experience I had never imagined that the emotional impacts would be so great.

everyday difficulties, the suffering of living with fear of violence on a daily basis, and so on.

While doing cross-cultural research I realised that a common, local culture between researcher and interviewees is, in certain ways, an identification that facilitates the act of reading the narratives. However, a common, local culture is only a partial commonality which is not enough to make the researcher aware of the other 'situatedness' of the interviewees. By coming to England and confronting differences that were hard to make sense of from my experience, I realised that there were aspects of my own national culture I used to take for granted. In certain ways, unconsciously, while in England, I ended up by 'repressing' the great heterogeneities and inequalities found in Brazil as a country.

Both in Brazil and in England, the need to reflect upon my feelings, while interviewing, has been very important. It demonstrates how the personal experience of the researcher, if not analysed, may interfere in the quality of the interactions with the participants.

8.1 Interacting with the participants

It became clear through the research that the process of reflecting upon and understanding the participants' aspirations was influenced by the intrusion of my own aspirations.

Interacting with the participants caused me to reflect upon the configuration of my own aspirations, including fears, frustrations, hopes, and the arduous process of reassessing them. For example, I was constantly affected by feelings of frustrations and anger throughout some of the interviews with the English middle-class girls. I remember particularly a focus group at Magdalene School that, unlike the others, provided relevant information for the research, but from a personal perspective made me feel impatient and sad.

> Elisabeth- I want to be a fashion director. I want to work in New York. That's kind of very much you have to build your way up, so this is what I want to do. My parents say I should take my time, relax... but I know I put a lot of pressure on myself.

> Amanda- I know that it may sound really basic, but friends are really important to most people I think. I would not be able to live far away from my friends.
>
> Elisabeth- I am slightly different to that. I've been moving around so much, it's quite difficult to keep friends, because people grow, and then you have always to move on. You cannot always cling to other people.
>
> Barbara- I suppose that people know that when they grow up they cannot be often close to their friends. That's why most people assume they are going to get married at some point.
>
> Elisabeth- I actually don't want to get married, maybe this sounds really strange to most people. I also don't want to have children. ... I think it is because I really want to have a very successful career.

Elisabeth knew 'exactly' what she wants to do in her future and had everything planned in a very precise way. Seeking a successful career, Elisabeth minimised the relevance of enduring friendship, and having a family. This was what made me furious and sad. Even Amanda and Barbara along with other peers were surprised with Elisabeth's dismissive approach to personal bonds.

I remembered that after finishing this focus group discussion I was so irritated that I had to discuss my feelings with one of my supervisors. I talked to him about the 'naivety' of some of the middle-class girls in England. Apart from Elisabeth, there were other interviewees, who although they expressed a desire to have a family at some point, overemphasised their career. Elisabeth, however, was the interviewee who focused on her professional life in the most extreme way. By referring to her professional life in such an 'exaggerated' way, as if it was everything to her or the most important thing she wanted in life, I felt Elisabeth could end up feeling lonely later in life. I thought that Elisabeth's account of the professional life and the expectations and hopes, which she attached to it, were so unbalanced and so unrealistic, that I was concerned she could end up extemely disillusioned in the future. She could not foresee how some of the other elements she wanted, for example maintaining a profound relationship with her family and her pursuit of a career, might end up being mutually exclusive.

Feeling very frustrated and unable to empathise with accounts that overstated the importance of professional life to the detriment of human relationships, I felt impelled to analyse my irritation. The middle-class girls in England showed a pronounced tendency to plan their lives as I had previously done. Indeed it was

my very studiousness and pursuit of a professional life in academia which lead me to study for a PhD abroad. During the process of doing my PhD, I questioned my previous attitudes and I realised how I had sacrificed other elements of my life. I began to understand the reasons why the interaction with these young women reinforced the frustrations I was experiencing in my own life at the time of the research. At that time I wanted to live the simple things of life and give priority to other aspects of life such as my relationships with friends and family, something which I had sacrificed during my previous, single-minded pursuit of career.

Another aspect of my subjectivity came up while I was interviewing the English middle-class young women. Again I had to be very careful to control my antipathy towards the ways some of these interviewees talked about their mothers and families.

> Suki- I don't like it when my mother wants to know everything that happens to me in school, and then she asks me to be in the kitchen while she is cooking. I don't feel like spending time with my mum chatting. I like to do this with my friends. I know that in India, where my family comes from, women tend to stick together. I am also aware that my mother might feel very isolated here in Nottingham. She looks after the house and my brothers during the day and it has not been a long time since came to live in this city (Magdalene College).

As Suki, a young woman of Indian origins, but born in England, spoke about her mother, I had to control my irritability by encouraging her to talk more about the way she felt. I had to bring the notion of interpersonal commitment, illustrated by Gadamer (1989), to the space of our interaction. Afterwards, I realised how my homesickness became visible when Suki shared with me that she didn't 'feel like spending time with my mum chatting', because she likes 'to do this with my friends'. Carrying on with the interview, I realised that Suki's desire of not wanting her mother to play the role of a friend was common among the middle and middle-upper class young women I interviewed. I also realise that I had difficulties in making sense of the young womens' excitement about leaving home as soon as they could afford a place of their own and living as far as they possibly could from their parents' home.

In addition to our different cultural backgrounds, I figured out that there was another issue that was bothering me while interviewing the middle-class young women. The intrusion of my subjectivity could only be understood through my

past and present experiences. For example, doing this research at that particular moment of my life made it difficult for me to understand the young women's needs to be away from their parents' home. Throughout almost the whole process of my PhD in England, I lived with a permanent state of homesickness. Desiring and not being able to be closer to my family had probably evoked, at first, a dismissive 'reading' of the participants' necessity to be apart from their families, by building up and experiencing their independence. After reflecting upon these things, I understood that the girls were wishing to differentiate themselves from their family members and construct their own 'identities'[19].

Another challenge I had to face throughout the research confronted me when one of the English working-class interviewees, Ray, compared his challenge of going to university to my experience of coming to England. This comparison opened up possibilities for touching upon his fears, doubts, desires, and so on. At that moment, he asked me many questions about my difficulties here, which I did not mind answering, but I had to ensure that I did not let him end up becoming the interviewer. In addition, I felt I could not make clear the challenges I was facing in adapting to English culture. I made sure to use positively his perception of the commonality of challenges in our lives, instead of talking too much about the culture shock I had experienced.

With the working-class Brazilians I faced difficulties relating to divisions, marked by what Bourdieu called *habitus* ((Bourdieu, 1977; 1986; 1994); and; Fowler, 1997)). The concept of habitus, as emphasised briefly in the introduction and I examine in Chapter 2, is based on social marks, produced, incorporated, and embodied both consciously and unconsciously. The habitus reinforces the status of distinction among social classes. Becoming 'taken for granted' ways of doing things or living, the habitus of a person tends to be reproduced in/through social, political, and cultural contexts. At the same time, the habitus is not a fixed category that makes change impossible.

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[19] Identity here is not a fixed category, but is understood as open to changes and reconstructions.

The fact is that some of the students from Colégio Dom João identified me as a middle-class, university educated, privileged and white (in a Brazilian sense of whiteness). I felt that the recognition of 'my belongings' made some of the participants interact with me as if I were 'superior' to them. Throughout the interview process some of them insisted on calling me 'Mrs', which is likely to make the relationship formal and hierarchical in Brazil. Among friends, people from close generations, or in informal situations, people call each other by their first name. Certainly, the students from Dom João, by identifying my middle-class background, decided to call me 'Mrs' which did not happen among the students from São Francisco.

By insisting with the students from Dom João that they were doing me a favour by participating in the research and giving me their time and by telling them that I was learning things from them, I sometimes managed to make them drop the 'Mrs'. In other moments, the differences visualised by them interfered in our interactions. For example, some of the students, such as Carlos, identified me as a sociologist. In the students' perception being a sociologist was very similar to being a psychologist. This meant that he felt encouraged and even relieved to share his life with me. In the case of Manoel, also a student from Dom João, at the end of the interview, I felt his need to talk further about what I thought of his vocation in life. As shown in Chapter 3, Manoel was in doubt whether he wanted to become a priest or a graduate in psychology, and then continue help others as a lay-person. I knew that I could not help him in anyway about his 'vocational' decision, but I felt impelled to say something about it.

> Manoel- Essa entrevista me fez pensar em muita coisa, mas ainda existe algo que não ficou claro que é a decisão vocacional. Isso deixou de ficar esclarecido para mim. Ao mesmo tempo sei que tem outros fatores que me impedem e me fazem pensar que não é bem assim. **This interview made me think about many things, but there is still one thing that needs to be clarified and that's about my career. This is still unclear for me. At the same time I know that there are other factors that prevent me, that make me think that deciding is not like this** (Dom João).
> **
>
> Ana Maria- (...) I feel that you should carry on your plans without worrying too much about your vocational choice at the present moment of your life. Maybe it is not the right time for you to make a decision, because there are still experiences that you ought to live, and incorporate into your life in order to make a decision. Sometimes to concentrate all the energy only on thinking, it does not help. In my opinion sometimes we have to act in practical terms, and broaden our experiences in order to make a very important decision, don't you think so?

Carlos- Eu prefiro ficar calado. Estou falando pra você porque é uma socióloga, estudiosa, não vai me olhar como um maluco ... Eu só vou ter confiança para me abrir se encontrar uma namorada e não vou conversar tudo com ela. A não ser se um dia, não me entenda mal, eu encontrar um dia uma socióloga ou psicóloga para ela me entender. **I prefer to be quiet. I am talking to you, because you are a sociologist, someone who has studied a lot, and who will not look at me as someone who is insane (....) I 'll only have the confidence to open up myself if I meet a girlfriend, and even then I wouldn't tell her everything. Only if someday, and don't get me wrong, if I meet, one day, a sociologist or a psychologist to understand me** (Colégio Dom João).

In these two narratives we can see that some of the students from Dom João had this image of me as somebody who had the qualifications to help them. This was a very delicate moment for me. In the case of Manoel he did not mention that I had a professional qualification to help him in the process of making decisions. At the same time he emphasised the fact that the interview did not help him in determining his career plans. Even though I was clear that this was not the purpose of the interview, I could see that he wanted to talk about it, so when the interview was finished I told him what I thought, but I clarified that I was not a 'professional' with specialist knowledge of the subject.

With regard to Carlos I told him that I was not a qualified psychologist and that I did not want him to mistake our interview for a therapy session. I thought that if I did not make the distinction I would not have been acting ethically. I was determined to ensure that at all time the interviews were conducted in an ethical manner. I guaranteed anonymity to all of the interviewees and I promised to use fictional names in the thesis[20].

After clarifying with Carlos the limits of my profession, and the interview process, I responded to his comment about having a girlfriend who was either a sociologist or a psychologist. In this respect I told him, in a very informal way, attempting to break the hierarchy constructed by him, that it is not the case that the most interesting people or the people we can share most with, are the most studious ones. I told him that there were moments in my life when I had had interesting conversations with people who were not particularly studious, but who had confronted similar difficulties, and lived through similar experiences.

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[20] The names of the all interviewees have been changed for the purposes of the thesis.

Other situations that I had to deal with while researching young women were their representation of me as a friend. In England this situation only happened with one female participant. As the research touched upon many aspects of people's lives, some of the young women identified me as a friend, to whom they could share aspects of their lives that were bothering them at that moment. Susie, already mentioned in this chapter, is a working-class young woman who had won a scholarship to study at Magdalene School. She was the only English participant keen on talking to me about issues not directly included in the research. She was also the only English interviewee whose interview lasted three hours. We met up on two occasions. The second interview took place in a café and as soon as the interview ended, she started to share with me specific issues about her personal life. At that moment, I clarified that I was no longer there as the interviewer and I turned off the tape recorder and stayed in the café for approximately twenty minutes. I tried to hear more to what she had to say by contextualising the issues rather than expressing my personal views. I wanted to prevent her from taking my words as the 'right' opinion. A very similar situation happened with Claudia, a Brazilian student from Colégio São Francisco, who asked me to give an opinion in relation to a fight she had with her boyfriend. I adopted the same approach as I did with Susie.

With these examples I have attempted to demonstrate the kinds of challenges I had to face throughout the empirical research. This meant that I had to deal with situations, maintaining interactive relationships with the participants and at the same time I had to clarify my position as a researcher. I had to act professionally and prevent my participants from feeling vulnerable after the interviews.

By focusing on these examples, I am not overstating the difficulties in the interaction between participants and researcher. I am validating the relevance of issues that were brought about by the interviewees and which made empathy between interviewee and researcher sometimes difficult and at other times easy. In this research the close interaction of the researcher with participants, the emotional difficulties, the analysis of the participants' fragments of narratives along with my own 'intrusive feelings' have not been a problem, but a valuable part of the research process. What proved to be necessary throughout the

entire process of research was the self-reflection about my own experiences and 'situatedness' (Haraway, 1988; 1991). In other words, I had to pay close attention to what I was feeling during the fieldwork. For this reason, I had to be constantly thinking about my Brazilian culture, and my middle-class background, since these tended to become central in the research dynamic.

Finally, besides the constant analytical process I had to undertake in relation to my emotions, by questioning my irrational feelings, I also had to differentiate my experiences, my life histories, and my aspirations from those of the participants. I aimed to establish a good rapport with my interviewees. I wanted them to feel comfortable with me. At the same time, as a researcher, I was aware of how the establishment of a good rapport is important in the production of data. The enriched interactions I had with the participants of this research made me grow as a person and as a researcher. The interactions also showed how the configuration of aspirations are composed of fundamental aspects of a person's life, for example, career, family, national culture, social concerns, and even feelings of frustration and impotence.

Chapter 2: Situating and Configuring Aspiration

Part I- Engaging with Contemporary Social Theory

Aspiration should be perceived in the thesis as an interdisciplinary concept that is defined in the third part of this chapter through dialogues across different theoretical traditions. To make clear how I conceptualise aspiration here, as an ongoing articulated process, I need to highlight the inter-disciplinary nature of the term. My intention is to locate aspiration in terms of the influences and limits of previous theories and theoretically oriented empirical research.

Given that the conceptualisation of aspiration cuts across many different bodies of theories and research, I will only review those accounts closely related to the framework of aspiration developed in this thesis. Firstly, I discuss contemporary social theories that tend to describe the main social dynamic of today's societies and people's subjectivities in the light of the fragmentation of 'late-modernity', and 'post-modernity'. These social theories provide speculative accounts of my research participants, as people who live in contemporary societies. Besides, the body of contemporary social theory has contributed to the elaboration of the research agenda in that it influenced the choice of the questions posed to the participants throughout the empirical work.

In the second part of the chapter I analyse the limits of grouping young people as an homogeneous category in society. I explore the relevance of considering young people's embedded belongings and experiences within specific concrete realities across time and space. Young people's aspirations are likely to be shaped through specific and differentiated interactions with the local, the national, and the global, this is to say, that people are unlikely to produce undifferentiated global cultures.

Finally, in the third part of this chapter, I clarify the specific approach to aspiration in this thesis. I highlight briefly the historical background of studies on aspiration and more recent ones, and I engage the positive aspects of theories I have borrowed from and the relevant reasons to develop a new and an

innovative approach. Finally I configure the approach to aspiration I developed in this thesis.

1. The Foundations of Contemporary Social Theory

Analyses of the transition from Industrial Society (Modernity) to Post-Industrial Society (Postmodernity) are at the forefront of contemporary social theories. The fascination of sociology with the characteristics and limits of modernity has characterised the foundation of sociological theoretical frameworks. Sociology has been traditionally associated with focusing abstract notions of social structures through wide-ranging theories. The origins of sociology are closely linked to attempts to understand those developments affecting industrialised societies and the consequences for human behaviour. Since Wright Mills (1959) sociology has been consolidated as a discipline with its roots developed from analyses of modern social institutions and social orders.

For Durkheim (1982 [1897]) social order, established by social rules, was the key for guaranteeing the existence of functional and healthy societies. The main concerns of the sociologists were to examine the structure of societies, and the rationalised actions of individuals (Weber, 1991). Marx (1977) looked at the economic logic behind wider social systems to understand social changes. By focusing on the structure of the society and the specificity of the social order in a precise historical period, sociologists expected to depict 'the varieties of men and women' (Giddens, 1992b) that prevail in a specific society, along with the unintended consequences of human actions.

In certain ways contemporary social theories, by looking at the limits of modernity, continue to trace the relation between wider social systems (the modern structures of society) and the broad patterns of social changes. They examine the unintended consequences of human activities, the change of social order, and the prevailing varieties of human beings.

As the consequences of modernity are widely discussed from the perspective of contemporary changes, including people's ways of living, this thesis had to discuss some of theoretical frameworks that related to the participants' experiences and their future anticipations. Also, as the empirical research of this

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thesis took place in present realities, the practices of putting together aspirations by the participants of the research were certainly influenced by narratives in relation to consumption, technology, flexibilisation of work, uncertainty, and so on. Aspiration as a theoretical and empirical 'articulation' has probably been affected by the 'underlying ontology of the present' (the dominant prescribed goals) as expressed by Sandywell (2003).

The present body of social theoretical frameworks is preoccupied with definitions of modernity, the consequences of modernity (Giddens 1990), including the impact of consumerism (Featherstone, 1991), and the networked society (Lash, 2002). According to some contemporary social theorists (Robertson, 1988; Archer, 1990, Featherstone, 1995), in the age of the Industrial Society, the preoccupation with the cultural sphere, including individuals' daily practices, was often subordinated to structural development. Culture was perceived in essentialist ways and applied to practical actions (Robertson, 1988). During modernity the emphasis on culture tends to be reproduced through social theories as unified and integrated. Culture signified a universalised 'product' (order) of the West. Industrial Society which was characterised by urbanisation, standardisation of social structures, rationality, and with regularities imposed by modern bureaucracies (Weber, 1991). For example, Weber (1991) perceived individuals' social actions as rational, 'goal-oriented' courses of conduct, 'instrumentalised' according to means and ends. 'Progressive' impacts of bureaucratisation caused actions to follow routines, repetitions, and systematic 'practices'.

The development of the Industrialisation project was based on a particular society, occupying a single bounded space with an integrated social structure and culture (in practice the nation state), in order to reach the modernisation stage. The identification of the modern stage was oriented from an evolutionary perspective of history towards technological progress.

Social theorists see the transition from Modernity to Postmodernity, as an eroding sense of continuity between past, present and future (Featherstone, 1995). This transition tends to be characterised by the decay and dissolution of Modernity, the compression of space and time (Giddens, 1990), the expansion

of broader communication systems around the world, the fluctuation of fragments and virtual images. In this process of transition, cultural activities are mediated through consumption and aesthetics, which become the ethical criteria for the good life (Featherstone, 1995).

Before engaging with specific features of contemporary social theories that have influenced the ways society and individuals are perceived, it is important to clarify that the transition from modernity to postmodernity shifts between optimistic and pessimistic analytical interpretations. The optimistic perspective celebrates either the aestheticization of life and the praise of symbolic meanings of consumption attached to daily life, or the discontinuities and ruptures with the excessive rationalisation of the enlightenment (Featherstone, 1995). Pessimistic analytical frameworks relate fragmented experiences to the flexibilisation of work, the impacts of technology, and processes of the individualisation of society (Sennett, 1998; Bauman, 1998; 2003; Lash, 2002). We are going to see that shifts from pessimistic to more optimistic analyses, or vice-versa, do not follow a sequence in terms of chronology, but cut across different times and approaches within the body of social theories.

1.1 Consumption and Life-Style

In the context of changes addressed by contemporary social theories, and in the light of the periodisation of late modernity and postmodernity, consumption appears as the 'key focus of city life' (Miles, 2001:90), along with the 'aestheticization' of everyday life. According to Featherstone 'consumer culture has enhanced this aestheticization of everyday life through the development of advertising, imagery and publicity which saturate the fabric of the lived environment and everyday encounters (1995:67). For Featherstone the 'aestheticization' of everyday life involves processes in which standards of 'good style/taste' invade every aspect of contemporary lives.

Consumer society is defined as a society, in which the significance of consumption goes beyond economic values and becomes central to social reproduction. The definition of 'consumer society' has been theorised by Baudrillard (1995). He refers to Marx's interpretation of exchanging goods (use-

value and exchange-value) in capitalist societies and explains the meanings attached to commodities. For Baudrillard, goods in the consumer society cannot only be addressed in terms of 'utility' and 'exchange' (profit making, demand, losses), but also as "symbolic communicators" with a sign-value. Consumer culture not only includes the production, advertising and pursuit of consumer goods, but also displays the phenomenon of cultural practices being mediated through consumption.

Based on the development of symbolic and 'aesthetic' meanings of consumption, many theorists have focused their arguments on opportunities and innovative experiences, through the expansion of artistic and cultural markets. The creation of fascinating images of 'personhood' reinforces the understanding of lifestyles, which have been defined as an encouragement to adopt one's own 'style', in order to go up the ladder of success through increasing 'social status'. Lifestyle, then, is characterised by the distinctive preferences that are expressed in the logic of the symbolic spaces of furniture, design, dress, language, etc (Bourdieu, 1994). From Bourdieu's (1986) perspective these distinctive lifestyles are the produced, incorporated, and embodied *habitus* among the dominant classes. He defines the term 'habitus' as a system of schemes of perception, thought, appreciation and action, which are durable and transposable. Habitus is 'doxic knowledge' (Bourdieu, 1994). It is a taken for granted way of doing things or living, which may be adopted unconsciously, acquiring the force of nature.

Contemporary theorists of lifestyle, in the context of post-modernity, tend to differ from Bourdieu's restricted account, which maintains the status of high culture (created for the higher classes), which remains apart from popular culture. For example, Featherstone (1991) theorises about the role of cultural intermediaries in contemporary consumer societies in promoting 'artistic lifestyles', by breaking down the exclusivity of intellectual knowledge, and making more flexible the boundaries between high and popular culture. Lifestyle highlights connotations of individuality, self-expression, and a stylistic self-consciousness (Featherstone, 1990; 1991). This account of 'lifestyle' is associated with the idea of free choice, reinforced by the principle that 'we are

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not what we are, but what we make of ourselves' (Giddens, 1991). From this perspective of lifestyle, the subject is a creative and a self-invented 'person'.

The problem with these accounts, when they are theorised separately from the materiality of everyday life, is that lifestyle is alluded to as a choice between a plurality of possible options (Giddens, 1991). The constraints imposed by poverty, social and economic inequalities are often excluded from the discussion. Here, I am not trying to neglect the centrality of consumption in contemporary lives, but if we focus on lifestyle as attached to self-invention and creativity, there is the risk of understanding the subject not only as free, but also as wholly responsible for his/her life. Is it only possible to understand ways of living as a matter of free will?

Although I agree with Giddens (1991) and Featherstone (1991) when they argue that in contemporary societies people are confronted with a greater diversity of choices and options than in industrial societies, I believe they romanticise lifestyles as necessarily entailing creative freedom and self-consciousness. The appeal for establishing life-style may enlarge opportunities for the middle and upper classes, but not for those who still rely upon government support, social institutions and welfare provision. These people are unable to choose a life according to their desires and plans. Since self-consciousness and the expressiveness of the middle class cannot be understood by taking their 'patterns' as norms, any attempt to understand people's creativity, expressiveness and their possibilities of being transformed into subjects can only be analysed through the interaction of the social, the cultural and the psychological with the materiality of everyday life.

The emphasis on lifestyle becomes extremely abstract[21], because it describes contemporary ways of living, without linking to empirical examples of how people relate to social, political, cultural and economic constraints. The abstract notion of lifestyle ends up by reinforcing the idea of 'classless' societies

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[21] By seeing these theoretical frameworks as abstract I am not promoting the idea that an academic work needs to be empirically based in order to be validated. However, any approach that tries to describe the ways in which people live in contemporary society needs to engage with particularities and differences in specific realities.

(Kingston, 2000), but as we are living with high levels of inequality, poverty and insecurity, we must recognise that social class divisions still impact on people's lives and choices. In agreement with Walkerdine et al. (2001), I state that class has not gone away, the contemporary challenge is to understand the forms it takes. There are societies in which the working classes have acquired opportunities to improve the quality of their lives through access to education, health care, and so on. As we shall document, the standard of living of the working class in England is far better than that in Brazil, where absolute poverty or *miséria* is experienced by many, whether openly, for example those whose only home is the streets, or in the hidden but pervasive poverty of the many who have no guarantee of even one meal a day. Although wealth is more evenly distributed within the United Kingdom, in England social class has not been abolished and, as we shall see throughout the thesis, continues to shape people's choices.

The opportunities and the freedom to choose, which are attached to the concept of lifestyle, should address consumerism in the light of what Miles (1998) calls 'the consuming paradox': that is - consumerism is at one and the same time constraining and enabling. On the one hand, consumerism has indeed a fundamental influence upon the everyday experience of social and economic life in capitalist societies, not only in influencing the structure of people's daily lives through certain patterns of consumption, but also by offering the illusion of consumer freedom. On the other hand, there are the disenfranchised 'consumers' and their desires and inability to consume. Because of these ambiguities, the implications of consumption ought to be analysed from two perspectives: Firstly by considering the paradox of consumption for offering freedom of choice and making choice illusory, to divide as much as it provides (Miles, 2001); and secondly, by considering consumption within people's everyday lives and their positional milieu (Krupalini and Bhat, 2003). After the influence of post-colonial theorists, the process of recognising the composition of multiple and intersecting positional milieu has been strengthened, as Bhabha (1994) has highlighted in his *The Location of Culture*:

> The move away from the singularities of "class" and "gender" as primary conceptual and organisational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions -of race, gender, generation, institutional location,

geopolitical locale, sexual orientation-that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world (Bhabha, 1994:1).

The positional milieu of individuals in society may both constrain and empower people's interaction with different power relations. It is important to stress that the different power positions of individuals and unbalanced power relations are still impacting on the lives of people in the so-called 'postmodern' or 'post-traditional' societies.

1.2 Risk, Reflexivity and the Information Age

Besides the changes promoted by consumption, there are other issues that have been theorised as 'consequences of modernity' (Giddens, 1990) or the transition to Postmodernity (Lash, 1990). Through the transition of industrial society to consumer society, the city is transformed through the culture of signs and imagery, impelling rapid changes. These transformations are inserted into what Giddens (1991) has named post-traditional order. Post-traditional society is a context reflexively organised and permeated by abstract systems. It is characterised by the transformation of time and space, coupled with: the 'disembedding mechanisms (symbolic tokens and expert systems) that separate interaction from the particularities of locales'; separation of time that articulates social relations across spaces of time-space, including global systems; and institutional reflexivity (in other words, 'the regularised use of knowledge about circumstances of social life as a constitutive element in its organisation and transformation' (Giddens, 1991: 20)). Giddens defines reflexivity as a response to vulnerability to most aspects of social activity and a removal from material relationship with nature. Social relations are continuously revised in the light of new information and knowledge.

As a feature of postmodernity, or what Giddens (1991) calls late-modernity, people's lives are permeated with uncertainty and dislocation, such that the secure foundations and stabilities of modern life are radically undermined. In the process of sweeping away tradition and entering into the post-traditional order people's lives manifest

> The paradoxical process by which social change is such that the individual experiences an increasingly risky life, and yet at one and the

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same time is increasingly free [?] from the constraints of social structure (Miles, 2001: 128).

Beck's (1992) risk society, as a 'post-traditional event', is theorised taking into account the process of transition from modernity to postmodernity. The process to postmodernity tries to overcome the excessive rationalisation of industrial society, characterised by rigid divisions of labour, class, distribution of goods, and fixed national boundaries. During the industrial period, material scarcity was a serious problem, thus the main concern in life was based on satisfying material needs. The 'risk society' of today is described by Beck as wealth abundant, in which the borders of nation states are undermined, and individuals are free from structural constraints (individualisation of social agents). The consequences of the excessive power of technological, scientific and economic progress ended up expanding new risks and dangers rather than controlling them.

Beck sees the distribution of risks as tied to his concept of 'reflexive modernization'. 'Reflexive modernization' means that scepticism is extended to the foundations and hazards of scientific work and science is thus both generalised and demystified' (Beck, 1991: 20). The excessive control of modernity ends up producing its opposite.

Coming from a similar perspective to Beck's risk society is Lash (2002), who emphasises the transition from an era of manufacturing capitalism to global information capitalism that is premised upon the 'spaceness' (extreme mobility), and fluidity of ideas (information) as capital. Lash argues that the logic of the social is displaced by that of the cultural within the process of globalisation of the sphere of the semiotic. Based on this premise, Lash supports his argument of the media saturated society, with its corresponding erosion of the analytical side of representation and critique by global information. The globalised information 'scenario' is described by Lash (2002) as networked power (communication flows), disembeddedness, spatial compression and temporal compression. Since the information age has replaced ownership and property relations of the means of production by relations of access and intellectual capital, new patterns of inequality emerge on the basis of differentiated access

to the mode of information. A shift from markets to networks and from ownership to access occurs. Lash (2002) constructs his critique of a totalising information age by recognising the exclusion of those individuals who remain outside of the network system: 'there is no time out of global information', exclusions are likely to increase [for those who do not have access to the global system]. According to Lash (2002) as a consequence of this, sociality becomes 'swallowed up' in the information order.

What is missed in Lash's account of exclusions in the network society is a relational, comparative analysis in terms of other forms of exclusions that influence, in various degrees, the different contexts and localities of contemporary life, and which have not been caused by the expansion of the network system. It is relevant to ask the question, to what extent does access to information reproduce 'traditional' and yet contemporary 'patterns' of inequalities? Does the network system emphasise previous exclusions or create new 'patterns'?

1.3 The Limits of 'Post-Traditional' Theory

Giddens' post-traditional order, Beck's risk society and Lash's global information network address distinctive features of post-modernity, such as uncertainty, the fragmentation of life, the difficulties of controlling risk and the exclusion of individuals who lack access to information networks. At the same time the three authors construct their critiques based upon a rupture or discontinuity from industrial societies to post-industrial societies. Apart from the wider protection from hazards, caused by nature, routinely faced in pre-modern times, it seems that Giddens, Lash and Beck think we live now with greater global risks and dangers in comparison to ' pre' and industrial orders'. The problem is that they seem to perceive 'traditional' modern society, as a stable and secure period, which was not necessarily the case. For the working classes in western societies, who experienced poor living conditions, periods of unemployment, unhealthy and unsafe conditions, low payment and ill health, alongside the majority of the population of the former colonies, who were subordinated to dehumanised rule and exploitation, life was neither stable nor secure.

Another incongruence of these approaches, is that they constantly make reference to individuals from post-industrial, contemporary societies as being free from the constraints of social structures. This presumes that inequalities, embedded in class societies, are 'almost' past 'phenomena', which is far from being the case. These theories, instead of examining the characteristics of contemporary dynamics that affect people's daily lives in differentiated ways across time and space, do not include aspects of historical continuities in their analyses. They describe 'past phenomena' such as social exclusions, from Lash's preoccupation with the spread of network technology, as if social exclusions were new. Although the network society may create difficulties for people who do not have access to technology, the lack of access to it impacts on today's societies in different ways. The spread of the Internet may open new possibilities of agency, or new exclusions. The fact is that we should not perceive changes from the perspective of 'totalising' and homogeneous ruptures with the past.

According to Ricoeur (1984; 1988), who is the main theorist I used to construct the concept of aspiration in the thesis, the past exists in the present and in future anticipations. I stress that it does not make sense to focus on tendencies of contemporary dynamics without taking into account the relationship between continuity, discontinuity, sedimentation (reproduction of old patterns and forms) and innovation (incorporation of changes) in social and cultural practices.

Another aspect of these theories which is difficult to sustain is the fact that they refer to the actual present as if we live under the influence of an 'homogeneous', globalised tendency around the world. It seems that the boundaries of nation states are far from undermined for everybody. The 'breakdown' of national boundaries can be rejected if we focus on the rigorous policies of immigration control, including refugees and asylum seekers' difficulties in obtaining the right to remain in developed countries of the western world. These theories tend not to emphasise collective identities such as the common sense shared by people from the same national culture. They develop an approach, which suggests that contemporary aspects of life are intrinsically media saturated. In this context, intimate face-to-face relationships are analysed as if they were substituted by 'connections', and 'sociality' built through the net.

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Besides, these connections should not be seen as if they were happening equally across the globe, disregarding cultural particularities and differences (Pilkington and Johnson, 2003).

We neither live in an homogeneous, global risk society nor in 'totalising' sites of virtual technological systems. Although rich, developed, post-industrial countries have inherent risks, such as nuclear or chemical incidents, terrorism, environmental catastrophe, etc, risk has a much greater adverse affect in the under-developed and developing countries than in developed countries, as Beck (1992) rightly recognises. However, these 'poor' countries are adversely affected by risk, not only because of the concurrence of material poverty and weaker systems for dealing with hazards, but also as a consequence of 'the transference of hazardous industries to the poor countries of the periphery' (Beck, 1992: 43) by wealthy countries. Beck does emphasise the heterogeneous level of risk across the world. The problem with his approach to the risk society is the lack of a more critical engagement with the ways heterogeneous levels of risk are produced and maintained. He does not subject the enduring economic and political interests of developed countries within the developing countries to sufficient analysis, particularly in the role that these interests play in generating risks in those countries on the 'periphery'.

In relation to Lash's account of technological networks, there is a problem with the generalised nature of his account due to the varying impact of digital technologies across the world. With this argument in mind, Sandywell (2003) argues that some of Lash's formulations verge on reductionism, as they neglect the many differing ways in which technologies are developed and operated in response to singular uses, and also their adoption across different cultures. For example in Yoon's (2002) research on the use of mobile phones by young people in Seoul, he shows that phones facilitate contact. They help young Koreans to share their lives and keep in touch with friends, parents, and people across generations.

Lash seems to forget the fact that behind every network there are 'life-worlds' (Sandywell, 2003), and that these have not disappeared in the context of the dissemination of technology. As network operations are attached to life-worlds,

the use of technology should not be thought of only as exclusions, but within the relationality of constraints and creativity. It is important to point out that objects, artefacts and technology do not have meaning in themselves (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996), but they are embedded in social life (Appadurai, 1986). They are neither good nor bad in themselves. Meaning can only be understood in specific contexts, in the light of concrete relations with people, depending upon the significance and uses that people attribute to them, either consciously or unconsciously. Goods and information are adapted for use and are connected to everyday practices. If the interactivity of goods and technology with people's daily practices is not observed, we fail to perceive local engagements with new technologies (Sandywell, 2003), and the ways in which specific cultural locations attribute particular meanings to technological networks. So instead of classifying technologies such as mobile phones and e-mail as tools that intensify individualisation (Bauman, 2003), and which lead to the fragmentation of identities, and the decline of long term relationships (Sennett, 1998; Bauman, 2000) in contemporary societies, these tools should be viewed as being intrinsically related to specific contexts of living.

Network sociality as described by Wittel (2001) does not represent belonging but integration and disintegration. In network sociality, social relations are not 'narrational' but informational. They are not based on mutual experience or common history, but primarily on an exchange of data and on 'catching up'. For Wittel mobility and speed seem to be the primary reasons for the shift away from a narrative to an informational sociality. However, Wittel (2001) does not say that informational sociality actually replaces narrational social relations, based on mutual experience and common history. To what extent are people prioritising one type of relationship over the other? Is it not possible to combine, or negotiate both? To what extent in the contemporary world in terms of people's choices in life is the individualisation process the central category of influence?

2. The Individualisation of Life: Narcissism, Intimacy and Love

The theory of individualisation has recently been conceptualised by Beck and Beck Gernsheim (2002). As a phenomenon of 'reflexive modernity' it includes the centrality of non-linear experiences, mobility, the outsourcing of the welfare state and the offloading of duties and responsibilities onto private spheres. Similar aspects of Beck and Beck Gernsheim's (2002) approach to individualisation have been discussed in the work of Lasch (1979) on the culture of narcissism. Lasch's (1979) notion of narcissism is not based on the primary narcissism of self-eroticism, which is a necessary 'stage' of psychological development, followed by the recognition of human beings as separate individuals; but on the selfish narcissistic concern for self-fulfilment that is reinforced by disregard for the needs of others.

For Lasch (1979), the insecurity of contemporary social life, along with the belief that society has no future, reinforces the lack of attention to the needs of the next generation. The weakening of social ties, along with the fear of dangers, inculcates a narcissistic inability to identify with posterity or to feel oneself as part of a historical stream or of a public, collective history. The best 'defences' against the culture of narcissism are the comforts of love, work and family life, which connect us to a world that is independent of our wishes, yet responsive to our needs. In Lasch's opinion 'our society tends either to devalue small comforts or else to expect too much of them' (Lasch, 1979:248). He considers that our standards of creative, meaningful work are too exalted to survive disappointment, and that our ideal of true romance puts an impossible burden on personal relationship. As a consequence of this, Lasch highlights two aspects: our growing dependence on technologies, and our difficulties in achieving a sense of continuity, permanence and connection with the world around us.

Lasch extends the impact of discontinuity and technological attachment to the ways we shape our relationships and consume goods. He emphasises that 'relationships with others are notably fragile'; 'goods are made to be used up and discarded'; and, 'reality is experienced as an unstable environment of

flickering images' (1979: 249). By living in this kind of world, individuals are encouraged to find escapist solutions to the psychological problems of dependence, separation, and individuation. According to Lasch individuals are likely 'to discourage the moral realism that makes it possible for human beings to come to terms with existential constraints on their power and freedom' (1979:249).

Engaging with a more contemporary account of Lasch's culture of narcissism, Bauman (2003) creates the concept of 'liquid love' to explain the frailty of human bonds in the contemporary world. Liquid love is an analogy to bonds that are only loosely tied (do not reach the 'stage' of becoming solid), because they are easily untied. Bauman contextualises the liquid modern setting of life within 'network relationships' that are connections entered on demand and which can be broken at will, as it is easy to enter, to connect, to exit and disconnect. For Bauman, people nowadays are not willing to bear a tied commitment, a long-term intimate relationship, since it can bring burdens and cause strains that they feel unable to bear. Besides, Bauman stresses that in spite of the investment, being in a relationship means perpetual uncertainty. As people see their investment in a relationship as unsafe, they opt to participate in 'network connections' that are marked by instantaneity and are essentially disposable. This gives people a sensation of being 'in control'. In this context, in the world of networks, characterised by speed and acceleration, people find difficulty in delaying satisfaction, by investing in relationships that are likely to remain insecure and full of fluctuations.

Bauman recognises that in all modalities of relationships, whether 'connections', or any kind of sexual and intimate association, people do not necessarily escape the vexation of pain and frailty. However, for Bauman people in contemporary society opt to invest in connections characterised by modest intentions, since 'no strings are attached and no hands tied' (2003:29). He affirms that as people tend to ask less, they settle for less and are likely to feel less insecure.

Examining some of the characteristics of reflexive modernity in the age of the infiltration of the network system, Sennett (1998) also focuses on the fluidity of

relationships, mobility, and speed, though framed by the changes to the organisation of work, in other words, its flexibilisation. For Sennett (1998) the flexibilisation of work is imposed on many employees nowadays, as the actual context of the economy is devoted to the short-term. Sennett perceives a relationship between the casualisation of work and consequences of individualisation such as the corrosion of character. According to Sennett character depends on human beings' connections to the world, expressed 'by loyalty and mutual commitment, or through the pursuit of long-term goals, or by the practice of delayed gratification for the sake of a future end' (1998:10). Sennett refers to the concept of character as built into our preoccupations with keeping some of the personal traits which we value in ourselves and which we expect to be valued by others. The reasons why individuals' characters are likely to be corroded in the age of flexibilisation may be explained by the way in which contemporary capitalism is sustained, with its devotion to short-term contracts and its need to constantly re-design institutions. Those institutions and industries that are not prepared to change rapidly and to respond to what is needed are likely to break down.

By taking into account the aims of the economy, which is devoted to the short term, Sennett theorises about the impacts on individuals' characters in a very similar way to Bauman (2003). Sennett mentions how individuals' identities are disguised to adapt to the requests of changing places, times and 'occasionally compounding several voices into one or splitting one voice into many' (1998:15). Since short-term capitalism is constantly threatening to corrode people's character, especially those qualities that bind human beings to one another, individuals have to learn to deal constantly with disjointed time, in other words, to develop confidence whilst living with disorder and to accept fragmentation and instability. In summary, a person can only survive by being able to constantly improvise.

The flexible capitalist motto of 'no long term' 'disorients action over the long term, loosens bonds of trust and commitment, and divorces will from behaviour' (1998:31). As a result of extreme mobility and insecurity, enduring relationships are eroded along with the decline of long-term goals. Sennett argues that people are unlikely to invest in careers or even lifetime employments. He

identifies people's incapacity to construct life-narratives. Given that linear narratives no longer make sense in contexts of actual living from perspectives of these theorists of individualisation who emphasise experiences devoted to the short-term, perhaps the practice of putting together 'fragments' presents new possibilities for constructing narratives.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) contextualise their concept of 'individualisation' by stating the consequences of 'post-traditional order' (Giddens, 1991) in the age of technology, speed, 'no enduring bonds', the separation of time and space, and the de-centralisation of institutional bureaucracy. They refer to it as institutionalised individualism:

> Central institutions of modern society - basic civil, political and social rights, but also paid employment and the training and mobility necessary for it- are geared to the individual and not to the group. Insofar as basic rights are internalised and everyone wants to or must be economically active to earn their livelihood, the spiral of individualisation destroys the given foundations of social coexistence. So, to give a simple definition 'individualisation' means disembedding without reembedding (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: XXI- XXII).

From Beck and Beck-Gersnsheim's account, the significance behind the concept of individualisation is already embedded in the ways contemporary societies organise themselves: 'Individualisation can no longer be understood as a mere subjective reality which has to be relativated by and confronted with objective class analysis' (2002: XXII). The reductionist relationship between individualisation and social class is no longer needed, as individualisation affects both ideology and false consciousness, in addition to economic ways in which classes were previously determined. As a consequence of this, individualisation becomes the social structure of modern society, and the individual, the basic unit of social reproduction.

Both Beck and Beck-Gernsheim considered that western societies are left with an institutionalised imbalance between the disembedded individual and global problems in a global risk society (2002: XXII). Additionally, they point out that individuals have to find biographical solutions to systematic contradictions and inequalities. With the weakening of collective ties, and class identities, Beck and Beck-Gersnheim believe that new democratic forms of organisation become

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more difficult to foresee. Even so, they show concern with the ways collectivity can be generated in global capitalism, characterised by them as the fragility of class bounds and other collective identities. The problem with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's approach in my view is that I sustain the opinion that more emphasis must be put on 'categories' of identity, such as national identity, gender, race and ethnicity which bind people together in contemporary societies and which may also divide. From this perspective, it does not make much sense to reflect upon individualism, without looking closely at patterns, which may propagate it and at others, which may militate against it.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim emphasise that individualisation cannot only be understood in terms of 'a me-first society' (2002:XXII), since there are signs of openness to ethics of 'altruistic individualism'/ 'co-operative individualism'. They stress that everyone in contemporary society who wants to live a life of his/her own has to be socially sensitive. This sensitivity is explained by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim in the context of an 'ideal intimacy situation' that is established by specific rules for intimate relations. The decision to live together as a couple implies constant negotiation and justification. From Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's account the problem of this co-operative individualism, constantly shaped by negotiation, is that there are limits to argument and confrontation if people want to live with another in everyday life. As already examined, Bauman (2003) also presents the problem of negotiation among couples, emphasising a negative contemporary tendency. He suggests that confrontations are so unbearable among couples in the liquid modern individualised society that long-term commitments become 'thin on the ground, long-term engagement a rare expectation, and the obligation of mutual assistance 'come what may' a prospect that is neither realistic nor viewed as worthy of great effort' (2003: 66).

As one can see, people's choices in life are likely to be described by the aforementioned social theorists of the 'post-traditional order', as ongoing processes, open to choices, in a process of constant decision-making, judging risks and reflexivity. From the analytical perspectives of these social approaches, 'homo oeconomicus' of contemporary life reveals a lack of responsibility to others. Yet, from these analytical trends, people are likely to be less restrained or connected by social and collective bonds. They tend to lack a

sense of historical continuity (a decline of narratives of sociability) and are primarily motivated by self-satisfaction in their intimate relationships. The last aspect has been considered by Giddens (1992a) in his theorisation of the transformation of intimacy in late modernity.

According to Giddens (1992a), expectations of equality and of having one's feelings understood by the other - traditionally the demand of the female in heterosexual relationships, have led to the development of 'pure relationships'. Giddens defines 'pure relationships' as the mutual understanding of feelings and the satisfaction of each other's sexual pleasure. These are essential characteristics to determine whether the intimate link continues or not. The drive for intimacy is based on profound sharing and mutual knowledge, disconnected from family formation, the daily commitment to parenthood, or obligations.

Pure relationship is stressed by Giddens (1991; 1992a) as a one which is internally referential, that depends fundamentally on satisfactions or rewards generic to that relation itself. To put it differently, the pure relationship is built on a coalition of similar interests, and is maintained solely by the satisfactions it may bring on its own. Similarly to Bauman's (2003) liquid love, the pure relationship only lasts if something can be derived by each individual, and viewed as worthwhile.

2.1 The Limits of Individualisation Theory

I have chosen to discuss the limits of individualisation theory in terms of its tendencies to theorise about intimate relationships. For me the development of generalising accounts with regard to intimate and personal relationships are the most problematic tendencies examined by those social theorists. The increasing importance of mobility and flexibility in the sphere of work should not be interpreted in the light of 'no enduring bonds', as if they were the common slogan of people's lives.

I argue that the problematic aspects of the pure relationship (Giddens 1991; 1992a) and liquid love (Bauman, 2003) are the fact that they tend to generalise a type of relationship, based upon reward, neglecting the problems couples are

likely to face and the negotiations among them that tend to take place in their daily lives. Also these relationships are presented as if they were 'universal' and the prevailing ideal for human partnerships (Bauman, 2003). As drawing upon 'universal' and 'ideal models' these theories do not take into account different experiences, the everyday routine and gender relations of power.

Noting that even Giddens has emphasised that 'men are largely unwilling to release their grip upon the reins of power'. Chambers exemplifies this throughout her research on the narratives of family photograph albums where family representations are tied to cultural myths of collective memories (Chambers, 2001:21). These memories are expressed by fulfilment in marriage and parenthood, the innocence of childhood and the achievement of material success. She shows how the messages transmitted, by studying families' albums, display heterosexual, mono-racial, family identities that reproduce the traditional patterns of the white, patriarchal, nuclear family. From her research, Chambers shows that the transformation of intimacy has not yet led to the dismantling of patriarchal power within the family.

According to Jamieson (1998) there are differences in the ways people develop intimate relationships within and between human societies. Furthermore, she illustrates in her research with working class women that the modes of intimacy present in their daily lives are not necessarily based on mutual sharing and mutual knowledge (Giddens, 1992a): 'many women have very segregated marital relationships with little disclosure or sharing activities' (Jamieson, 1998: 133).

Illouz (1997) has conducted a piece of empirical research on the ways urban white North Americans, from working, middle, and upper class backgrounds, experience love and romance. In the analysis of the research Illouz reveals that love can only be interpreted within cultural and social terms. Based on the empirical findings, Illouz concludes that romantic love can no longer be relegated to the sphere of private life, as it is influenced and even shaped by the volatile 'stuff' of culture, such as norms, language, symbols, social conflict and class relationships. According to her a group of interviewees mentioned that 'intense and immediate emotions are deceptive and unreliable, and sexual

attraction is an insufficient and even dangerous reason to choose a mate' (1997: 159). Other respondents of Illouz's research were likely to refer to love as 'making things work' rather than towards contemplation or aesthetic experience. Also, Illouz illustrates how class impacts on the experience of intimacy on a daily basis, where in the specific experience of her respondents, the lack of money drives families apart: 'if you love somebody but you don't have any money, then you're spending all your time working...' (Illouz, 1997: 270).

Besides sexual intimate relationships, Chambers (2001) and Allan (1996) stress the importance of friendship to people's lives. Allan (1996) highlights that when people are questioned about their friendships they often describe much closer relationships. Close friends are often claimed as 'family' through intimacy, shared goals, and experiences (Chambers, 2001). Young females in particular share intimacy among friends. Female friends tend to be willing to confide and discuss fears, anxieties, and romances with one another (Hey, 1997; Allan, 1997). They do not affirm that friendship tends to be more important among young females than among young males, but illustrate the ways people's patterns of friendship are likely to be related to wider experiences. Even if cultural images of masculinity are gradually altering, boys and girls still receive from parents and other adults, both within and outside of schools, different encouragements to express emotion, tenderness and compassion outside romantic relationship (Allan, 1996).

In a similar vein to Illouz's argument that 'the subjective experience of love relates to such resources as money, leisure time and education' (1997:16), the relationship of friendship is tied to aspects of a person's identity, as for example, in this case, dominant 'constructions' of femininity and masculinity.

With these examples I demonstrate that to qualify people's relationships from macro-structural changes, or a predominant social-economic dynamic, without framing relationships as anchored in the cultural, social, spatial or economic conditions of people's lives, is very problematic. People's relationships can only be understood in the light of the concrete specificities of social class, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, culture, spatiality, and so on. These categories of

identity have not disappeared in contemporary life, as has been illustrated by Jamieson (1998), Illouz (1997), Chambers (2001), and Allan (1996). Belongings are still influencing people's ways of living and thinking. If the effort to understand individuals' specificities and differences in the context of their lives is not made, love, intimacy, friendship, people's identity and aspirations become abstractions, analysed from macro-structural changes, such as risk society, late modernity, and so on. In this case, we end up reproducing reductionist approaches in which social and economic transformations set the patterns and rules for individuals' lives. It is fundamental to relate social dynamics to practices and tendencies to actual happenings.

Another aspect that has been referred to by Lasch (1979) is the crisis of family life. He stresses the crisis of today's families but without pointing out '...the key processes through which a white, nuclear version of familialism has been mobilised and naturalised in Western Anglophone cultures' (Chambers, 2001:31). She anchors the ideal white, nuclear family within the 'nation', supported by social hierarchies amidst inequalities of race and gender. By perceiving traditional family life as ideal in comparison to today's family lives, Lasch does not take into account women's disenfranchisement, and other hierarchical relationships such as those between parents and children; or the legal discrimination against members of minority ethnic communities, that characterised patriarchal, and racist societies. Besides, the understanding of present family relationships should not be reduced to contexts of historical ruptures, but framed within dynamic practices, embedded in continuities and discontinuities, sedimentation and innovation.

Other problematic aspects of the arguments put forward by these social theorists is that they tend to inadvertently reproduce traditional dichotomies, for example, that of the individual and society, or structure and agency. From the perspective of lifestyles, people are free to make choices, but the possible limits imposed on them by the contexts in which they live are not considered. The tendency of these wide-ranging social theories is to describe contemporary phenomenon with sweeping generalisations, and neglecting particularities and differences.

Although there is a relationship between changes in the collective sphere and people's practices in their daily lives, people's reactions should not be predicted as intrinsically positive or negative. For example, the phenomenon of internet 'chat' may improve people's face-to-face intimate links and also raise awareness of political struggles, as happened in the case of the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* (EZLN) of Mexico, which use effectively the internet to propagate its political programme. The Zapatista movement is a clear demonstration of what Ribeiro (2000a) calls the efficacy of 'witnessing from a distance', and the virtual power of world public opinion' (2000a: 119) of transnational communities.

These interpretations of the 'traditional order' produce generalising accounts of family relationships, as if family formations and childcare nowadays were no longer desirable. Besides, they do not seem to engage properly with past experiences that were characterised by insecurity and discrimination. Although the examples addressed by the theories of individualisation/ flexibilisation of work, are centred on specific samples of North American and Western European realities, they seem to describe global tendencies. Sennett's work (1998), for example, does not focus on the experiences of people in under-developed and developing countries. To such people, unemployment and work flexibilisation are old patterns, caused by colonisation, poverty, inequalities, and the unequal concentration of wealth. Unemployment has been intensified by imperialistic policies of exploitation such as interventions and sanctions in the name of western civilization and democratic values, rather than technological revolution. Inequalities in those countries cannot be explained by the individualisation theory (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) in terms of privatising the means to confront and tackle poverty, since experiences of community, neighbourhood, and family are embedding sources for sharing, and exchanging. This means that in under-developed and developing societies, especially among working-class people, who often have to improvise to survive, there is likely to be a greater reliance on friends and family members for practical and emotional support on a daily basis.

What I have tried to emphasise above is the impossibility of making generic, ontological presuppositions, depicting modern and 'postmodern' tendencies as

if they existed in an homogenised form throughout the world. It is not possible to theorise the 'modern actor' or his or her identity and aspirations without posing specific questions and defining temporality, spatiality, and relationality with concrete linkages. If we fail to do this we end up reproducing theoretical perspectives about ' ... the putative universal social actor [that] is in fact extremely particularistic - namely, white, male, and western' (Somers and Gibson, 1994).

Claiming the importance of putting together concreteness and theoretical sophistication, Du Gay et al. (2000) stress the relevance of including multiple positions of 'reading' and 'understanding', re-addressed throughout the field of humanities. Rather than universalising the particular in this way, key currents in humanities disciplines converge in advocating multiple positions of reading and understanding. Du Gay et al, for example, advocate that we should go beyond acknowledging the particularity of our presence in the world, our specific identity, and a historical understanding of specific forms of personhood (Du Gay et al 2000:299). An approach that identifies subjectivities within the particularities of social contexts, across time, has been crucial in terms of the inclusion and recognition of differences in social and cultural research.

In my conceptualisation of aspiration, I engage with the relationality between individuals and their social contexts rather than produce 'unilateral' analyses, as if the consequences of risk, technology, and individualisation were embedded in the production and re-production of societies. In the same way that history cannot be understood by simply discovering and by inventing the past, aspiration cannot be approached in terms of macro-social changes, independently of people's history and their recreation of time and space. To understand aspiration as a dynamic concept, histories must be interpreted through a reconstruction of their making, resonance, and contestedness over time (Somers and Gibson, 1994).

3. Conclusion to Part I

Having discussed contemporary social theories I want to conclude by stating that aspiration is not an abstract and a fixed category, but rather depends upon life's temporalities, spatiality, belongings, and social and economic opportunities and constraints that intersect in each person's particularities.

I take into account the fact that young people's lives are impacted by macro-social transformations, for instance: consumerism and its ideological power over desires and ideals; the flexibilisation of work and the lack of predictability of long-term employment.

First of all, I attempt to make clear that those aspects impinge on people's lives in different ways, not only because of individuals' peculiar forms of confronting difficulties and dealing with ambition, but also because of their specific categories of identity. These affect not only people's experiences in life, but also their anticipations of future plan as seen throughout the empirical work of this thesis.

The second reason I chose to analyse those social theories and macro-transformations in the light of aspiration is to show, from the context of people's articulations, that neither the media nor the technological artefacts of contemporary societies have power to control human beings' lives, less so in homogenising fashions, as tended to be discussed by Bauman (2003) and Lash (2002). In a similar vein, the flexibilisation of work, and the lack of predictability of future long-term careers and jobs are not enough to stop people from putting together their aspirations in relation to professional lives and anticipated jobs. In this thesis I shall illustrate how paths towards desirable employment and a career are likely to be planned, and still play central roles in people's configurations of their future lives.

The trading of consumer goods across the world, the flow of information, images and other forms of global imagery are not the only processes that create relationships. Human beings, in the case of this research the young people interviewed, are those who relate technology, consumer goods, and so on, to

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their lives. This means that in spite of the ideological power of the media, and of consumer culture over people's lives in contemporary societies, they are far from being the producers of social relationships. The young people I interviewed were likely to configure specific connections to those issues. However, it is important to state here that, although the young people interviewed are creative human beings who tend to decide upon some of their priorities in life, and to tackle them from the context of their categories of identities, they are unable to be entirely the producers of their lives according to their wishes.

I stress once again that my interaction with those social theories, from the perspective of this research on aspiration, has been very crucial. I sought to demonstrate throughout the empirical chapters, as I indeed do, that young people are able to confront risks and constraints, and deal with them creatively. However, at the same time unequal forms of power relations tend to impact upon their lives, mostly in the case of disenfranchised young people. Alternatively, as it becomes clear in the subsequent chapters, young people tend to rely their personal and collective bonds in their day-to-day routines.

Finally, through the ruptures produced in many of those social theories I examined here in the context of 'post-modernity' and 'post-traditional order', we are able to question the historical discontinuities, by focusing on young people's aspirations in terms of Ricoeur's (1988) fusion of temporalities, the interaction of memory (past), experience and attention (present), and expectation (future).

Part II- Refiguring the Relevance of Youth Studies

In this part of the chapter I review empirically based studies of the lives, experiences and cultures of young people. One of my aims is to argue against some common ways of considering youth from perspectives of life-stage, life cycle and phases, consolidated in the field of developmental psychology. The main reason I examine here some of the earlier studies on youth is that I aim to question, from the contexts of the configuration of aspirations of those young people I interviewed, any sort of generalising ways of focussing on people's lives and of understanding their more realistic and idealistic life-plans.

I re-state here that I will be arguing against treating youth as a group, culture or life-stage that is separate from 'adult-life'. I find this separation in some classic works in the field of youth studies. In the case of the later examples, however, youth studies within the Cultural Studies tradition, present a more socially integrated view of youth. At the same time I make clear, in the context of the more recent studies of youth, that there were some limits that impacted upon youth subcultural tradition, particularly in the earlier studies, produced in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). We need to look at the more recent development of youth studies, particular those that make explicit links with concepts of social theory, such as individualization and reflexivity. Differently from past youth transition studies, the later research emphasises the non-linear and heterogeneous paths of becoming adults in contemporary societies. In this context, researchers in the field do not neglect the fact that young people's strategies towards adulthood are deeply interwoven with processes of coping with remaining structural constraints.

1. The Critique of Youth as a Separate Category

There is a relationship between the consideration of youth as a separate category of society and the emergence of youth cultures in the post-war period and economic development (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). During the post-war period youth has been perceived as 'mass consumers' and consequently have been 'targeted' by the fashion and music industries. The perception of young people in relation to social problems was developed earlier, particularly in North America, within the process of urbanisation. Concerned over the spread of urban gangs, and the delinquent activities of 'street corner groups', sociologists during the inter-war years, started to engage with studies of young people. These researchers, members of the Chicago School, carried out studies into the implications of urban development. Many of the urban gangs and 'street corner groups' in the United States bigger cities were formed by unemployed and socially excluded young people (Gelder and Thornton, 1999; Cohen, 1997; Redhead, 1993). The members of the Chicago School underpinned the hardship of the day-to-day of the social and economic marginalized groups of young people as a means of making sense of their deviance.

The limit of these studies, however, is that instead of focusing on the level of poverty and lack of opportunities faced by different groups of young people in North America, they ended up by reinforcing relationships between socio-economic exclusion and deviance. This has strengthened prejudices against young immigrants from ethnic and racial minorities, as they are continuously perceived as sources of problems.

Clearly, this shows that for more than seventy years research in the field of youth in urban cities has tended to reinforce predominantly negative images of young people. According to Roche and Tucker (1997) this type of research makes young people appear as sources of trouble rather than in trouble[22]. Determinist accounts of young people's deviance have widely spread throughout the world and are still revisited whenever public order is disrupted.

The North American sociology of youth as deviance also became popular in Britain, particularly throughout the mid-40s (Redhead, 1993), whilst the identification of young people as drug addicts and a threat to society has developed in Britain since the post-war period. This type of study culminated in the formation of a group of researchers interested in discussing politics and deviance, who joined together at the National Deviancy Conference (NDC) in the late 60s (Redhead, 1993). Among this group of researchers was Stanley Cohen whose book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* - a study of the creation of the mods and rockers - had a great impact (Redhead, 1993).

Another tradition that has strengthened the perception of youth as a westernised, 'universal category', has been psycho-developmental work, characterised by the predicament of young people's behaviour and attitudes in terms of the life-cycle.

Erikson (1976) has been an important theorist of the life-cycle approach in the context of youth identity and crisis. He developed a concept of life cycle, under the influences of Stanley Hall, Karl Manheim, and Talcott Parsons (See Cohen,

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[22] The perspective of young people 'in trouble' is more recent. This perspective has been reinforced by the phenomenon of youth unemployment, teenage pregnancy and so on.

1997)[23]. To understand Erikson's concept of the lifecycle it is important to focus on the idea of 'series of passages'[24]. Erikson (1976) developed an understanding of a person's lifecycle by emphasising the crisis that affects each 'passage' of the cycle. He applies the term 'crisis' to indicate that each passage or stage involves a fundamental shift, which is essential for the growth of the adolescent, and at the same time leaves the young person vulnerable to impairment of identity.

According to Erikson's model, each developmental stage can be understood around a specific crisis, which can be resolved either positively or negatively. Again, his idea of crisis is of a 'developmental stage', which does not tend to suggest a catastrophic risk, but a decisive turn. Crisis is perceived as a crucial period of increasing vulnerability and potentiality.

The problem with Erikson's account is that it is very general. He fails to consider social axes, such as class, gender, and cultural belonging that shape the contours of young people's crises and the ways they respond to them. As a consequence, he produces a kind of normative account of development that trivialises difference and neglects the significance of individual circumstances (Urwin, 1984).

In addition Erikson denies the 'relative' variability of psychic reality and ends up reproducing a 'basic personality structure' (Cohen, 1997), which is by definition unchangeable. Erikson dismisses the possibility of the subject articulating new identities by not taking into account his/her specific contexts and experiences of living. Cohen emphasises that Erikson leaves out of his account the way the subject is positioned within a field of desire, which is socially produced. The position of Erikson' subjects can only be identified by reference to cultural

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[23] Although the work of Erikson is inserted in the field of psychosocial and psychoanalytic theories, he has been influenced by the works of Stanley Hall on biological upheaval and adolescence, Karl Manheim on generation as a social construct, and Parsons on the emergence of adolescence in terms of functionality.

[24] Erikson's meaning in relation to 'series of passages' is similar to Levinson's (1978) concept of seasons, defined as a series of periods or stages within the lifecycle.

norms - that is dominant cultural patterns - leaving no space that allows identity to be re-worked.

From a more contemporary and general approach, young people are perceived as hedonistic, avid consumers, egocentric and political apathetic. These perceptions tend to be sustained either by the impact of individualisation theory, as discussed in the first part of this chapter, which reflects the general consequences of the post-traditional order, or by comparison with the students' movements in the sixties. The image of contemporary disaffected and alienated youth has been propagated in such a way that older people tend to consider today's youth as media literate and politically illiterate - 'rebels without a cause or a clue' (Best and Kellner, 1998). Allusions to the loss of commitment of today's young people to public life are still in place (Abramo et al, 2000; Peralva and Sposito, 1997). Those researchers, who were themselves young people during the sixties and seventies and who engaged with political activities during their young adulthood, are likely to express dissatisfaction with contemporary young people's participation in politics (Abramo et al, 2000).

Although it is important to recognise the participation of young people in the sixties and seventies protest movements against imperialism, dictatorships and racism, one has to be careful not to romanticise these movements, and not to reproduce nostalgic accounts of young people's political engagement in the past. If this continues to happen we end up denying the possibility of engaging with young people's lives in their contemporary contexts. From this perspective, this thesis attempts to avoid comparisons across different periods of time by contextualising past memories along with possibilities that can be pushed forward, implemented by different groups of young people today. For this reason, it becomes appropriate to engage with the concrete realities lived by different young people in a specific location.

To conclude this section I need to stress that the present thesis is not primarily organised through the perspective of youth as a self-closed category. To understand different choices, adopted by young people, I decided to point out the key aspects that are dealt in the field of youth transition, as they engage with critiques of the social theory I am examining in this thesis. It reflects upon

paths towards adulthood not only as expressions of uniqueness and creativity, but also as on-going processes, linked with social, economic and familial experiences. In addition, as the field of cultural studies research has emphasised since its foundation young people's creativity, without either hiding their conflictive and limited life-contexts or presenting pictures of them 'as "cultural dopes" passively being propelled along pre-ordained "trajectories" ' (Coles, 1995:16) it is worth revisiting it.

2. Youth Transitions as Embedded in Socio-Cultural Contexts

Initial studies of youth transitions in Britain were connected with the prolongation of the dependence status of youth through the crisis of manufacturing industry, and the low availability of non-skilled or semi-skilled jobs in the end of the seventies and eighties (Roberts, 1984; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Transition, however, was looked at purely in terms of young people's involvement in the labour market (Coles, 1995), and failed to explore other complex aspects that relate to processes of becoming adults. In comparison with the Brazilians, British young people even now have early transitional paths towards their economic independence. They can afford to leave their parents' home much younger than the average Brazilian. Also, what is categorised as unskilled working-class job in Brazil has never offered linear possibilities of becoming independent from family networks[25]. Transition towards independence has often had an unspecific status in Brazilian society. In this sense I agree with Bucholtz's (2000) argument about the inadequacy of understanding young people's paths towards life-choices and independence from unilateral views of macro-change structures, without relating those to cultural specificities and 'coping strategies' (Johnston et al., 2000).

Yet, from the perspective of early youth transition studies, young people's agency towards future trajectories were extremely limited, since they were highly influenced by their fixity of location associated with social class (Roberts, 1987). Transitions in this fashion were largely outside of the control of individuals as social actors (Evans and Furlong, 1997). In many cases the

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[25] Here, I am not attempting to narrow the complexity of familial relationships in Brazil in terms of economic dependence. The sphere of family relationship in Brazil cuts across different aspects of life, as it is shown in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

straightforward type of transition from school to non-skilled work was likely to damage young people's mobility in the labour market and possibilities of upward aspirations (Bynner, 2001).

 The more recent studies in this field have signalled the discontentment among youth researchers of the ways the British Government has set strategies to respond to youth unemployment by equating life-opportunities with educational availability. Although this socio-economic policy in implementing education was meant to expand the range of options among the young people in Britain, it is evaluated by Ball et al. (2000) and Johnston et al. (2000) as non-effective in diminishing rates of unemployment and social exclusion. These researchers perceive the development of vocational training and further educational courses in the light of Beck's (1992) individualisation and Giddens' reflexivity (1991), as attempts to hold individuals accountable for their choices and survival, regardless of their situation in life. In the research, carried out by Ball et al., the impact of the ideology of meritocracy has been discussed. Even young people with very limited prospects, constantly 'reiterate that they do have choices, that, luck, hard work and sheer determination are the bases of "success" ' (Ball et al., 2000).

From the perspective of individualization, difficulties in the process of achieving adulthood become personalised, resulting in policies that lead to the depoliticisation of the structural levels of society and overemphasis on personal responsibilities (Rudd and Evans, 1998). In this vein, Johnston et al (2000) mention the ways in which unemployment for school-leavers and young adults in Britain have been seen in national policy as linked to youth crime.

The failure around the delivery of education in developing successful paths towards adulthood can be linked with similar problems of perceiving aspirations as exclusively dependent upon either social economic opportunities or personally ambition, as if these aspects were not interrelated. A person's biography cannot be interpreted as unrelated to those of other individuals or groups. The understanding of the ways life-opportunities should be delivered demands a more dynamic relationship between structured constraints, biographical experiences and personal abilities for coping. As mentioned by

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Bynner et al. (1997) and Ball et al. (2000) successful routes towards adulthood transcend expectation around labour, since they also depend upon family relationships and support, as well as domestic and housing transitions.

To expand socio-economic interventions via education should not be simply a question of making explicit the availability of educational training for vocational and academic routes, especially, because education for those with already damaged 'learner identity' seems 'like an impossible or unpalatable option' (Ball et al., 2000:15). There is a need to stress how support, such as free courses, career advisers, and training information are only appropriate if delivered to respond to the different needs of individuals, particularly those with low educational attainment. This is also a way of minimising the impact of structured constraints and expanding young people's aspirational choices. Since transition, as well as aspiration, is founded in social relationships (Allatt, 1997), support networks should focus on building up young people's interest in discovering new potential, rather than intensifying their own sense of deprivation[26].

It is possible to note an interesting turn undertaken by recent research in youth transition in Britain. In these are clear an attempt to understand young people's responses to macro-changes as connected with many spheres of their lives and not as a reduced relationship of cause and effect with the labour market. Researchers in this field have stressed that there are non-linear and heterogeneous responses given by young people in their process of constructing routes towards independence. This means that these routes can be made, undermined and reinforced at different times in people's lives, alongside partial achievements of independence. People can be independent in some sphere of life and dependent in others (Thomson et al 2002; Jones and Bell, 2000).

Also, the understanding of transitional paths as interwoven with childhood experiences, family relationships, health and, educational attainment (in sum a process that involves a person's biography), can be used to question the pejorative relationships between unemployed school-leavers and their

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[26]Johnston et al (2000) have shown in their research that there are career advisers who remind people of their bad results, and schools, which tend to exclude students who are not likely to be successful sixth form applicants.

involvement with crime, drugs and early pregnancy. It is in the sense of articulating people's biographies with their social, cultural and economic environments that transitional studies can be more closely related to my research on the articulation of aspiration. According to studies carried out by Bynner et al. (1997), Ball et al. (2000) and Johnston et al. (2000) it is not laziness or a desire to depend on benefits that make young people at some time unable to break with the cycle of family exclusion, crime involvement and low aspirations. As acknowledged by Thomson et al. (2002) many young people prefer see themselves as thieves, and drug dealers than dependent on benefits. This shows clearly that the relationship between deprived youth and the desire to depend on benefits is not straightforward.

Transition to adulthood needs to be seen as a continuous interplay between the circumstances, experiences, and personal agency within the specificity of social and geographical location. Although more recent studies of youth transition take into account the relationship between the different spheres of young people's lives, in other words, the mediation of working, housing and domestic transitions, they tend to lay too much stress on material resources. In this vein young people's tactics, which include their daily routines, leisure activities and practices of coping with structural constraints, without reproducing the cycle of exclusion, are not highlighted. There is a tendency to link strains and social class. In this way, the equation between coming from middle class backgrounds and having creative means to respond to difficult times becomes almost straightforward. In sum, this field of study needs to look at how young people negotiate life in a hermeneutic process, which entails coping devices.

3. Cultural Studies and Youth Subcultures

Cultural Studies as a research field has been consolidated from a very different perspective to contemporary social theories and other studies on youth. Since its foundation, Cultural Studies did not centre on conceptions of the transition of macro-structures, often based on speculative and generalising approaches. It has been developed through theoretically orientated empirical research of cultural manifestations, including the study of youth sub-cultures and latterly of

youth experiences more generally (Cohen, S., 1987; Cohen, P., 1997; Willis, 1977; Hall and Jefferson, 1976) in an earlier period, and the more recent studies of young people, (Walkerdine, et al 2001; Mac An Ghaill, 1994; Frosh et al 2002; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Pilkington, 1994).

Even if the approaches developed in the field of youth subcultures, during the seventies and eighties, differ from my own, my engagement with Cultural Studies can be explained by two main convergences: Firstly, Cultural Studies has criticised the standardisation of the production of social identities. In other words, production has often been addressed as contextual and shaped by the cultural 'incoherencies' of social reality. Secondly, later critiques of the youth subcultures work, carried out by researchers in the field (Cohen, 1997; Mc Robbie and Garber, 1976; Hall, 1997; Gelder and Thornton, 1999; Mc Robbie, 1997), contributed to a change of the forms of research on contemporary young people. The more recent studies, including this research, take into account the embedding subjectivities of youth, not as a separated category, but as specifically located. This was developed through interdisciplinary studies, whose research practices and positionalities are related to mine (eg. Frosh et al, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Pilkington, 1994; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Walkerdine et al, 2001). It is relevant to emphasise here briefly the basis of Cultural Studies, because this field opened up the construction of 'a model of multiply divided subjects in a multiply divided society' (Cohen, 1997: 224). This approach has been central to the elaboration of this thesis.

3.1 The Subculture Field

The early studies of subcultures were attempts to map resistances to post-war hegemony (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). By focusing on changes in the process of production that disintegrate traditional working class structures, subcultures are seen as youth re-arrangements to deal with the destruction of cohesive elements, such as the sense of community, that existed within the culture of young people's parents. At the same time that some of the sub-cultural groups aimed to express a rupture with the parental culture, Cohen was able to state 'subculture cannot break out of the contradiction derived from the parent culture' (Cohen, 1997:58).

Subcultures used cultural symbols in their construction of styles, while reproducing through the practices of their members the contradictions of the social world, and as such they were considered exercises in representation (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). They were working-class group associations that depicted and made apparent, though symbolically, the inequalities of the social world. From this perspective, subcultures draw together society and culture. Culture is seen as patterns of beliefs and values or even ideologies, which cannot be separated from action and social organisation (Gelder and Thornton, 1999).

Subcultural representations were examined as meaningful expressions of the beliefs and values of social organisations. In particular, subcultural status and strategies remained connected to class subordination. From this perspective subcultural groups are identified as composed mainly of members of the working class that seemed to embody the instability of 'class' as a workable category. These members confronted the crisis of the parental communities break down, after the post-war period.

The CCCS did not approach youth as aimless, delinquent, deviant, and so on. The members of the Centre constructed youth as symptomatic of the central contradiction of the time, expressive of the decline of the 'respectable' working-class lives. In this sense, youth groups reacted against class decline by producing subcultures. For Cohen (1997), subcultures became symbolic means of expressing and 'resolving' the crises of class. As power relations of class 'interpellated' young people they reacted imaginatively against these relations through new symbolic arrangements (Althusser, 1971).

Just as a social group organised around something which all members held in common, be it a problem, an interest or a practice, so subcultural groups often expressed the common aspects among members, through styles. The symbolic structure, shared in the subcultural group, provided a sense of affinity in terms of common life styles[27]. These styles were, according to Willis (1977),

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[27] It is important to clarify that the meaning of style in Cultural Studies approaches is different from the social theoretical accounts. While Contemporary social theories construct lifestyle as

expressed in clothes, music, attitudes, and were used as symbolic resources to sustain a particular personal or social identity. The assemblage of style is examined by Willis as practical creativity, decoding and recoding cultural commodities. For Willis the practical creativity is expressed by the ways young people construct their individual identity out of many commercial resources or cultural commodities.

3.2 The Configuration of Style

A very important characteristic of styles is the variability with which they are assembled in different subcultures. It is interesting to examine the 'configuration' created in the practice of assembling, as the meaning behind each 'configuration' is specific. Each assembling configuration tries to 'communicate' the relationship between each configuration and the 'intention'/ 'identity' of the group. To focus on practices of assembling means to question structural determinism, by taking seriously what people make out of them. In this particular case, the understanding of styles requires a practice of interpretation.

According to Hebdige (1979), style in relation to subculture was often a means to express revolt, refusal and a symbol of triumph, embedded in mundane objects. By inserting those objects in a dialectical relation between action and reaction, objects became meaningful, rendering a symbolic dimension that reveals a form of stigmata, or tokens of a self-imposed exile. It is interesting the way Hebdige expresses the double meaning associated with the assembling of objects.

> On the one hand, they warn the 'straight' world in advance of a sinister presence- the presence of difference - and draw down upon themselves vague suspicions, uneasy laugher, 'white and dumb rages'. On the other hand, for those who erect them into icons, who use them as words or as curses, these objects become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value (Hebdige, 1979: 3)

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an expression of individuals' choice, or self-identity, as illustrated in the works of Featherstone and Giddens, style here expresses symbolic common aspects, shared by the members of the subcultural groups.

The characteristic of these assembling objects is very much related to Levi-Strauss's (1968) concept of the bricolage, defined as a mode of adaptation, where things are put to use in ways for which they were never intended, often dislocated from their 'normal context'. The bricolage can be understood as a montage, where elements are put together, or taken out in a variety of ways. The objects assembled in each subculture are meant to be different, to cause an impact, construct opposing meanings, clash with mainstream forces and be always capable of being made and re-made. The bricolage arrangements embedded in subcultural styles allowed them to resist media incorporation. As Hall (1977a) has pointed out, because the media has progressively colonised the cultural and ideological spheres, subcultural processes of 'assembling' are always prepared to change, i.e. their styles are made to mean and mean again.

The media handling of the many aspects encoded in subculture only reinforces the fact that subculture does not stand outside the reflexive circuit of production and reproduction. Subcultures tend to respond to the decline of working class communities, job opportunities or others contemporary problems by communicating an alternative identity, displaying their own codes in non-conventional uses. The subversive assembling of styles is one of the key aspects of all subcultures, since the communication of significant differences from the mainstream is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular cultures.

The configuration of style, shaped by bricolaged arrangements, reveals the intention and identity of the group. The symbolic fit between the values and life-styles of a group has been called 'homology' by Willis (1978). Hall (1976) describes homology as the re-assembly of the appropriated objects in distinctive ways and this is made to reflect, express and resonate aspects of group life. For example, Hebdige (1979) illustrates 'homology' by addressing the skinheads: the assembling of boots, braces and cropped hair by the skinheads was very much in congruence with what they wanted to communicate e.g. hardness, masculinity and 'working-classness'. As we can note, the analysis of 'homology' in styles is relevant to later studies, adopted by Cultural Studies researchers. The need to understand the meanings of objects and things in relation to the context of social relationships ends up by reinforcing the interest

of some of the CCCS members in defining the concept of representation (Hall, 1997), as embedded and located in specific contexts.

3.3 The Limits of Homology

Recognising that many critiques developed against the subcultural approach were carried out by members of the CCCS themselves, I shall consider in this section only the issues that were discussed by researchers of consumption, life-style and the field of 'post-subculture'. Post-subculture is an approach which aims to study the divisions and fragmentations of youth cultures (Redhead, 1990; Muggleton, 1997; 2000).

One of the key aspects that influenced debates on style by postmodernists has been the fluidity and multiple possibilities propagated by the development of the consumer society. In this context, the concept of a 'way of life', retained by the subculturalists 'as the outward expression of an identity' (Hollands, 2002:26) has been questioned. Consumption has been framed as creating potential routes to expand senses of imagination and meanings, beyond structural constraints and belongings. Featherstone (1991), by introducing the idea of life-style, as a means to multiple choices and self-identity experimentation, has perceived the field of consumption as made up of symbolic communicators, allowing interactive exchanges. The spread of the concept of life-style has challenged the association of subcultural, stylistic assembling with working-class values, developed by members of the CCCS.

The fragmentation and experimentation propagated by consumer cultures made theorists, such as Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) and Muggleton (2000) perceive styles as stylistic choices rather than as strategies of resistance. They argue that the young people, represented by the CCCS, could have played their 'subcultural' roles for 'fun', or even personal choice, without being committed to an identity as members of working-class communities. This new tendency of youth research is reinforced by the fragmentation of youth styles.

The emphasis on loose identity as not necessarily linked to 'axes of belonging' marks the backdrop of the more contemporary youth research on style. In certain ways, the focus on experimentation mediated through consumption,

under the influences of structural changes, characterised by the flexibilisation of work, the limited role of the welfare state, and the prolongation of young people's transition to adulthood have created a research field concerned with the temporary cultural dimensions of young people's lives. Also, researchers, for instance Thornton (1995), defended a more disengaged relationship between subculture and social context, based on her recognition of the role of the media in the creation and propagation of subcultures.

In some ways breaking with the 'structurally grounded concept of subculture' (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004:11) strengthened the image of young people as creative, dynamic, and innovative, open to interact with opposing and differentiated styles. Experimentation and choice were prioritised over structural identities and social divisions (Hollands, 2002). Researchers established a theoretical field of youth studies, which was later, identified as 'post-subcultural', and sustained their argument on the fluidity and the weakness of relationships between style, taste, and identity (Redhead, 1990; Thornton, 1995; Bennett, 1999; and Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004). Post-subcultural theory, to a certain extent, ratifies some of the characteristics of social theories of individualisation, as it is based on a view of the fluidity and instability of social relations and disconnection from the traditional identity markers of modernity. For post-subculturalists, the gregarious aspects associated with young people's groupings are maintained by their stylistic choices and other consumer preferences, and not by a common set of values, beliefs and forms of social interaction. According to Bucholtz (2002), post-subcultures frequent relate to everyday life aesthetics or lifestyle constructed through consumption as the domain of what binds young people together, as if they were key practices for new forms of sociality.

To explain these new forms of sociality (Maffesoli, 1996) that are made and re-made by stylistic temporary identifications, many of the post-subcultural researchers borrowed the concept of 'tribus' or neo-tribalism, defined by Maffesoli (1996). Tribus is an arrangement of gathering, based on what he sees as happening in today's lives: a combination of flux of social life and the increase of series of temporary group situations. The author develops the idea that in the course of a day people are members of temporary groups at different

times, which can be made and unmade easily, differently from tribes, which entail fixity and longevity. For Maffesoli (1996: 23-25), contemporary tribus does not have any specific goal for being together nor fixed purposes; the gathering is 'experienced for its own sake, without any projection'. According to the author (1996: 74-5) the effervescence of neo-tribalism can be explained by its unwillingness 'to identify with any political project whatsoever, to subscribe to any sort of finality'.

Finally, since fluidity and multiplicity are seen as the primary features of contemporary youth post-subcultures, which are unlikely to be associated with common meaning, they became very dissociated from my research on aspiration. In this research, narrations concerning practices of togetherness tended to illustrate some sort of common interest. For instance, the openness to different assemblages of rhythms in the music 'scene', mediated by local popular sounds and international rock, has been mentioned by some of my research participants in terms of creativity and experimentation, but not dissociated from their notions of identity.

3.4 Beyond Subcultures and Post-Subcultures

The early subcultural studies of the CCCS may have exaggerated the fit between class and style and certainly limited their research to groups of white English working-class males, by excluding other groups of young people. However, I reinforce here the relevance of framing young people's practices, including their consumer choices and life-styles, within the context of broader aspects of their lives. The post-subcultural studies do not seem to engage sufficiently with young people's spheres of life. In this sense they downplay central components that are very significant, as for instance, occupation, family, school, gender, class and so forth. The field of post-subculture, with its emphasis on floating membership and styles, illustrates the nature of young people's consumption (life-style) as if it were adopted for its own sake, regardless of young people's personal goals and cultural identities. From my research I have seen that style in this limited sense does not play a central role in framing affiliations, since they are shaped by shared practices. Style can be one of the components of these practices.

Since the articulations of my interviewees are much more contextualised from the perspective of belonging and space, and young person's need to construct and maintain significant ties, the post-subcultural temporary collective 'arrangements' do not explain my subjects' experiences. On the contrary, the articulation in relation to life-style expressed by the young people in this research revealed their concern for being accepted by their friends while maintaining similar social privileges to their family of origin or improving its social situation. They did not articulate the desire of 'being lost in the crowd', as pointed out by Thornton (1995), while discussing youth clubbing. My research participants mentioned life-style as a means to maintain pre-existent collective links. In a similar vein, Miles et al. (1998) show that social meanings endowed in goods are ways of communicating solidarity and commonalities among peer groups. By this I mean that people's experiences of consumption, leisure, or the material environment in which they are engaged is not neutral, 'but provides symbolic meanings which, arguably, go some way to giving order and purpose to our everyday lives' (Miles, 2003:176).

My interest is in considering aspiration as a mediation of experiences lived by the self and/or collective others, across temporalities. My aim is to understand the meanings of young people's practices without neglecting the overall spheres of their lives. This has led me to rethink critically the concept of representation, without presenting things/styles as having either embedded meanings or expressing simply a disembedded experience. Hall's interest, along with other theorists, in understanding the definition of representation has been influenced by post-structuralist approaches, since 'representation' could only make sense as a 'discursive practice', defined by Foucault (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1987) as a cultural practice, inserted in power 'apparatus', rather than an illustration of the primacy of a structure. By comparing Hall's later studies with his earlier ones we can perceive the change of his research interests. Hall (1997) approached the significance of meaning by going beyond the field of working-class subculture, and started to allude to the concept of representation from broader social embeddings. In the process of reviewing the limits of youth subcultural studies, some of the members of the CCCS started to focus on

experiences in a less structural way, but without neglecting the explanation of what gives meanings to people's lives and their cultural practices.

In this context the concept of identity became understood as not fixed, but as entangled with different categories of belonging across space and time. We can then see a strong relationship between research that seeks to conceptualise representation and the critique of identity as a closed, fixed and pure belonging. The re-conceptualisation of representation, not as attached to fixed objects, life-style for its own sake, fixed meanings, but expressed 'by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them' (Hall, 1997:3) has led to the questioning of 'identity'.

By illustrating the ways we represent feelings, attachments, emotions, concepts, and ideas, in sum, all 'arrangements', 'sets' described as cultural, Hall (1997) draws a relation between representation, meanings and identity: 'in part, we give objects, people and events meanings by the framework of interpretation which we bring to them'. We also give things meaning by how we use them, or integrate them into our everyday practices (Hall, 1997:3). Meanings are produced through different processes and practices, what Hall calls the cultural circuit; therefore, meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong'. He sees meaning as tied up with the ways culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within groups and between them.

By focusing on the ways we use things and relate to people in our everyday lives, we represent our culture and our identity. Representation only makes sense within the context of discursive practice, in other words, as an unfixed 'category'. Since representation is closely tied to both identity and knowledge, through culture and language, the production and circulation of meanings take place as the role of discourse in culture (Hall, 1997).

The emphasis on representation as tied up with identity and cultural practices, cutting across our different social positionings and shaping discursive practices, led to a revision of the field of Cultural Studies. In the process of re-examining and revising Cultural Studies approaches, researchers took on board other

post-structuralist contributions: for example, the 'deferred' meaning of Derrida[28], the implicit presence of the 'colonised other', discussed in Bhabha (1994), Said's (1994) and Brah's (1997) post-colonial theory, the concept of articulation of Laclau and Mouffe (1984)[29], the recognition of subjectivity in social and cultural practices addressed by post-Foucaultian theorists (Henriques, et al., 1984; Walkerdine, 1997; Walkerdine et al., 2001).

According to McRobbie (1997:10), whilst the process of revision of Cultural Studies was taking place, the discipline found it appropriate to 'rethink the relations between the economy and culture without automatically slotting the economic into the bottom line'. This is one of the common critiques drawn in relation to Cultural Studies. Researches in Cultural Studies, particularly those that concentrated on youth subcultures, tend to emphasise the field of symbolic creativity or 'resistance' by isolating the wider relations of these young people's lives to the work sphere, everyday activities such as attending schools, and their interactions with family members. Also a similar critique can be made with regard to the study of post-subcultures. Even if post-subcultural researchers have claimed to engage with experiences of differentiated youth groups in comparison to members of the CCCS, they have failed to explain what makes people participate in specific tribus by not interacting with young people's mundane experiences outside the tribus. Willis' (1977) research with working-class boys was a partial exception to this, as he researched young people's experiences with school and work. Re-engaging with the relationship between literacy and being working-class, pinpointed by Hoggart (1957), Willis emphasised the experiences of lower working-class boys, and their resistance to the middle-class culture of academic performance. Educational attainment, based on a middle-class culture is seen as irrelevant by working-class boys in terms of their future working lives as manual workers. In the light of Willis' ethnographic research and other influences already mentioned, a shift occurred in youth studies resulting in a move away from concentrating on the more

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[28] Derrida (in Du Gay, 2000) focuses on meaning as created by the process of continuous deferral. Meaning is produced within the discourse by the play of difference and deferral (différance).

[29] The concept of articulation of Laclau and Mouffe (1984) is discussed in the third part of this Chapter.

spectacular aspects of subcultures to the inclusion of the more common and concrete experiences of the majority of young people within the domestic, work and educational spheres.

In agreement with Cohen's (1997) description of subcultures as entangled with macho street cultures, and lawless masculinity, many researchers (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Gelder and Thornton 1999; Gilroy, 1987), addressed the invisibility of the many 'other' categories of identity among young people, such as young females, ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants[30], and even young people from middle and upper class backgrounds who were also excluded from youth studies. The interrelation between participating in leisure activities and young people' social, cultural, educational, and financial pressures were ignored in the studies of subcultures (Skelton and Valentine, 1998). Subcultures were not effective in prompting actual material improvements (Cashmore, 1984) or even daily solutions to address these pressures. Even if the subcultural groups were effective in demonstrating that young people were not passive absorbers (Cashmore, 1984), they have been criticised for only providing escapism or relaxation (Pilkington, 1994). This is to say that social contradictions were only magically resolved in different cultural codes within styles of subcultural bricolage (Cohen, 1997).

As Cohen (1997) and Gelder and Thornton (1999) pointed out, subculture was a collective and highly ritualised defence against a transition, therefore, instead of illustrating ways to face the transition from youth to adulthood, subcultures remained outside of adult society and excluded from the sphere of work. In this sense, subculture became 'empowerment' without a future. Walkerdine (1997) also criticises the overemphasis on resistance, as she thought the term romanticised the daily life of youth, and did not cover the challenges and sufferings faced by them.

The importance of subcultural 'ways of living' cannot be neglected. They have impacted upon changing restrictive dress codes, music, and the recognition of

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[30] Even though the studies of spectacular cultures were predominantly developed with white English males, the lack of discussion about 'Englishness', nationality or national culture was not tackled in the early study of youth subcultures.

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the remaining relevance of social class in contemporary societies, critiques of patriarchal hierarchical formalities and family conservatism. Overlooking Willis' work, Gelder and Thornton speculated that if subcultural resistance took place within workplaces, it could have been able to provide political solutions, as happened with other movements, such as the feminist, homosexual, or ethnic minority struggles for equal rights. In Cohen's opinion since subcultures restrict their resistance to the 'limited' field of leisure, their members end up reproducing a narrative of failure, with 'no career prospect' as such.

The need to expand cultural studies to other contexts of people's lives in the process of rethinking identity and people's aspirations as produced in social constructs is argued for by McRobbie (1997). She emphasises the necessity to re-theorise the relations between individuation, subjectivity and identity by thinking about 'affective dimensions of belongings, affiliation and identification' (McRobbie, 1997:10).

From the shift that happened within the field of cultural studies, it is relevant to explain how particular social identities became perceived as loci of complex forms of power (Henriques et al., 1984). With this approach influencing the field of cultural and social research, collective identities and individual subjectivities started to be taken more seriously in the field of contemporary cultural studies. Recent studies on young people attempted to relate meaning to power relations, but also to psychic, and emotional dimensions, which are the outcomes of social and cultural processes (Johnson et al., 2004).

From the context of contemporary social and cultural research about young people we can note the development of accounts that draw attention to cultural and social experiences in schools. Schools are considered sites for the production of sex, gender, class, and ethnic subjectivities (e.g. Walkerdine, et al., 2001). As there is a complex interconnectedness of social construction and regulation in schools (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frosh et al., 2002), we need to go beyond unitary concepts of the subject and trace the ways people deal with the more structured regulations and contingencies. Research carried out in schools with young girls/ women, boys and young men has contributed to the contemporary field of Cultural Studies and other disciplines in the Humanities,

as this work has become highly inter-disciplinary in more recent research about young people.

The processes of the transnational movement of commodities, ideas and people have transformed, once again, the field of youth research. There has been an explosion of work on ethnic youth groups, often influenced by postcolonial theories (Gilroy, 1987; Back, 1997; Law, 2002). Different subordinated regions of the world have been productive of their own approaches to identity, with major implications for youth studies. Garcia Canclini (1995a), for instance, has developed his concept of hybridity[31]. He has attempted to illustrate the different type of modernity and consequent social identity formations that have impacted upon Latin American countries.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that recent youth studies have also taken seriously into account the intersection between the local, the national, and the global (Massey, 2000). Empirical research with young people has been developed across the world in the attempt to highlight how local cultures tend to intersect with national and global cultures (Pilkington, 1994; Pilkington et al., 2002; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Pilkington and Johnson, 2003). Pilkington (1994) in her research with Russian young people has shown, with different examples, the ways in which her research subjects have adopted aspects of western culture, at the same time continuing to celebrate their local and national cultures. As we shall see, particularly in Chapter 5, the young Russians, interviewed by Pilkington, tended to perceive the global in ways quite similar to, particularly, the Brazilian participants of this research.

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[31] Garcia Canclini's concept of hybridity is defined and contextualised in more detail in Chapter 5.

4. Conclusion of Part II

These more recent studies of young people's experiences in school have a strong relationship with this research on aspiration, as they develop integrative perspectives on young people's lives, instead of seeing particular interests either as external or as fragmented. This thesis on aspiration aims to demonstrate the intersection between the different elements of young people's lives and the dynamism among them. I believe that even temporary means of social involvement of young people are better understood in terms of relational meanings to other central arenas of their lives, than from contexts of the general fluidity of life-styles. As has appeared in this research, young people, while engaging in leisure activities and buying consumer goods, show concern with being accepted by their referential groups, as for example, their schoolmates, rather than the desire to integrate in temporal 'tribus' (Maffesoli, 1996). I stress here that to engage with multiple intermediated categories of identity, within the central sites of young people's daily living, where socio-relationships with significant others in my work are lived, is the only way to deal with the most important aspects that guide people's choices and paths in life. Refigurations of aspiration, in order to take place, require the articulation of different fragments of narratives, which are embedded in different 'positional milieu' across space and time. However, the process of putting elements together reveals the ways young people re-make the links among them.

This research, as well as the more recent studies carried out in schools, has shown that power relations do not only impinge on the more social aspects of living, but also continue reinforcing dominant categories of identity, for instance, those of white, middle and upper class men from western developed countries. Recognition of the ways in which people from lower social positions still have more limited opportunities in life in comparison to those of privileged categories of identity has been extremely relevant to this thesis, as we will shall see throughout the empirical chapters. Studies of youth transition tend to discuss in a very clear fashion that choices are still limited to the most vulnerable groups of young people in Britain.

My work is also, in many ways, a response to debates about the local and the global in youth studies. It was in the light of these debates that I chose to work in both England and Brazil. The global, particularly in peripheral countries, is seen with reservations and not as a means to expand opportunities. From this point of view, particularly in the case of the Brazilian interviewees, we shall see that the relationship with the national is reinforced. In this case, national belongings, Garcia Canclini's specificity of Brazilian embedded 'hybridity', for instance, are particular illustrations of local belonging.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out that my research subjects, though not being the most vulnerable groups of young people either in Brazil or in England have shown levels of agency, in spite of their different levels of constraints and risks. The literature on youth transition has demonstrated effectively the ways in which current government measures, instead of promoting opportunities, reinforce beliefs in the personalisation of structural constraints. At the same time, these studies are still neglecting to focus on human beings' coping strategies. The capacity of being united as human beings by acts of suffering, as discussed by Ricoeur, offers young people possibilities of articulating hope. In this research I attempted to demonstrate that my research subjects, while confronting constraints, are still open to dreams and keen on narrating their ideals and expectations in life.

Part III- Configuring Aspirations

Following a logical sequential order which shows how the different theoretical frameworks in this thesis on aspiration intersect, having already discussed the generalising characteristics of contemporary societies and developed a brief account of youth studies, I stress in this part the individuality of my approach to aspiration.

In this part of Chapter 2 I turn more specifically to the question of aspiration. I first highlight briefly a background history of the field of aspiration. Secondly I stress the positive and more limited aspects of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) notion of articulation. Finally, I address Ricoeur's argument on time and narrative, to introduce the theme of temporality into the question of aspiration.

1. An Account of Previous Studies on Aspiration

As discussed by Weber, S. (1976) aspiration from the perspective of classical studies was described as ways of searching for better integration in existing social contexts. Weber shows that previous studies on aspiration tended to be developed with reference to the projects of the 'dominant social class'. According to her, researchers have placed particular aspirations of working-class members in comparison to projects of the dominant classes. Those studies ended up reinforcing the idea that the aspirations of the working class were generally 'lower' in comparison with members of upper classes. These accounts of aspiration not only neglect the constraints which the socially excluded and the working-class have to confront, but also have failed to discuss the conflicts and ambiguities people from all social classes tend to face while making decisions in terms of future projects.

A second approach to aspiration was that influenced by Chombart de Lauwe (1964). Undoubtedly in comparison with the first approach, which I, in agreement with Weber, have criticised above, De Lauwe's approach is much more thoughtful. The studies into aspiration developed and influenced by De Lauwe were based on relating aspirations to the transformations of society. However, his account was very closely connected to Moscovici's concept of representation (see Weber, S. 1976), within the field of Social Psychology.

The influence of De Lauwe can be perceived even in more recent research concerning the study of dreams, for example Raiça (1993). Raiça has worked with the category of representation of dreams in order to understand, through empirical interviews, the general social representations of university students' dreams, specifically groups of young graduate students from the city of São Paulo (Brazil). Although she identifies the general aspects that her interviewees include in their dreams, the author does not intersect her research participants' categories of identity in her analysis of dreams. From this perspective, the thesis produced only a generalised description of her subjects' dreams.

In a more contemporary context, Matheus (2002), by studying the ideals of three groups of students from public state schools who live in three different

shantytowns in São Paulo, sought to question the common perception of youth apathy that impacts upon the ways people view contemporary young people. By stressing the everyday life of his research subjects, Matheus managed to show his research subjects' different forms of participation in their local community. From this context, he was able to reinforce the idea that the generalising view of contemporary young people needs to be revised. However, again, there is a lack of reflection upon the relationship between ideals and social milieu across time and space.

We can note throughout these examples that recent studies on ideals or aspirations are still very much influenced by the more psychosocial approach of social representation. In this sense, research on aspiration does not tend to address the cultural, political and social locations in which young people live and are impacted by their routines. The closest research to my own concept of aspiration found in the literature review, which looked at aspiration by intersecting it with some categories of identities, was the one developed by Krupalini and Bhat (2003). Their subjects were graduate and post-graduate young women from three specific locations in India: Dharward, Mysore, and Shimoga (2003: 217). However as Krupalini and Bhat attempted to emphasise the remaining unequal power relations, between men and women, in Indian society, they restricted their studies on aspirations, focussing more in terms of young women's perceptions about specific social institutions, such as marriage, family, education and employment.

 The literature review has yielded little that seeks to reflect upon aspiration by taking into account the wider embeddings of people's life. As will be shown in the empirical chapters, when people are anticipating their future lives, many different categories of identity influence and intersect with their experiences and expectations of future lives.

Finally, I hope that the current study on aspiration, configured and refigured across time and space, by taking into account the different categories of identity that are entrenched in people's lives, may encourage other researchers to engage with the field.

2. The Relevance of Articulation and its Limits

By borrowing from Gramsci's (1971) definition of hegemonic forces, in the sense of unstable, but persuasive bids for consent (Zizek, 1994), Laclau (1977) argues that Gramsci still retains a 'positivity' / a determination from the effects of social class interests in his discussion of hegemony. Later Laclau, along with Mouffe (1985), breaks with Gramsci's centrality of economic location as a means to understand the structures of society and include the effects of other 'positions' in political 'discourse'. These 'positions' may engage with struggles against gender inequality, racism, movements in favour of environmental issues and lesbian and gay rights. Laclau and Mouffe defend the contingency of discourse and emphasise the importance of including pluralist demands.

The basic concept in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) definition of discourse is the 'articulatory practice'. This is also the most relevant concept of their work to my approach to aspiration. According to Laclau and Mouffe articulation is defined as 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (1985:105). The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice is what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) call discourse. The different positions that appear articulated within a discourse are called 'moments' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). They consider a discursive formation not unified in the coherence of its elements or in the unity of an experience, but in the struggle of structural positions. The practice of articulation involves working on 'elements', defined by the authors as any difference that is not already discursively articulated (1985:105).

Articulation, from the perspective of this thesis, seems 'ideally' to relate to aspiration. It incorporates different social and political positions, including social class, which is considered without its previous economic determination. The concept of articulation takes into account both discursive and non-discursive aspects, as does aspiration. Articulation addresses contingencies, in other words the transformation of elements across different moments, at the same time that it includes regularities that are not totally modified. Articulation, in Laclau and Mouffe's definition is ' a discursive practice which does not have a plan of constitution prior to, or outside, the dispersion of the articulated

elements' (1985:109). They argue that discourse only exists as a partial limitation of the field of contingency. In this terrain 'neither a total interiority nor a total exteriority', 'neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity' are possible.

The main difficulty with Laclau and Mouffe's approach is its neglect of individuals or social groups and of an account of located experiences. Through their concept of articulation I cannot see how it is possible to identify the presences and the practices of flesh and blood subjects.

Laclau and Mouffe only frame articulation from the perspective of political discourses that challenge privileged social positionings. In this vein, the subject positions are categories, such as women, men, gays and feminism. These subjects can only be understood within a discursive structure.

Laclau and Mouffe do not discuss the experiential self as able to articulate his/her fragments of narratives across time, by considering the intersection of the past, the present and future expectations. The subject 'agent' is thin in the sense that his/her experiences depend on discursive structures.

In comparison, the participants of this research are considered as flesh and blood subjects, who have changeable collective identities and individual subjectivities, outcomes of their involvement with social and cultural practices (compare Johnson et al., 2004: 259-64). As they put together, select, configure, and give a sequential order to their fragments of narrative, the subjects of this research sustain a presence throughout their articulations of their future anticipations. For this reason, whenever articulation is mentioned throughout the thesis it is as synonymous with Ricoeur's concept of configuration/ refiguration. This thesis uses the concept of articulation, supplementing it by borrowing from Ricoeur's hermeneutic cycle and from Gramsci's notion of 'common' sense; this appears to me to be culturally entangled with daily life in a much more concrete way than Ricoeur's prefigurative moment.

3. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative

The final element in my refiguration of aspiration is Ricoeur's account of time and narrative according to Ricoeur, who draws on Augustine. Time can be understood as 'the threefold present' (Ricoeur, 1988), which I have briefly emphasised several times throughout the thesis. The present of the past (which is memory), the present of the present (activated through attention and action) and the present of the future, which is anticipation. Time, according to Ricoeur is a basic feature of human life. It is grasped especially through the cultural form of narrative.

Like other forms of representation, narrative - which may be 'factual' or 'fictional'- is produced according to the moments of the hermeneutic circle (see chapter 1). At the prefigurative moment, time is acted out and 'suffered'; in configuration, time is emplotted and schematised in forms with their own genre, types and histories, and also through traditionality and innovation.

These ideas are important to my concept of aspiration. In formulating their aspirations within their interactions with me, interviewees configure (and sometimes refigure) their aspirations in little narrative fragments. These embrace past, present, and future in different ways. As will become clear in the empirical chapters, my participants are likely to imagine their future in terms of expectations, based on past experience, and in articulation of what feels feasible today. In this way, Laclau and Mouffe's articulation (in this thesis assumed as being as close in meaning to Ricoeur's configuration) is given a more temporal dimension.

Similarly, since configuration depends on prefiguration in Ricoeur, to articulate aspirations depends upon cultural forms of daily lives, which also involves Ricoeur's fabric of life ('acting and suffering').

Conclusion

In this chapter I have set out to review some of the main theoretical framework related to the concept of aspiration in this thesis. By arguing against the generalisations of social theory, I have nonetheless taken key themes of the theorists as research agenda for my empirical study.

From my review of youth studies, I remain close to the tradition of previous researchers in stressing the embeddedness of youth in wider social relationships, especially class. Later work on youth, influenced by post-structuralist and some feminist theory, stresses the multiplicity of positional milieu and this view of difference, as my own study shows. Similarly the contemporary agenda of global/local relations are central to my choice of the Brazilian and English case studies.

In the third part of this chapter I engaged more narrowly with the specificities of my approach on aspiration, stressing the different categories of identities included in the concept. At the same time I emphasise the importance of the cultural embeddedness of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe) and the processes of configuration and refiguration across temporalities, borrowed from Ricoeur's analysis on time and narrative.

Chapter 3: Anticipating Careers and Jobs

In the previous chapter I discussed how Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle breaks with both the model of a pre-given psychological subject (Walkerdine et al, 2001) and all types of social determinism. Aspiration is articulated by the synthesis of heterogeneous elements into a temporal schematisation (Ricoeur, 1984) of the many different aspects of life. This synthesis is shaped by a configuration of events and experiences that may be refigured through the interplay of repetitions and innovations. These impinge on specific moments of a person's life. With regard to the young participants of my research, the process of configuration/refiguration has taken place during the interview sessions.

Work and career aspiration is relatively autonomous from socio-economic macro dynamics. Jobs and careers relate to different aspects of a person's life-settings. The analysis of jobs and careers carried out in this chapter attempts to demonstrate that understanding people's aspirations requires seeing beyond the simplistic strategies of reducing costs and increasing productivity, impacting upon the labour market today.

This chapter aims to demonstrate the ways that social class, conceptualised not only in terms of material conditions but also of subjective 'formation', impinges on aspirations. This means that educational opportunities, peer groups, family structure, parents' expectations, and a person's relationship to their social class dominant cultural patterns or 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1994) are all likely to affect the ways careers are perceived, chosen and confronted. Bourdieu's habitus is illustrated through analyses of young people's narratives as symbolic translations, systematic expressions of their space of existence.

In the first section I show how different perceptions of careers and jobs constitute Brazilian and English narratives. This analysis attempts to depict the sort of generic images or 'representations' associated with careers and jobs. In this section I observe how poverty, ie low material conditions of living, impacts on the level of optimism towards career expectations. I focus on the level of poverty that confronts the working- class Brazilians, including a brief analysis of

the social and human development of both countries. In doing so it is possible to understand the ways in which the research participants' social surroundings are articulated in their aspirations.

In the second section, I concentrate on career decisions and the elements that these young people tend to prioritise, assemble, and also neglect in the process of choosing a career. This part describes how young people construct the narrative of careers in terms of what they find meaningful in life and work.

Finally, I explore the reality of young people's contexts and their strategies for confronting the obstacles they meet in their daily lives. Looking at the ways risks are incorporated into young people's life strategies, I question Sennett's (1998) straightforward relationship between the lack of economic predictability and pessimistic views on anticipations regarding employment.

1. Perceptions of careers

1.1 An Outline of the Social and Human Contexts

As the research was carried out with British students who were doing A-levels and Brazilians in their last year of Secondary Education, all my participants constructed their narratives focusing on their expectations around careers and jobs. Career is perceived, among the young people I interviewed, as training in a specific area of knowledge that requires a long-term investment and which opens up better and more enjoyable labour opportunities. In a more sociological context, career incorporates not only entry into and progress through the labour market, but also conveys the sense of a wider entry into adult, domestic life. This is associated with pressure from parents and relatives, encouragement and incentives from school, pressure from peers and engagement with leisure activities (Banks et al, 1992). The 'representation' of both careers and jobs relates to working experiences across different 'social positionings', such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and race. According to Roberts (1987) 'career trajectory' sums up two aspects of life chances: variability across different sections of the population, and change over time. Roberts (1971) stresses how vocational guidance from an early age, in the context of widening people's experiences and their self-awareness of their developing abilities and interests,

tends to help people embark on their working lives with satisfaction. Most 'white collar' careers (Hales, 1985) tend to become stable with age and require extended education and professional training. A job is understood by my participants as an activity that one does to earn a living, and is not necessarily enjoyable. A job in this sense is seen as a means of entry into employment via unskilled or semi-skilled work (Banks et al, 1992) and which offers a limited range of opportunities to improve social status and salary. Another characteristic related to the 'representation' of jobs is its connection to manual labour, the practice of 'doing' and the lack of creativity, whereas career is often linked to 'mental labour', the practice of 'planning' and creativity (Littler and Salaman, 1985).

As the design of career and jobs cuts across differentiated categories of identity, it is important to analyse the social and human development differences between Brazil and England. However, I do not analyse the human development of the two countries in the format of a social-economic report, but as a discussion of expectations concerning careers. I have been guided in this by focusing on those participants, the Brazilian working-class, who are at the lower end of the scale in terms of standards of living[32].

In the following section a series of tables is presented with data for a number of socio-economic indicators of Brazilian and English social factors. Unfortunately it was difficult to draw straightforward comparisons between Brazil and England as the data was generally not available just for England (for example the United Nation's Human Development Index). Hence the UK is given here as a proxy for England, to illustrate general tendencies.

Table 2 shows the Human Development Index (HDI), as defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which is used to measure a country's human development. The HDI has been created with the objective of elaborating the analyses of human development rather than simply basing it on

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32 Throughout this chapter the perspectives of the other participants are also analysed.

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Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per Capita. The HDI takes into account the life expectancy of the population, access to education and access to the infrastructure necessary for a basic standard of living, such as sanitation.

The table illustrates the difference in the HDI between the United Kingdom and Brazil, - the UK is ranked thirteenth in the world while Brazil is ranked sixty-fifth. The UK is classified as having high Human Development while Brazil is classified as medium. The level of human development increases or reduces the possibilities a population has of making choices in life.

Table 2.   Human Development Index Rankings: Brazil and UK

	Education index[1]	GDP per capita (at Purchasing Power Parity in US$) 2001	GDP Index	HDI value 2001	HDI rank
Brazil	0.90	7,360	0.72	0.777	65
UK	0.99	24,160	0.92	0.930	13

[1]Formed by adults' elementary education + combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio. Varies from 0 (lowest) to 1.

Source: UNDP/ Human Development Report 2003

One can see the differences, in terms of the standard of living, between the poor in the UK and the poor in Brazil, in **Table 3**, which shows access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. The table demonstrates the level of social inequality in Brazil in comparison with the UK. In Brazil the poorest 10% of the population has only 0.7% of total income or consumer 'power' of the

Table 3.   Income Inequality – UK and Brazil

	Survey year	Share of income (%)				Gini coefficient
		Poorest 10%	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Richest 10%	
UK	1995	2.1	6.1	43.2	27.5	0.36
Brazil	1998	0.7	2.2	64.1	48.0	0.61

Source: UNDP/ Human Development Report 2003

country, whereas in the UK, the poorest 10% of the population has access to 2.1% of total income. What one also notes from Table 3 is the immense gap

between rich and poor in Brazil when compared to the gap between rich and poor in the UK. In Brazil the richest 20% retains 64.1% of total income, whereas in the UK, the richest 20% retains 43.2% of the country's income. This explains the difference of the Gini coefficient which measures the concentration of wealth on a scale from 0 (every individual has the same income) to 1 (just one unit concentrates all income). The extremely high level of concentration of 0.61 for Brazil is only surpassed by six other countries in the world (five from Africa and one from Latin-American) (Waiselfisz et al, 2004: 88).

With this level of social inequality, I could not carry out the research among the 20% of the poorest population of Brazil, because if I did so I would include a group of people who have very reduced possibilities of making life choices, due to their level of social exclusion. This means that the research participants from the Brazilian working class are far from being at the bottom level in terms of standard of living. Even so, the limited material resources for a basic condition of living impact on the lives of the working-class participants. It is very relevant to emphasise the limits of these interviewees' social and economic lives particularly in the Western world so influenced by the ideology of meritocracy. The latter has attempted to minimise the perception and recognition of social and economic constraints. Understanding the living constraints of the Brazilian working-class interviewees helps to make sense of how their hopes in life are associated with the possibility of investing in a career. To this group of people actually achieving a career is depicted as synonymous with a happy, completely transformed life.

> Paulo- Penso que tudo é difícil, mas se eu conseguir entrar na universidade dali para frente tudo é mais fácil. Eu acho bem mais fácil. **I think everything in life is difficult, but going to a university makes everything easier in the future. I think it will be easier** (Dom João).

> Cristina - Ir para a Universidade significa uma possibilidade de mudar totalmente de vida. De tirar da pobreza a minha família toda. Eu como uma profissional moraria em outro local, compraria uma casa para minha mãe, minha tia e depois comprava a minha para morar com meu marido e meu filho. Seria como uma vida nova. **Going to university means having the chance of changing one's life completely. It would enable me to get my family out of poverty. If I had a profession I would live in another area of the city, buy a house for my mother, my aunt, and then I would buy mine to live with my husband and son** (Dom João).

Paulo's and Cristina's narrative fragments, along with other students from Dom João School, focus on career as a life-changing possibility. Paulo perceives a

career as leading to a change which has the potential 'to make everything easier in the future'. Cristina relates the opportunity of going to university as leading to a 'completely' changed life. From these young people's perspectives, the realisation of a career is related to optimistic future configurations, in Ricoeur's sense. The elements they put together when describing the significance of a career are always desirable. However, their references to a professional life are not constructed through face-to-face experiences lived by them and others, but through 'images' of successful and admirable people. None of the interviewees' parents or any other family members have ever gone to university. Actually, all of the working-class Brazilian interviewees stated that if they managed to complete a degree they would be the first members in their family to do so.

> Silvana- Eu sou a primeira da minha família a acabar o segundo grau. Minha avó acha que já é muito e deveria parar por aqui, mas agora vou querer ir em frente de todo jeito. Eu estou estudando tanto que acho que vou endoidar. **I am the first in my family to finish secondary education. My grandmother thinks that it is already too much and I should stop, but I want to go ahead. I am studying so much that I think I will drive myself crazy.** (Dom João).

We can observe how going to university is considered a privilege in Brazilian Society. Also the fact that they will have to compete with the students of private schools (often middle and upper class ones) for a place in the Public (Federal) Universities puts a lot of pressure on them. Silvana is studying so hard that she says ' I will drive myself crazy'.

For them, a career is the life chance which will enable them to escape the poor environment that characterises their present lives. A career opens up the possibility of living in a better and safer neighbourhood, of improving their standards of living, and of being able to support members of the extended family.

A great part of the Brazilian population lives in poverty with no welfare benefits to support them, should they be unemployed. Athough the majority of the working-class Brazilians interviewed were supported by members of their families, they mentioned the fact that many people they know are unemployed or have occasional work. Although having a career does not imply the pursuit of a job, in Brazil, the number of years spent in education, is strongly correlated

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with participation rates in paid employment, as can be seen in **Table 4**. The table shows, very clearly, that increasing the number of years in education,

Table 4. Correlation between employment and formal education in Brazil:

Number of years of formal education	Probability of being in employment (%)
0	46.1
1	55.7
2	54.6
3	56.1
4	57.2
5	61.8
6	65.3
7	65.5
8	64.7
9	66.9
10	68.1
11	71.2
12	74.8
13	77.6
14	76.0
15 and more	81.3

Source: Waiselfisz et al, (2004) pp: 146.

increases a person's chances of being in employment. It can be seen that for the section of the Brazilian population who have no formal education there is only a 46.1% probability of being in employment, whereas for that section of the population who have 15 years, or more, in formal education, there is an 81.3% probability of being in employment[33]. That is to say that education is an important factor in securing employment in Brazil, although it does not in itself guarantee employment.

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[33] The data referring to employment in Brazil is not very illuminating, because it does not take into account the large numbers of people who are in informal jobs.

Few of the young working-class Brazilians' parents have finished primary education or have any kind of formal employment contract. The majority of the working-class interviewees know that if they are lucky enough to be employed after finishing secondary education, without a university degree they will tend to earn on average the minimum salary, which is approximately £50 per month.

In Brazil there is no sense of equilibrium among the different social classes and no universal category, such as 'citizen', in terms of equal civil responsibility and rights. The public services received by the majority of the population such as education, health, etc are not of a reasonable standard. Apart from some very limited services, working-class Brazilians do not have access to any welfare benefits. The upper and middle class rely on privately provided services, such

Table 5. Family income and access to private and public education at secondary and tertiary level in Brazil:

Regions	Students from Publicly funded Educational Institutions (city, state and federal funded institutions)									
	Secondary School Education Family income per capita broken down by quintile1 (%)					Tertiary Education Family income per capita broken down by quintile1 (%)				
	1st.	2nd	3th	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3th	4th.	5th.
Brazil[2, 3]	**12.9**	**20.9**	**24.5**	**26.5**	**15.1**	**2.3**	**4.7**	**9.9**	**23.9**	**59.2**
North[4]	13.3	18.8	23.4	26.2	18.3	3.4	2.6	9.2	24.8	59.9
Northeast	*10.0*	*16.8*	*24.4*	*27.2*	*21.6*	*2.2*	*1.5*	*5.6*	*15.4*	*75.3*
South	13.1	22.9	23.9	24.8	15.2	1.7	4.2	9.7	24.3	60.2
Southeast	16.3	22.7	25.2	24.8	11.0	2.8	4.1	7.2	19.7	66.1
Centrewest	13.5	20.1	23.6	26.6	16.1	4.1	4.9	10.3	26.4	54.3

Regions	Students from private institutions									
	Secondary School Education. Family income per capita broken down by quintile1 (%)					Tertiary Education. Family income per capita broken down by quintile1 (%)				
	1st	2nd	3th	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3th	4th	5th
Brazil[2, 3]	**2.4**	**4.6**	**9.5**	**22.3**	**61.1**	**1.2**	**1.4**	**5.7**	**17.6**	**74.0**
North[4]	2.8	3.5	9.4	13.7	70.6	1.9	1.1	5.2	14.2	77.6
Northeast	*1.7*	*2.8*	*6.6*	*15.3*	*73.5*	*1.5*	*0.7*	*2.7*	*9.7*	*85.4*
South	3.4	5.2	10.9	25.6	54.9	1.5	2.6	7.1	22.3	66.4
Southeast	2.4	6.9	11.4	23.9	55.4	1.2	3.3	9.3	22.1	64.1
Centrewest	1.7	5.2	9.2	20.4	63.5	1.6	1.6	5.1	19.4	72.3

[1]. First quintile is the poorest 20% of the population, fifth quintile is the richest 20%.
[2] Excludes the rural populations of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Para and Amapa.
[3] Excludes retired people receiving Government pensions, domestic employees, and families that do not declare income and wealth nor contribute to Income Taxation
[4] Excludes the rural population.

Source: IBGE, Diretoria de Pesquisas, Coordenacao de Populacao e Indicadores Sociais, Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios (PNAD) 2002/ Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Director of Research of population and Social Indicators of National research per Residence Sampling – 2002

as private education and health plans. The type of modernisation that Brazil has experienced was extremely selective (Souza, 2000). New technologies have been introduced, but at the same time social inequalities have not been addressed, leaving the majority of the population without a place in either the productive or political processes. For instance, while the private sector provides quality primary and secondary education, it is public funding, at the federal or state level, that is used to fund the country's best universities. The majority of students who pass the highly competitive exams for these institutions are those who have attended private schools. **See Table 5**.

Comparing the Northeast Region of Brazil, where the research was carried out, with the national average, we can see how the First quintile, that is the poorest 20% of the population, have limited access to secondary education, even in publicly funded institutions. In the Northeast region only 10% of the students come from the poorest 20% of the population compared to the national average of 12.9%. In private education there is an even greater rate of exclusion, for example in the Northeast Region only 1.7% of the students in secondary education are from the poorest fifth of the population compared to 2.4% nationally. If we look at tertiary education the access for the poorest 20% of the population is even lower. In the Northeast only 2.2% of the students at publicly funded institutions are from the first quintile of the population compared to the national average of 2.3%. At private universities the numbers are even lower with only 1.5 % of students in the Northeast region being from the poorest 20% of the population, which is slightly higher than the national average of 1.2%.

Another trend which the table reveals is the predominance of students in secondary education from the richest 20% of the population, at private institutions. Taking the percentage of students in secondary education at publicly funded institutions, starting from the first quintile and moving upwards, one notes the increasing proportion of students drawn from the richer sections of Brazilian society. This changes between the fourth and fifth quintiles, where the proportion drops from 26.5% to 15.1% on the national average. The counterpoint to this is that the percentage of students from richest 20% of

the population, at private institutions, increases dramatically, particularly in the Northeast Region of Brazil, between the fourth and fifth quintiles, that is from 15.3% to 73.5%. So the wealthier people are, the higher is the probability they will attend private secondary schools. In the case of the Northeast Region, of those students in secondary education at state funded institutions, 21.6% are from the richest 20% of the population whilst of the students attending private secondary schools, 73.5% are from the richest 20% of the population.

If we look at the disparity in access to tertiary education between the lower and higher quintiles of the population, the inequality is even more pronounced. For example, only 5.6% of the students at publicly funded universities in the Northeast Region are from the third quintile, compared to the 75.3% who are from the fifth quintile. The interviewees who took part in my research were probably from the third quintile of the population in terms of family income per capita, whereas the middle and upper class participants probably belong to the fifth quintile.

As we can see, the opportunities for working-class participants to get into university are still very low, but at the same time, the working-class participants of the research were quite privileged, given that in the Northeast of Brazil they make up 24.4% of students at state-funded institutions. Due to the limited access to university in Brazil the working-class students are well aware of the privilege attached to securing a place at university and a subsequent career.

The working-class Brazilian participants mentioned some recent policies which had brought about improvements in access to schools and universities for the poorest students. One of the programmes which had benefited these young people directly was the *Rumo à Universidade* or 'Route to University'. Even though the programme does not equip students for the Federal university entrance exam it does strengthen students' awareness of the subjects required in university entry exams[34]. Being confronted with a long history in which

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34 The students mentioned two policies recently implemented: *Bolsa-escola* (Scholarship-school), and *Rumo à Universidade* (Route to University). The first one consists of a scholarship provided by the Government for poor families, who send their children to school. The second relates to additional courses given to students at state schools who are in their last year of

manual and technical workers struggled to make ends meet, these young people tend to perceive the path towards higher education as a unique opportunity to enable them to escape from an environment of poverty and intense insecurity.

Apart from the prospect of a better salary, social status also legitimises the social hierarchy of a career. People with a university degree are popularly referred to by the title of 'Doctor', reinforcing the belief among the Brazilian working class that a university degree not only improves living conditions, but also brings with it respectability.

Respectability implies the possibility of being counted as a human being. One notes the importance of gaining respectability is very strong among the working-class, not only in Brazil, but also in England. The relationship between respectability and a sense of belonging to the working-class was emphasised by Hoggart (1957). Skeggs (1997) in her study on the formation of class and gender stressed the working-class hope of being considered respectable by others.

Education is highly valued and encouraged among poor families in Brazil. A common experience among the young working-class research participants is living with members of the extended family. Living with their grandparents, who are occasionally the homeowners, and sharing the expenses with other members of the family, such as uncles and aunts, increases the family income. This enabled the young people I interviewed to remain in education for longer. The majority of parents, who can benefit from the extended family financial arrangements, or who are able to earn at least twice the minimum wage, only expect their children to earn money upon completing their secondary education. The parents prefer to sacrifice the family's material conditions, for a while, in order to invest in their children's education.

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secondary school and who intend to apply for university. The additional classes takes place every Saturday and Sunday.

1.2 Career Perspectives: Moving across the different spaces of experience[35]

Although the degree of poverty and life opportunities differs greatly between Brazil and England, social structures such as class continue to shape life expectations in England. The majority of English people who live above the poverty line tend to live in a nuclear family context or with single parents. These parents are either homeowners or live in social housing. However, access to education and expectations of educational development differ greatly. Some of the English working-class interviewees were mature students who had taken part in government training schemes when they left school at the age of sixteen. These students opted to return to education and study A-levels because of a lack of satisfaction in their previous or present jobs. Even without a university degree a person is able to find a job in England, whereas in Brazil the lack of a degree increases considerably the probability of unemployment. This is not to say that education does not increase life-opportunities in England, but it is not central to finding a job.

Another aspect that has a significant effect on English students is the quality of schools and university options. Since schools attended tend to be determined in relation to home address (catchment area) people who live in the more affluent and privileged areas of Nottingham tend to have access to better schools. This research and others (Walkerdine, et.al 2001) show that there is a strong relationship between the school a person attends, the pressure regarding the performance towards A' level exams, and university choices. In Nottingham, working-class young people tend to attend comprehensive schools and the middle-class ones attend voluntary-aided schools or private schools, which are likely to have entry exams. Catholic Schools, for example, St. Joseph's, one of the institutions where I carried out this research, are likely to take students from outside their catchment areas.

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35 The term 'space of experience' is also used in Chapter 4. The term has been borrowed from Skeggs (1997) and it includes a person's location (the spatial dimension) and the social positioning of belongings, such as gender, social class, ethnicity, race, and national culture.

It is also important to highlight that the encouragement students receive towards educational attainment tends to differ across schools. Whereas the majority of schools attended by middle-class students emphasise the importance of the acquisition of communication skills, confidence, critical thinking and rationalisation of emotions (Walkerdine et al., 2001), working-class schools tend to be less concerned with these qualities, even their potential to achieve high grades in order to enter into the most academic and traditional universities. The young women participants, from Magdalene School, throughout the interviews, talked about the pressure of the school and its emphasis on getting top grades and aiming for places in old, traditional universities.

> Rick- Depends on what we get, doesn't it? I mean I would go anywhere that offers what I want to do (Nottingham College).
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> **
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> Bill- We have to make an effort not only to go to university, but go to a good and respectable one (St. Joseph's).
>
> **
>
> Joan- if you really want an academic course and a recognised institution, it's really hard if you drop a grade. To go to law school in a good institution depends on the grade you get (St. Joseph's).
>
> **
>
> Amanda- I think it's a bit unbalanced here. Because if we get a B, we think that we failed. Whereas all of my friends in other schools think that B is very good. You don't realise that you can still do well with 3 A' levels and a low grade like C. We have to get only As'. It's good in a way, but in other ways... (Magdalene School)

Rick says that he cannot choose a university and it 'depends on what we get'. His confidence in terms of his achievement in his exams is not as strong as the middle class students interviewed, as he states: 'I would go to anywhere that offers what I want to do'. I suggest that Rick is probably aware of the lower quality of his education, that it might have not provided him with the necessary qualifications required by traditional universities. In addition to Rick, all of the other working-class interviewees, perceived the fact that being accepted by any university is already a great accomplishment. A university degree is an expression of Rick's aspiration for a more enjoyable work experience, whereas, as narrated by Amanda, Joan, and Bill it is articulated positively only by accessing 'good, recognised and respectable institutions'. Bill is a black[36]

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[36] I have not stressed the skin colour of the other students because they have not mentioned it as something relevant to their educational performance, whereas Bill saw himself as being in a minority group in his school.

working-class student, who had the opportunity to study in a 'good school'. He points out the pressure at home and at school to get to a 'repectable university' for sport management, the course he wants to do, is very high. However, Bill does not mention, as Amanda and Joan do, the old traditional Universities, because his meaning of respectable is associated more with an institution that is at the top rank in his professional field. Bill says that the University of Loughborough is very good in his area of study, so if he is accepted there he will be happy. In the case of Amanda and Joan their 'configuration' of 'good and recognised universities' was less clear. Amanda focused on the pressure from school for their students to get as many A grades as they possibly can. Amanda recognises the emphasis on educational performance and top grades is 'unbalanced... if we get a B, we think that we failed, whereas all my friends in other schools think that B is very good... we have to get only A's'.

Attempting to make clear the need associated with so many A grades, I tried to understand the meaning associated with Joan's words such as 'an academic course and a recognised institution'. I encouraged my interviewees to define with other words the type of university they meant. The most illuminating response I obtained was 'the well recognised traditional universities'. By marking the field of cultural and social production/reproduction of the middle class interviewees, it is possible to observe that while they question the pressure and anxiety put on them by teachers and parents, they desire to attain their parents' privileged social positions. They believe that their routes become much more uncertain if they attend new universities, the old polytechnic institutions, rather than the traditional and top universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Warwick, the University of Edinburgh (its cultural atmosphere) and London School of Economics (LSE). Middle and upper middle-class students highlighted these universities as their favoured options. In fact, the participants interviewed from middle and upper middle-class backgrounds did not mention any options that were not from among the high ranking and traditional universities.

As we can note from Rick's narrative working-class educational institutions tend to focus less on educational performance. In general, education in schools is based on the needs of the middle and upper classes and it does not

acknowledge different local cultures, the needs of minorities and the working-class (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frosh et. al, 2001; Walkerdine et al., 2001). Working-class students along with some ethnic minorities are likely to attend an educational system completely dissociated from their abilities and the encouragement received at home (Walkerdine et al, 2001). This results in students dropping out of education as soon as they finish statutory education at sixteen years of age.

> Rick- I just hated school. I really didn't enjoy being told what to do. I ended up leaving school just before I was sixteen (Nottingham College).

As we can see from Rick's articulation school was far from a pleasant experience. One of his complaints is the fact that he 'really did not enjoy being told what to do'. We do not know what the relationship was between Rick and the school staff. Sometimes, with working-class children, this can be very patronising (Walkerdine et al, 2001).

Since experiences in schools express the 'modus vivendi' of the social group who attend them, all sorts of values, emotional codes and cultural tastes including those of career and university choices, are reproduced in visible and in hidden ways. The experience of feeling displaced in middle-class school surroundings is illustrated by one of the interviewees. Bill, who I have previously mentioned, lives in the Meadows, one of Nottingham's poorest neighbourhoods, and expressed his feeling of not being treated equally to 'middle-class students'. Like Brazilian working-class students, Bill has highlighted his experience in the process of configuring a relationship between career and 'respectability'. It is interesting to highlight that when Bill described the university he wanted to go to he made reference to a 'respectable' university. Bill's narratives are very marked by his need and hope for being considered a 'respectable person'.

> Bill- If I had the chances of getting an enjoyable and respectable job without going to university I would not even think of starting a university. But if you do not get into university you are unlikely to get an enjoyable job or the respect of people (St Joseph's).
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> **
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> Paulo- Minha família é uma família humilde, entende?! Se eu me destacar, eu posso ajudar minha família e construir minha nova família com uma força maior. Como universitário, já gente, bem sucedido, entendeu? Penso que tudo é difícil, mas se eu conseguir entrar na universidade, como consegui acabar o colégio, dali para frente tudo seria mais fácil (...). É claro que a luta agora é maior. **My family is from humble origins. If I extend my range of possibilities in comparison with my family and social background, I would help my family and build up a family of my own in a**

stronger position, like a university student, a REAL person, successful, do you understand? If I can go to university as I am just about to finish school the future will be easier... It is clear that the fight is now bigger (Dom João).

From the experiences of young working-class Brazilians and young members of minority ethnic communities in England, it makes sense to focus on the relationship between career and respect. Despite the struggle to make ends meet, working-class Brazilians are treated differently even by the penal system. For instance, Brazilians who have a university degree are entitled, by law, to have access to special jails even if they plead guilty. Working-class Brazilians feel they are often at disadvantage. In public health institutions they queue up for hours to make a medical appointment to be seen months later. The schools they attend are unable to provide the necessary education to prepare them for university exams. Relationships with the police are characterised by insecurity. Instead of counting on the police for protection, working-class people feel they are constantly being watched by them. This difference in treatment still impacts on working-class Brazilians, who have to confront bureaucratic institutions, and who are often treated without proper respect and consideration (Damatta, 1994).

In the process of emphasising careers my working class participants, for instance Paulo, often revisits and puts together painful past experiences in terms of surviving, along with expectations of the future as envisaged now. Paulo expresses his desire to become a 'real' person. He not only implicitly attaches to his narrative the feeling of having no guaranteed rights as a proper citizen, but also he feels deprived of humanity. Especially by belonging to a 'lower' social class, Paulo resents not being treated with respect. At the same time, he recognises his value and present achievement of finishing secondary education, while facing daily challenges. Having a tough and economically limited life does not prevent Paulo from aspiring to the happiness associated with becoming a university student. Paulo anticipates the experience of being a university student and of having the ability to help his family. He looks forward to having a family of his own in a stronger position, 'like a real person', and to making the future easier. Differently from Sennett's portrayal of contemporary societies, indelibly marked by unemployment and flexibility of work, Paulo envisages the possibility of having a career and improving the life of his family

and himself. Paulo illustrates that aspiration is mediated by past, present and the 'presentification' of expectations, impinging, shaping, and transforming the being of time (Ricoeur). Paulo hopes to gain respect by improving his social 'location' through education. In other words, he expects to be recognised as a worthy human being by sharing the middle-class privileges of investing in education and pursuing academic credentials.

Bill's narrative also highlights his feeling of inferiority, revealed by associating respect with the pursuit of a career. Being black and living in an area of the city in which children have low educational performance pressurises him to be constantly proving his abilities. Feeling displaced in his middle-class school may reinforce Bill's recognition that he is treated differently from other students.

Even if Simon and Fred, white English working-class participants made the link between gaining respect and the pursuit of a career, the hope for respectability has been much more emphasised by my working-class Brazilian participants, along with Bill[37]. Brazilians may articulate respectability and career more directly due to the low value of disenfranchised people's lives in their own country. Bill may also have made the link, because of the lower conditions of living that characterise the experiences of Blacks in Britain. However, this specific research did not allow me to analyse further the relationship between being part of an ethnic minority and the claim for respect. In Brazil, the official national 'discourse' of racial democracy, based on the miscegenation of whites, blacks, and Indians, as a pride of the nation, tends to dominate even among working-class participants. The 'racial democratic' discourse, sustained by the recognition of Brazilian' cultural richness, due to black, indigenous and white influences, has contributed to making the identification of the black population in Brazil with their African origins more dispersed. The recognition of Blacks in Brazil[38] and the relation to an African heritage has only been propagated relatively recently. Actually, the black movements have been responsible for this

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37 Bill was the only black student interviewed in England.

38 It is interesting to note that in Brazilian culture there is no such expression as Brazilian Blacks. The racial democracy discourse aimed to put all Brazilians together in the same category, including the idea that every Brazilian, even the ones of very white complexion and blue eyes, have black blood has been widely propagated (Freyre, 1957).

propagation. However, the black-African 'consciousness' has until now impacted more on two of the Brazilian big Capitals: Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. None of my working-class participants were black, but most were *pardo* – a general category, that refers in Portuguese, to different mixtures of racial heritage. Another aspect of the 'discourse of miscegenation' as examined in Chapter 5 is that it minimises physical and biological differences with intermediary categories, such as mullato (a 'hybrid' skin colour of whites and blacks); and 'cabaclo' (a mixture of white and indigenous). There are many intermediary categories of skin colour in Brazil, which makes the recognition of race difficult. Many people, who would be considered black in England, are recognised as 'mulatto' or from another skin colour category in Brazil. Some of my participants had dark skin, but they did not have other predominant physical features that are common among blacks and none of them identified themselves as black.

The participants in the research carried out in England who belonged to ethnic minorities were predominantly working-class with the exception of two Indian young women interviewed in Magdalene School. Suki expressed her desire to be a medical doctor and Nihla, a computer fashion designer. Neither Suki nor Nihla seemed to find themselves in a disenfranchised position in comparison with the white English young women. The differences that came up, throughout the interviews with them, were in relation to their parents' restrictions regarding boyfriends. Both of them said that their parents would not be happy if they started to go out with boys at their present age. They also emphasised their parents' preference for marrying inside the Indian community. I stress that the methodological approach in this thesis does not allow me to make generalisations. I can only analyse these examples as case studies. This means that I am not able to affirm to what extent Bill's feelings of lack of respect and discrimination that he associated with being black is linked to him being black and/or his working class conditions. Allison, who is a white English young woman from working-class background, studying at Nottingham College, also finds herself disenfranchised in relation to the middle and upper class English. She works at a supermarket and is not sure if she will have the money to afford university fees even if she is offered a place. The fact is that 'belonging to an ethnic community' and being 'working-class' are embedded in ways that make

any *'disentanglement[39]'* impossible, unless the thesis had centralised its discussion on the differences between 'white English' from the working-class and members from ethnic minorities from working- class backgrounds. The fact is that many of the disadvantages faced by members of ethnic minorities are embedded in other disenfranchised positions associated with class structure (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Another thing that can be said is that certainly the extreme conditions of poverty and social inequality in Brazil ensure that the 'lacks', the 'absences' in Brazilian life are constantly present in young people's articulations. However, even if some Brazilian participants interviewed, particularly those from working-class backgrounds emphasised the existence of prejudices against blacks in the Northeast of Brazil, none of them discussed race relations.

By referring to the 'entanglement' of racial and ethnic disadvantages with being working-class I am not claiming that, for example, blacks in Brazil and in England do not have worse life-opportunities than white working-class people. **Table 6** clearly shows that salaries are differentiated by ethnicity across all Brazilian regions. We can see that there is a difference in terms of access to higher salaries among white, black and other ethnic communities, such as 'mulatto' and 'cabloco' in Brazil. In all regions of Brazil, the average family income of young people, from 15-24 years old, per capita, among whites is higher in comparison to that of blacks and others racial groups. The average family income, per capita, expressed as multiples of the minimum wage, of young people in the 15 to 24 age group in the Northeast of Brazil, is 0.82, whereas among whites it is 1.21 and among blacks and other racial groups it

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39 As stated by Furlong and Cartmel (1997) the analysis of the impact of 'race' on the life experiences of young people is complex because many of the disadvantages faced by members of ethnic minorities are consequences of their position within the class structure . In agreement with Miles (in Furlong and Cartmel, 1997) racism is part of a wider structure of class advantage and exclusion.

Table 6. Family Income per capita by race: Brazil

REGIONS OF BRAZIL	Family Income per Capita[3] (multiples of the minimum wage)		
	Total	White	Blacks and Others
Brasil[1]	**1,46**	**1,99**	**0,90**
North[2]	1,11	1,57	0,96
Northeast	*0,82*	*1,21*	*0,65*
South	1,76	1,91	0,99
Southeast	1,83	2,27	1,13
Centre-West	1,67	2,30	1,22

[1] Excluded rural population of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Para and Amapa. [2] Excluded rural population [3] figures are for family income per capita for 15-24 year olds only.

Source: Waiselfisz et al., (2004): pp 94.

is 0.65. In Pernambuco, the state where this empirical research took place, the figure for the whole of the 15-24 age-group is 0.88, for white young people the figure is 1.22 while for black young people the figure is only 0.65 (Waiselfisz et al., 2004). Table 6 clearly shows that the economic condition of non-whites in Brazil is worse than that of the white population.

Table 7. Permanent exclusion rates and ethnicity: England

2001/02

England	Rate[1] per 10,000 pupils
Black Caribbean	42
Black other	36
Black African	16
White	14
Bangladeshi	11
Pakistani	10
Indian	3
Chinese	3
Other ethnic group	20

[1] The number of permanent exclusions per 10,000 pupils (headcount) in each ethnic group in primary, secondary and special schools (excluding dually registered pupils in special schools) for compulsory school age and above.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Departments for Education and Skills.

In England the reduced life-opportunities among the Black communities are illustrated in relation to the permanent exclusion rates in primary, secondary and special schools. **See Table 7**. As we can observe the highest exclusion rates are concentrated among the various Black ethnic groups. The Black

Caribbean has a permanent exclusion rate of 42, the Black other has a figure of 36, and the Black African of 16. All of the Black categories have higher rates of exclusion when compared to White. However, the rates among the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, and Chinese ethnic groups are all lower than that of White.

Table 8. Gender Related Development Index: Brazil and UK

COUNTRIES	GDI		Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%) 2000-01		Estimated earned income (PPP US$) 2001		HDI rank minus GDI rank
	Rank	Value	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Brazil	58	0.770	97	93	4,391	10,410	0
UK	11	0.928	119	105	18,180	30,476	2

Source: UNDP/ Human Development Report 2003

Differences in life-opportunities are also present between genders. Both in Brazil and in the UK, even though the percentage of access to primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio among women is higher than among men, the estimated earned income does not follow the same tendency. 97% of Brazilian women are enrolled in primary, secondary or in tertiary education, whereas only 93% of men are. In the UK the figures are 119% for women and 105% for men. There are higher numbers of females in education than men. However, in terms of estimated earning men tend to get higher salaries. Women in Brazil earn on average US$ 4,391, whereas the men earn US$ 10,410. In England, women earn on average US$18,180 while men on average earn US$30,476. In both countries then, women earn less than men. The gender development index in the UK is much higher than in Brazil. The UK occupies the 11th position in the world, whereas Brazil is at the 58th position. However, in the UK, the Gender development index is still lower than its Human Development Index, because when the HDI is subtracted from the GDI, the human development index has a surplus of 2 points.

The tables above show that life-opportunities in terms of access to education, access to university and earned income vary according to social class, ethnicity and gender in both England and Brazil.

1.3 Career as the Working-Class Aspiration

The route to university in Brazil remains profoundly upper/middle class. Despite the availability of a more efficient welfare state and the possibility of earning well as a skilled manual worker in England, as expressed by Rick, a career is still associated with the habitus of the middle and upper classes.

> Rick-The only reason that I came to college was just to try to have a better life, a job I enjoy. For me to have a career is a way of being more satisfied with what I will be doing, because I had jobs before and I was well paid, but I hated those jobs. Now, I just want to do something that I really enjoy which is science, so for me money is not the most important thing anyway (Nottingham College).

This suggests that amongst the English working-class research participants career is not related to the representation of a completely different life, as it is the case of the Brazilians' working-class narratives, as Paulo has expressed before in this chapter: 'I would help my family and build up a family of my own in a stronger position, like a university student, a REAL person'. For Rick a career has more to do with 'a better life and a job'. It is a way of 'being more satisfied with what I will be doing' rather than the money he will be earning. He had previous jobs before that paid well, but he 'hated' those. Even if a career in Rick's articulation is not intrinsically related to the expectation of higher salaries than his past jobs, his description of his career expectations fits well with what has been described in the beginning of this chapter in terms of career. Career requires an investment and is more related to people's abilities and interests in life than jobs.

With regard to the association of careers with enjoyable ways of living, both Brazilians and English from working-class backgrounds highlighted the connection between a career and pleasure and fulfilment. The possibility of going to university brings into contact the world of identification with what a person is doing, entertainment, and wider perspectives of living. The majority of my interviewees from Brazil and England described the images of middle class life-styles. These tend to evoke desires for a nice house, a car, a 'respectable' job, financial security, and leisure time to be spent by 'travelling around'.

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Engaging with other aspects of middle-class habitus, in terms of transcending the need to earn a living, working class Brazilians developed their images of a career by marking the significance of their lives as human beings, whereas the English working-class participants focus on a career as more involved with their daily life necessities, as a means of enjoying their work activities more and deal with the more concrete 'absences' of their present lives. It is important to point out that for the young Brazilians I interviewed the concrete possibility of having a higher education degree is still very much idealised.

> Antonio- Se eu não tiver uma profissão, eu não vou ser nada na vida. Quando eu morrer, não vou deixar nada que fique. Eu quero plantar algo que fique na memória dos outros. **If I don't have a profession I'll be a nobody. When I die I will not leave anything that remains. I want to plant something that lasts in people's memories** (Dom João).
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> Rick- We don't want only to be struggling really. I left school and started to work. I had jobs that I haven't enjoyed, so I just want to get a better job (…) yeah. The only reason I came to college was just to try to have a better life, a job I enjoyed (Nottingham College)

Antonio's account emphasisis the same desire for having his values and strengths identified, and of being counted as a human being, as Paulo stressed in the earlier fragment of narrative. By being in the world, experiencing the low value and lack of recognition of his present life, Antonio sees himself as nobody that really matters. From his strong and powerful feeling that expresses the limitation of his life experience in the world, Antonio alludes to his expectation of making his life 'remain in people's memories'. He feels this because in his present life he does not 'exist' as a meaningful and an interesting person. He feels the need to build something meaningful enough to remain alive. Rick narrates an account that portrays his daily experience of 'struggling', without constructing something that really matters to him and others. He seems to be living by restricting his range of possibilities, by not experiencing fully the meaning of being in the world. Both participants relate a career to possibilities of breaking with the tiring, and overwhelming daily routine of making a living. From their 'configurations' careers lead to the more inventive and significant aspects of living. They also offer possibilities of giving meaning to their lives, allowing them to be valued by both themselves and others. They feel that a career strengthens the recognition of their capacity, autonomy and creativity.

Carlos-Com uma carreira você pode fazer algo com personalidade própria, coisa bem dinâmica. **With a career you can do something which will express your own personality, and have a very dynamic life** (Dom João).

As Carlos mentions, investment in a career is very much identified as an opportunity to build a sense of autonomy, linked to the idea of a person with his own identity, plans and ideals. When Carlos refers to doing 'something which will express your own personality' it seems that he is saying that he wants to be counted as a self included in social contexts, and not as a self that disappears and is overwhelmed by external social and economic structures. He wants to have a dynamic life, but what does that mean? Maybe, he is trying to say that he wants to feel his existence as a subject who plays an active role in his surrounding context, which involves his space of experience. Though illustrated from a different perspective, the desire to be respected as a person who exists and matters is again expressed. This desire to be respected as a human being makes complete sense, especially if we look at Carlos' and Antonio's articulations of their narratives. By living in a social group in which life depends deeply on a struggle for survival, the working-class young people I interviewed found that the sense of being an individual, a self-ego that turns into a subject, becomes very blurred. As a career is constructed from a person's talents, abilities, self-confidence and self-respect, it tends to reinforce conditions for differentiation and autonomy.

As careers are presented in terms of positive transforming experiences for the working-class participants, the tension between frustration and fulfilment that takes place in the process of establishing a career is not emphasised or anticipated by them.

2. Routes towards careers in the light of ambiguities: Middle-Class patterns

Differently from working-class participants, Brazilians and English from middle and upper class backgrounds tend to perceive the pursuit of a career as a certainty. However, for them, there is no possibility of finding a reasonably paid job without the possession of a degree. These young people are unable to envisage a future life without a university education. As investment in education is perceived by middle and upper class parents as the most valuable gift they

can give their children, young people are likely to feel the pressure associated with the need to study.

> Eduardo- ... e a minha mãe não quer que o computador seja para jogar e sim para estudar. Ela fica falando que não me vê estudar e fica nervosa. E isso irrita. **My mother does not accept the use of the computer for games. It is only to be used for studying. She keeps saying that she does not see me studying and gets on edge. This upsets me** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Joe- We don't actually have leisure time. Our leisure time is doing schoolwork (St. Joseph's School).

As we can observe, dedication towards studying is seen by parents as playing one of the most important roles in young people's daily routines. Eduardo feels frustrated about the lack of freedom to do whatever he wishes. Joe complains about the fact of not having leisure time. It seems that schoolwork consumes all the free time he has. The other activities young people may be allowed to engage in, throughout the interviews with other middle and upper class participants both in England and in Brazil, were articulated as dependent on school achievement. Even if both middle and upper class English and Brazilians feel pressured to obtain high results in A-levels and in the Vestibular respectively, the perception of a career tends to be differentiated among them in relation to presence or lack of constraints, and social barriers.

> Eduardo- Eu sei das minhas obrigações com o estudo. Minha mãe vive fora de casa é por isso que ela não me vê estudando. Faço muitos cursos, além do colégio, e preciso de um tempo livre. Ela parece que esquece o quanto é duro se matar de estudar, ver que o seu tempo de jovem está passando e você, talvez, acabe com um emprego nada a ver. **I know my obligations in terms of studying. My mother most of the time is not at home and because of this she doesn't see me studying. I do a lot of courses besides the school and I need free time. She seems to have forgotten how hard it is to study, seeing that your life as a young person is passing and you may end up with a job that doesn't fulfil you** (Colégio São Francisco).

Eduardo articulates the typical conflict faced by the Brazilian middle and upper class young people. They recognise their 'obligations in terms of studying', since they are aware of how difficulty it is to get a reasonably paid job without a university education. However, they know about the frustrations involved in the process of developing a career in Brazil, through their parents, cousins and other relatives' experience. The ambiguity of studying hard, dedicating almost all of one's time to study, whilst feeling unsure about work opportunities in the future, made the research participants feel very frustrated. As Eduardo says 'my life as a young person is passing and you may end up with a job that doesn't fulfil you'. On the one hand, a career leads to the realisation of one important

aspect of a person's life: the possibility of enjoying the work and of being competent in the field. On the other hand, these interviewees see the choice of a career as something that is deeply linked to youthful idealism rather than realistic practicalities. They mentioned the fact of spending years dedicated to a field of work, doing specialisations in postgraduate study, and being unable to work in their professional field with security. This social group tends to perceive a career as fundamental and necessary, especially in terms of non-materialistic satisfaction in life, but far from assuring financial independence. They stress the need to specialise and to make the effort of becoming one of the best, but also to keep themselves up-to-date with current affairs and other opportunities of self-improvement. Among these participants the idea that is widely disseminated is the need for expanding knowledge. This means that the more knowledge a person retains across different fields the better it is.

> Daniel- carreira é um aspecto importante da vida. É a possibilidade de trabalhar na área que gosta e contribuir, atuar competentemente. No entanto, você tem que se especializar, saber cada vez mais da sua área, sem se descuidar do que está acontecendo ao seu redor. Você pode acabar tendo que trabalhar numa área completamente diferente da que você sonhou. **A career is an important aspect of life. It opens the possibility of working in the field a person likes and of contributing competently. Although a person needs to specialise and know more about the area, a person has to be aware of what is happening in his/her surroundings. Everybody may end up working in an area completely different from what they dreamt of** (São Francisco).

Daniel's approach seems to be very much based on life-experiences. It is very common to go to a university, specialise in one discipline and end up finding a job in a completly different field. The relevant aspect to stress here is that, even though Daniel is aware of the difficulties of finding a job in one's own subject area in Brazil, he still articulates a career as 'an important aspect of life' that 'opens the possibility of working in the field a person likes and of contributing competently'. At the same time that Daniel has a very 'realistic' appraisal of his living conditions and the difficulties of reconciling a career with a job opportunity, he remains committed to investing in a career. For him the crucial aspect is not to reduce a person's education in the field of career development, but also to be 'aware of what is happening in his/her surroundings'. This narrative actually opposes Sennet's pessimistic view about the end of careers (1998). He did not emphasise that difficult times may open up new alternatives (expanding the field of knowledge), instead of restricting the elements that

compose life. The perspective pointed out by Daniel seems to be true, particularly in an environment that is already marked by numerous limitations and risks. Risk is evoked by Daniel as impacting on daily life, due to violence, unemployment, poverty, and so forth, not as a generalised structural feature of modernity (Beck, 1992).

Middle and upper class Brazilians tend to incorporate into their narratives the contradictions of reality and dreams. Being aware of their parents' struggle to maintain a good standard of living even when recognised as qualified professionals, they allude to the false status of having a career in Brazil. At the same time, they reproduce their parents' encouragement that a person always has space if he/she becomes one of the best in the field of study.

> Alexandre- Você se forma coloca o seu anel no dedo, pega o canudo para casa e pode levar um canudo. **You graduate, put the ring on your finger, take the diploma home and can remain with it (in your hands).** [This reference has a connotative meaning in Portuguese, expressing the fact that you may end up unemployed] (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
> Andreza- É porque não pode, pelo menos isso é o que eu vejo com meus pais. Não basta ser bom tem que ser o melhor. **It is not possible…at least this is what I see with my parents. We cannot be only competent, we have to be one of the best** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
> Daniel -Em muitas dessas profissões universitárias o mercado está saturado. Você até pode se sair bem, mas tem que ser o tampa. **In many of these professional careers the labour market is already saturated. Thus, you can be successful, but you must be the expert** (Colégio São Francisco).

It is important to note that even if a career is not perceived as a secure route to financial independence in Brazil, it is very desirable. The cultural value to the middle class of gaining and creating knowledge can only be reproduced by working towards a career and intellectual investment. The challenge of struggling to become 'an expert', 'one of the best', as Andreza and Daniel said, in young people's field of competence may not prevent downward mobility (Sennet, 1998), but it does help to maintain the middle class habitus in terms of knowledge idealisation. Career is still not only desirable, but it is associated with the pressure of demonstrating a person's ability and competence.

With regard to the middle and upper middle-class English participants they tend to be much more optimistic in relation to the opportunities available for people with high educational credentials. They perceive hardwork and the pressure of

A-level exams as likely to be rewarded by future success. Actually some of the participants even said that the most difficult challenge consists of getting good A level results rather than establishing a career.

> Lucy- There is a lot of competition out there. People say that A-levels are the hardest exams you go through, because once you go to a well-recognised university I think it's meant to tail off a bit (St Joseph School).

Since Lucy sees career success in much more concrete and feasible ways, a career becomes dependent upon a person's commitment and interest. The various pathways available, reinforced by the great possibilities of investment received both through schooling and upbringing, strengthen these participants' belief that challenges are overcome by individuals' ability. From this perspective the image of a self-made individual, propagated through theories of life-styles and consumerism, has much higher impact. The English middle and upper middle-class young people are likely to believe that they can build their lives in the ways they anticipate by investing in hard work.

> Juliet-The thing is to work as hard as you can. Of course you are going to get there (St. Joseph's School).
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> Joan- Young British people are working themselves into the ground, because we all know that a career is a person's main role in life until they are 30 (St. Joseph's School).

From the perspectives of Juliet and Joan of 'working as hard as you can', there is no need to adjust desire and reality in relation to professional ambitious. Not feeling handicapped by limitations or barriers reinforces these young women's motivation to invest fully in ambitious acquisitions of academic qualifications. They seem to be prepared to 'work themselves into the ground at least until they are 30'. For these middle and upper middle-class English participants, careers are a means to independence, self-assurance and financial security. In addition, for young women, the emphasis on a successful career reinforces their assertive abilities in overcoming female secondary roles in the labour market, at least in terms of earning (see Table 8 in this chapter), by reaffirming their primary engagement with the labour market.

> Joan- The role of the female today is to have some success in a professional career before having a family. I think that this is the compromise (St Joseph's).

Joan's articulation is commonly found among English middle and upper middle-class young women. They seem to have made up their minds to postpone having a family until they are established in the labour market. It is important for

these young women to develop a career as a means of fulfiling their cultural tastes, participating in decision making and strengthening the recognition of women as professionals. By becoming competent professionals they may consolidate women' space in the labour market, not in secondary jobs, but as privileged and high status workers. In certain ways, these young women rationalise their emotional needs in order to enter the professional space that was previously a male preserve.

3. The Process of Deciding upon Careers

The process of deciding upon a career requires the articulation by young people of general perceptions of careers in their space of experience, including the awareness of their subjectivities, as individuals with specific needs to be fulfiled. For example, since middle and upper class Brazilians are more likely to feel uncertain about their future work lives, they are less prepared to accept delayed gratification than are English middle and upper middle-class participants. Referring to their parents' experiences Brazilians state that the drive towards a career can be more overwhelming and stressful than pleasant. Although they tend to perceive a career as central in their lives, the pursuit of this appears entangled with their need for family support. For Brazilians, especially in the Northeast of the country, where the extended family remains very important, the developing process into adulthood is not centrally based on emotional autonomy[40]. The path towards development is much more linked to an individual's capacity to construct emotional interactions than to emotional 'independence'. The strong identity with home and family tends to support people in dealing with the insecurity of the outside world.

Differently from Sennett's (1998) relationship between the flexibility of work and the fragmentation of family ties, Brazilians, in discussing their work lives and perceiving a completely non-predictable future, tend to emphasise their enduring and meaningful family ties.

> Márcio- O que fica faltando seria a minha família. Mesmo depois de casado, gostaria de estar morando na mesma cidade dos meus pais. Nesse começo de vida eu acho que meus pais seriam muito importantes. Eu não tenho a mínima idéia de como vai ser a minha vida quando acabar a universidade, mas precisaria dos meus pais. **What would be missing is my family. Even after marriage, I would like to live in the**

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40 This aspect of emotional autonomy in relation to independence is discussed in Chapter 4.

same city as my parents. In my life as an adult I think my parents would still be very important. I don't have any idea of how my life will be when I finish university, but I will need to be with my parents (Colégio São Francisco).

Márcio's fragment of narrative reproduces his hope of being close to his parents in order to count on their support. It seems since the world of work is very uncertain, Márcio wants to be assured of at least one thing, being near his parents. Although Márcio finds it very difficult to envisage his future life after finishing the university, he is certain that the support of his parents, his 'need to be with my parents', is central to his expectation of life.

As we are going to see in the next chapter, interactions with family members shape people's daily routine in Brazil. The desire for close relationships with family members has been expressed by all the Brazilians interviewed. This wish is included in the narratives of young people, who did not have the 'traditional' nuclear mode of family, and were brought up by single mothers. The majority of the Brazilians I interviewed have their extended family living in Recife. These young Brazilians feel very tied up with their parents, their family life and its surroundings, and express their desires to live near their families, throughout their adulthood, as Márcio highlighted. The hope to remain living in their home city tends to reflect upon career choices. Instead of choosing mobile, flexible careers, they are keen on investing in careers that can be developed and established in their own locality. Living abroad is only considered as a short-term investment in language, knowledge and professional development.

It has been always very common for Brazilians from middle and upper class backgrounds, especially in the Northeast of Brazil, to follow similar careers to their parents, generally traditional and privileged careers such as law and medicine. Having a law degree in Brazil allows one to compete for higher paid and more stable jobs in the public sector across wider areas of knowledge, including the possibility of becoming a high public official in the judiciary system. For this reason a great number of middle and upper class recent undergraduates in law remain out of the labour market for at least two years, studying full-time, in order to guarantee a place in the public sector. A medical career, besides its social status and humanitarian aspects, is associated with greater employment opportunities not only in Recife, but also across other regions of the state.

It is important to mention that the labour market, especially in the Northeast of Brazil, is much more limited than either the South or the Southeast of the country. External investment in Brazilian industry is much more likely to occur in these wealthier regions of the country. By noting the limited possibilities of developing a non-traditional career, some parents, particularly well known professionals, expect their children to choose their parents' careers and work with them as a team.

> Marcela- Minha mãe e meu padrasto são dentistas com uma clínica. Eles dizem que se eu quiser fazer odontologia já é meio caminho a dado. Mas, eu não estou interessada não. Já me acho muito dependente da minha mãe e preciso conquistar minha vida profissional. **My mother and my step-father are dentists and own their own clinic. They say that if I decided to do dentistry I will be half of the way through. But, I am not interested. I think I am already too dependent upon my mother and I need to succeed in my own professional life** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Alexandre -Meu pai vive dizendo que o sonho dele é me ver trabalhando com ele, mas você trabalhar na fábrica do seu pai... quero trabalhar numa coisa minha, entendeu? E o tipo de coisa que para mim vai ser melhor é não trabalhar com ele, porque não quero me acomodar tanto. **My dad keeps saying that his dream is to see me working with him, but to work at the industry of my father...I want to work with something which is mine, do you understand? This is the kind of thing that for me... it is better not working with him, so I do not take things for granted** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Daniel- Olha, tudo para meu pai é estudo. Ele é médico, muito bem sucedido .... Eu não ... tenho prazer de estudar. Eu estudo para passar e muitas vezes eu não passo, mas é basicamente isso. Ele queria que eu fosse médico e trabalhasse com ele, mas não quero isso. **See everything for my father is related to study. He is a doctor, and very successful ... I don't get pleasure from studying. I study to pass my exams and many times I failed, but it is basically like this. He wants me to be a doctor and work with him, but I don't want this** (Colégio São Francisco).

Indeed, for Marcela, Alexandre and Daniel it is very important to chose a career in which their parents, who have established names in their professional fields and secure private businesses, do not interfere. On the one hand, these participants recognise their lives would probably be much easier in relation to material conditions if they did what their parents expected. According to Marcela's parents if she opted to become a dentist, she would be 'half of the way through'. On the other hand, feeling already too dependent on family support, the establishment of a career, as stated by Marcela and Alexandre, encourages them to search for their independence from family practical help. Feeling already 'too dependent upon my mother', Marcela feels the need to build something through her own efforts in order to allow herself to recognise her achievements in establishing a career. Alexandre feels that if he goes to

work for his father, he may end up satisfied, but without challenges in his life. He stresses in a very categorical way his desire to 'work with something which is mine'. It seems to mean a lot to him to work on something that he himself is able to implement. For middle and upper class Brazilians the development of a person's career is related to self-assurance and persistently investing in personal abilities, in spite of economic upheavals and uncertainties.

Although middle and upper class Brazilians still desire to engage in traditional professions[41], and since traditional careers do not often guarantee financial security, contemporary young Brazilians seek a closer relationship between career options and personal satisfaction. Daniel, along with other middle and upper class interviewees, rejects the possibility of adopting a career with which he does not identify. One of the most fundamental aspects highlighted by this social group is their personal identification with the professional field in terms of studying and the daily practice of the career. In this context, young people, by knowing they will have to face uncertainty and insecurity in the labour market, are prioritising personal satisfaction in terms of fulfilment and creativity, rather than centralising their careers on the basis of social status. However, deciding upon taking a risk in a non-established field, instead of accepting parents' social and material capital (Bourdieu, 1986), presents conflicts and ambiguities.

> Luís- Eu vou fazer música. Quando estou tocando me dá um sentimento de liberdade, de que a vida não tem fronteiras. Quando eu faço música eu boto para fora o que eu sinto. Não é uma coisa só mecânica. É um processo de inovação criativa que também mexe com a alma. Eu me sinto presente naquilo que estou fazendo. **I will do music. When I am playing I feel free, as if life did not have frontiers. When I create music I put out what I feel internally. It is not a mechanical thing. It is a process of creative innovation that touches the soul. I feel connected with what I am doing** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Eduardo- Eu vou fazer engenharia da computação ou ciência da computação, devido ao meu interesse por computadores. Eu gosto de computador e tenho facilidade de aprender. Eu escolhi essa profissão porque se identifica comigo e eu não suportaria fazer o que eu não gosto. Eu não sei como vai ser minha vida como adulto, só sei que eu quero ter prazer no que eu fizer no meu trabalho. **I will do Computer engineering or computer science, because of my interest in computers. I like computers and I have skills with them. I have chosen this profession because I identify with it. I could not even think of doing something I don't like. I don't know how my adult life will be. The only thing I know is that I want to have pleasure in what I have to do in my work** (Colégio São Francisco).

41This can be verified by the highest competitive rates that persist for many consecutive years to enter into courses such as law and medicine in the local Federal University (UFPE).

Among middle and upper class Brazilians, career decisions are connected to personal identification with specific abilities and fulfilment. Indeed, Brazilians across all social classes seem keen on doing activities that touch them as humans, by transcending the mere economic conditions of living. The significant differences among them are the ways they negotiate the limitations, as we are going to see in the next section of this chapter. Eduardo shows, in his fragment of narrative, that his identification with computers intensifies his feeling of 'pleasure in what (he has) to do' when working with them. Enthusiasm and pleasure are key aspects in Eduardo's configuration of career. Luís embraces a feeling of freedom, 'as if life did not have frontiers'. By doing music, Luís feels completely free to create and innovate not only his work, but also his soul. According to Luís doing music, creating it, 'touches the soul'. Both Luís and Eduardo configure their careers as productive processes that impact on their personal and professional lives.

By identifying with the practice of caring for others, the greater part of Brazilian female participants from working and middle/upper class backgrounds choose caring professions in the field of health. The majority of the Brazilian females emphasise the need to do something that allows a frequent interaction with people. Focusing on interacting with people and being keen to help people overcome limitations, young Brazilian middle class females refer to careers such as physiotherapy and psychology, while young females from the working class mention their desire to be nurses.

> Marcela- Eu quero fazer fisioterapia ortopédica para ajudar pessoas que sofrem acidentes e perdem os movimentos a se recuperarem. Deve ser muito gratificante se realizar ajudando alguém. **I want to do physiotherapy to help people who have suffered accidents and lost their movements to recover. It should be gratifying to become a professional by helping people** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Carla - Eu sou concentrada e cuidadosa e quero fazer algo que tenha a ver com crescimento e desenvolvimento das pessoas. Senti que o que faço tem um impacto na melhoria de vida dos outros. Por isso penso que gostaria de fazer fisioterapia ou psicologia. **I am caring as a person, then I want to do something related to people's growth and development. I want to feel that what I do has an impact on improving the life of others** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **

> Silvana-... pelo fato de mexer com o ser humano me fascina. O fato de conhecer melhor o ser humano, de tocar. Se eu fosse enfermeira, saber que aquele ser humano depende um pouco de mim, eu fico fascinada com isso. **The fact of dealing with human beings fascinates me. The fact of knowing people's needs better, being in contact with people who have needs... If I were a nurse only the fact of knowing that a human being depends on me would fascinate me** (Colégio Dom João).

We can observe how the meanings behind a career transcend financial earnings and the preoccupation imposed by the labour market of reducing working hours and increasing productivity. These young women associated a career with their desire to help others, and to participate in 'people's growth and development', as stated by Carla. By looking at Silvana's articulation of narrative it is possible to understand her reference to 'knowing that a human being depends on me' in terms of her emotional needs. Her father abandoned her mother before Silvana was born. Her mother thought of giving her up for adoption, but Silvana's grandparents did not allow this to happen. For Silvana it is very meaningful to feel that somebody needs her, values her, and may depend on her. From her space of experience, being valued by others strengthens her security in her own self. Marcela focuses on how it would be gratifying to become 'a professional, by helping people'. Not only Carla and Marcela, but also other middle-class young women I interviewed feel that by choosing these professions they can be more active in dealing in practical terms with social inequality. As these young women realise their privileges in life in relation to the majority of the Brazilian population, they express throughout their fragment of narratives their plans for working in both public and private health centres. Intersections between personal choices and social problems happened frequently through the narratives of the Brazilian participants, especially, females who chose caring professions. The strong association of caring careers with women's professional choices probably expresses, even if only unconsciously, the traditional roles historically played by females. Practices of looking after, treating and caring are linked to notions of motherhood and femininity.

There are many elements configured in association with a career. Marcela and Carla aspire in their careers to the possibility of helping others and feeling more committed to social practices. Silvana goes beyond the process of caring and searching for emotional fulfilment through her relations with patients. Manoel, the only male to choose a caring profession, sees psychology not only as an extension of his pastoral work at his local church undertaken in his daily life, but also as a route to help others as a lay person. Manoel is still in doubt whether he wants to become a priest and/or a psychologist. At the time of the interview

he was very concerned at this conflict. He wanted to discover whether he had the vocation to be a priest and adopt celibacy or not.

> Manoel - É justamente assim... quero entender o comportamento das pessoas, a história de vida, para tentar ajudar. A minha profissão de psicólogo se comunica com o meu trabalho da pastoral. Além disso, tenho que decidir meu discernimento vocacional. Se quero assumir o celibato e viver para a missão. Não é que seja uma congregação das tradicionais. Ela é mais encarnada na vida, interagir com a miséria nas ruas, tentar ajudar, acolher, esse é o carisma da congregação. É despojar-se de tudo e seguir um caminho. Isso também inclui o celibato. **It is just like this I want to understand people's behaviour, their life histories, to try to help them. My profession as a psychologist connects with my pastoral work and my decision as to whether I want to become a priest or not. I know that I have to identify my vocation in life and discover if I want to adopt celibacy and live for a mission. It would not be a traditional congregation. It would be more incarnate in life, interacting with the misery in the streets, trying to help, and embrace people. This is the charisma of the congregation. It is to disconnect from everything and follow a path that may include celibacy** (Dom João).

Manoel's career combines his desire for knowing and understanding people's history and engaging with missions that may appease misery and human suffering. As he says he wants to follow a path, a career that is 'incarnate in life, interacting with the misery in the streets, trying to help and embrace people'. He wants to follow a path that allows him to confront human frailty and support them. Psychology represents a possibility for him to re-figure his desire to help others without having to confront celibacy, in case he does not have the vocation to become a priest.

At the same time that a career is determined by factors other than practical ones, it is not chosen only on individuals' likes and dislikes in life. Upper and middle-class young people tend to opt for careers that are socially recognised. They tend to avoid uncertain career routes. Although we saw the example of Luís, who decided to become a musician (a difficult route to follow in Recife) he relies on the experience and network of his father, who is already a university professor in the field of music. Márcio, by being aware of the limited opportunities in the field of traditional engineering, civil, mechanical, and electronic, in Recife, decided to invest in a new high technology form of engineering. He decided to take the risk of doing 'megatronic', a combination of electronics and robotics. Márcio manages to cope with the risk of doing 'megatronics', because he foresees a possibility of becoming an independent consultant in case there are not work opportunities.

It is important to stress that middle and upper class Brazilians do not tend to choose a career completely disregarding the status associated with it. For example, both physiotherapy and psychology are associated with caring for people, but nursing is also a caring profession. However, none of the middle and upper classes young women's research participants chose to be nurses. The difference is that, among upper and middle class people, the type of caring provided by nurses is seen as occurring under medical supervision, in other words, nursing is perceived as a less autonomous field. Besides, nurses are unlikely to be well paid. These aspects may explain the reasons why none of the middle and upper class participants, though wishing to work in helping people to recover, have chosen to be nurses.

The tension between identifying with the field of work and neglecting the more traditional careers is not resolved. Brazilian middle-class participants, spontaneously, introduced in their narratives their reasons for not having chosen medicine.

> Marcela-Quero ajudar as pessoas que sofreram acidentes a voltar a andar. Fisioterapia é uma alternativa para medicina, pois eu não me acostumaria ver as pessoas morrendo. **I am going to do physiotherapy to help people who had suffered accidents to walk again. It is an alternative for medicine because I cannot cope with the fact of seeing people dying** (Colégio São Francisco).

> Alexandre -Tenho amigos meus que estão fazendo administração e outros que estão fazendo medicina, eu comparo uma coisa com a outra. Os que estão fazendo administração conseguem juntar tudo numa coisa só, os estudos, as responsabilidades com o trabalho, o lazer, mas o médico não. Medicina é muito assim é como eu disse precisa muito de você. Tem que estudar muito para medicina. Eu quero fazer o seguinte ter minhas responsabilidades na faculdade, responsabilidade no trabalho, entendeu? Responsabilidade de me divertir, entendeu? **I have friends doing administration and others who are doing medicine. Then I compare people who are doing administration and they manage to balance everything, the studies, and responsibility when they are working as a trainee, and leisure. But doctors no way. Medicine is very much like this. It is like I said you have to study very hard. And I want to do the following: to have responsibility in the faculty, responsibility in my work, do you know what I mean? The opportunity of having fun...** (Colégio São Francisco).

Middle and upper-class Brazilians, by having to adapt to the tension of 'performing' in traditional careers or choosing something they identify as fulfilling stress the insecurities that impact on their parents' work life. These young people tend to be very much aware of the fact that some careers, for example medicine, can have a very constricting effect upon other aspects of life. For the middle and upper class Brazilians interviewed, a career is meant to be a path

towards living, but not the ultimate goal in life. Young people are concerned not to take on the long working hours, and stressful lives of their parents. The desire to have a healthy balanced life that includes work time, leisure activities, intimate relationships, family and friends was commonly expressed by men and women of this social group. However, they still envisage some of the privileges their parents have, for instance, a house on the beach, a farm to go during family holidays, and so on.

> Luciana- Minha vida ideal é ter uma carreira que possa me preencher, ao lado da minha família. É voltar para casa e ter meu marido, meus filhos. Eu quero tambem uma casa própria e quem sabe uma de campo e uma de praia. Quero dar uma vida boa para meus filhos e estar com a pessoa que amo e pronto. **My ideal life is to have a profession that fulfills me. To be with my family, come back home, have my husband, and my children. I also want to own my house and who knows a house in the countryside and on the beach. I want to offer a good life to my children, to be with someone I love, and that's it** (Colégio São Francisco).

To combine a career with a family life is commonly mentioned by my female participants. Luciana's hopes of having a second and third house illustrate patterns of upper class Brazilian life-styles. Due to Brazil's geographical size, travelling abroad is not as economical and convenient as in Europe. The leisure time of upper class Brazilians, from Recife, is divided seasonally: during the summer time weekends and holidays are spent at the family's second home on the coast and in the winter at the family's third home in the interior of the state of Pernambuco. As career choices are made in very insecure ways in terms of future prospects, there are two central tactics mentioned by middle and upper class Brazilians in their attempts to minimise anxiety, and fears of depending financially on their parents: the first one is their roots in relation to home as means of emotional support and personal fulfilment; and, the second is their desire to have a family of their own.

3.1 Careers as life styles: The English Patterns

Unlike the Brazilians, young English men and women from middle and upper class backgrounds seem more relaxed in terms of their career prospects. Although they mention the pressure suffered in the process of doing 'A' levels and deciding upon universities, their hopes in terms of their future careers seem to be more problem free. They know that the process of establishing a career involves 'working oneself into the ground', but after that they expect the work 'to tail off a bit'.

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Amongst the middle and upper middle-class English interviewees it was possible to observe that although some students are interested in traditional careers such as law and medicine, the great majority of my participants chose careers more in terms of the imagined life style than the daily professional practice of what a career involves. There were two exceptions, one from working-class background and the other from middle-class.

> Sue- I got 11GCSEs, I got really good ones. I got 4 Bs and 7 Cs. So I did really well. And I decided to…well since I've got this result I thought of doing law. Because I found it is really interesting. So I thought in order to pursue my career I want to do my A levels, and go to the university. That's why I came here (Nottingham College)

Sue perceives her result in her GCSE's (4Bs and 7Cs) as a very good one, which is evaluated in the light of her "space of experience". The evaluation of school results depends very much on the social class and expectations of young people, parents, peer group, school staff, and so on. Sue is very happy with her results, whereas the young women from Magdalene College would perceive the same grades as failure. Surprised with her own results, Sue decided to invest in her education by going to law school. She did not demonstrate clearly the reasons why she wants to do law. When I asked her to express more about her identification with the field, she simply said that it broadens knowledge, and is an interesting and well-respected field. Again we note how the emphasis on respect appears in the aspirations of both the Brazilian and the English working-class participants.

Interestingly, some of the English young men, interviewed in Nottingham College, have explained the reasons for starting science in relation to its broadening areas of knowledge. For Sue and the young men to go to university is something that will increase their chances of finding a job that pays well and it is enjoyable, as already pointed out by Rick. A career does not tend to be associated either with the direct practice of daily working or with engagement in a more creative life, as described by the middle and upper middle-class English interviewees. The English working-class I interviewed showed similar approach to the Brazilians, who took into consideration aspects of their current life, such as family home while choosing a career.

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Jonathan- I am more concerned about a place that is close. I don't want to move to Manchester or something, because I have a girlfriend and don't want to leave her on the spot. I want to go somewhere local like Nottingham or Loughborough which are easily reachable by public transport (Nottingham College).

**

Sue- I want to go to Nottingham Trent or another university depending on what results I get really. Because you cannot really choose. But I want to go to Nottingham Trent to do Law. I am a kind of person who gets homesick. I don't know how you managed to come here by yourself. Now I feel like I want to stop here, because I like to stick to my roots if you know what I mean (Nottingham College)

It is interesting to pay attention to how the intersection between present life and future life is a central aspect in working class decisions about careers. The importance of sticking to one's routes, as mentioned by Sue, articulates the ways in which the participants relate to their aspirations. The working-class do not focus on keeping their options as open as possible by applying to the best and furthest university in the country. This contrasts with the practice of middle and upper middle-class interviewees in their approach to independence. Working-class young people are likely to prioritise the known environment. Jonathan does not want to go ahead with his professional life and sacrifice his personal life, by 'leaving his girlfriend on the spot'. These young people also incorporate into their narratives the awareness of how their university decisions depend on the results. They do not have the degree of confidence of middle class participants who express the university they want to attend before knowing whether or not they will be accepted. Similar to the middle and upper class Brazilians, the strong emotional link of my participants to their location means that career choice is interwoven with the contexts of their present lives.

From a different perspective, Joan, a middle-class young woman, in comparison to Sue, explains about her identification with law. For her law does not only represent an engagement with a well-respected field of knowledge, but the chance of taking a traditional course at the University of Cambridge. The connection to her family environment and any kind of attachment that constrains her freedom are not elements included in her career choices. On the contrary, she is keen to enjoy the freedom to choose among many possible options.

Joan- I am applying for law. Politically I am kind of left wing so I think it interests/ attracts me because in law you have social issues to deal with in the work...and, well I think in a subject like law you can interpret many different issues. That's why when you study and get a job, subjects like that, allow you to understand more of banking services, community problems, and criminal law (St. Joseph's School).

Ana Maria- But, how do you as a person in terms of life ideals relate to the desire to do law?

Joan- Definitely. I believe in justice and in a lawful healthy society. And, also when you do something like law, you have to be quite assertive. You have to be comfortable with communicating, and I think I am (St. Joseph's School).

From Joan's articulation the belief she has in her capacity to communicate and be assertive is clear. Planning to have a degree in Law from Cambridge reinforces Joan's trust in her own ability to do well in a career traditionally associated with men. It is interesting to note that Joan, while prioritising freedom throughout her narrative, focuses on the importance of having a community based society. In this context, she configures and reproduces official discourses in the Western world that relate investment in the building of communities and efficient 'systems of surveillance' (Foucault, 1980). Law is a field that deals with the reform and maintenance of policies related to public and private sectors of society. For her it is a broad field of knowledge that offers the possibility of being recognised not only economically, but also socially. As already mentioned, the meaning behind performing well is related to Joan's accomplishment as a modern female who seeks recognition in a professional capacity, disassociating herself from dependence on the centrality of building her own family. This issue of prioritising careers in relation to family is shared by all of the English middle and upper middle-class young women I interviewed. Young men, even though they mentioned their desire to have a family in the future, do not discuss the need to 'balance career and family', in other words, to prioritise a career first and postpone a family, as do the middle and upper middle-class English females. This omission in terms of balance, by the young men, suggests that the division of labour in the domestic sphere is still unequal, and that young men do not anticipate assuming more equal responsibilities in the realm of family and housework (Chambers, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

As discussed further in Chapter 4, for young women the pursuit of a career is central to their lives. Joan sees a profession in law as offering money and prestige. For her prestige is important 'especially for women, because by having a degree of independence, we show what we can do'. Joan also sees the prestige of a career as being associated with the degree of challenge that a

career represents, as well as its ability to provide a comfortable life - which for her includes holidays abroad. She chooses a career, such as Law, that has not been traditionally associated with women.

Unlike upper and middle class Brazilians, English young people, by not envisaging any limitation in their future, feel comfortable choosing a wider variety of careers. The English middle and upper middle-class young people have such a strong belief that 'all is possible and the success depends on a the person's effort' that even uncertain career choices, such as those in the Arts, are contemplated by a significant part of the English interviewees. The desire for creativity by some interviewees, and financial reward by others, seem to be the two fundamental factors for these young people when deciding upon their careers. The relationship between the establishment of a career and its identification with a whole set of habitus (Bourdieu, 1994), valued in upper and middle class surroundings, is observed throughout the narratives of these young people. For example, certain personality traits, such as assertiveness, dominance, autonomy, and imagination are associated with certain careers and those careers are seen as desirable due to the idealisation of those traits by the middle and upper middle-class English's participants. The same is true of careers that are associated with enjoyable life styles. These participants tend to foresee their future professional lives as composed of many desirable elements present in their descriptions of life ideals.

> Chris- I am able to choose my own path. I think of doing art, art is something I would like to go into. Something artistic, perhaps.... English literature things. It's all creative stuff. I might go into writing. I am not sure (St. Joseph's).
>
> Ana Maria- How do you relate this sort of career in the artistic field to your personality and your goals in life?
>
> Chris- I think it does make me more imaginative, being able to do artistic things. I think it does make a person more imaginative. It makes you see the world with a more observing eye. But I think it does help me and also I think it makes you more creative in general in life. You don't always want to follow the rules... I want to attempt to be a bit more off the beaten track (St. Joseph's).

We can observe how Chris' articulation of his narrative relates to the desire for autonomy and freedom to 'choose his own path'. What does he really mean by being 'off the beaten track'? Does it relate to his desire to be more imaginative? Is his positive view on imagination an idiosyncratic trait in response to the more expected common pattern of life? Probably, Chris wants to have enough

freedom in his life to have a strong sense of autonomy. To be considered an independent person by adults has been presented in the narratives of the English middle and upper middle-class participants as essential. Chris also desires to choose a type of work that satisfies him entirely, without focusing only on financial earning. Although Chris does not focus very much on the necessity of having enough money to live independently, he is aware of the need to provide for financial safety. He keeps saying he wants his life without barriers or limitations.

It is important to observe that the tendency to describe a life style and associate it with a career has often appeared throughout the middle and upper middle-class English people.

> Phil- I want to be a director of an international computer company, because I like to be in charge. I am too dominant, so I could be a director, a high executive in some multinational company. I take charge and sort things out. I would be creating computer software that I love and travelling quite a lot around the world. (St. Joseph).
> **
> Elisabeth- I want to be a fashion director. I want to work in New York. You have to work your way up, so this is what I want to do (Magdalene School).

As we can observe Chris, Phil and Elisabeth do not tend to stress the practical field of a career routine (the daily life of working), but the relationship between personality traits and creative life-styles. By recognising themselves as 'imaginative', 'dominant', and able 'to work your way up' and reach the top level of a career, they aspire to future lives seeing themselves 'travelling around the world', and 'without barriers and limitations'. Their professional choices tend to mirror the images of middle and upper class life-styles in the Western world, associated with mobility, the contact with media entertainment and fashion. These young people describe images of world-citizens that have the opportunity to be innovative as long as their financial security is guaranteed.

The practice of the middle and upper-middle class English of centralising career choices in terms of life-style is focused on privileged financial condition. As these young people interviewed in the research believe that career depends on a person's capacity rather than opportunities offered in the outer world, they feel free to create their career images, disregarding everyday practicalities.

3.2 Adjusting desire and reality

Similar to middle and upper class Brazilians the choice of careers among the working-class participants tends to be based on identification with the field and the practice of the career. The difference between middle and upper class participants and the working-class ones is that the latter tend to focus on two routes: one constructed in terms of what they desire to do, and the other, centralised in a more realistic approach taking into account their space of experience.

> Neide- Quero fazer ciências biológicas ou artes cênicas, mas meu pai é do contra. Ele fica dizendo que quer uma filha médica. Sendo realista artes cênicas aqui em PE não dá muito certo e medicina não é para gente como nós. **I want to do Biological Science or Scenic art, but my father is against it. He keeps telling me that he wants to see his daughter a doctor. Being realistic scenic art here in Pernambuco does not work out, and being a doctor is not for people like us** (Dom João).

Neide's plan intersects with her own desire to be an artist along with her father's dream to see her as a doctor. She sees that, as a poor person, to survive by doing scenic art in Pernambuco is not very 'realistic'. Also, to do medicine is very difficult, because Neide would have to compete with students who had attended private schools. She clearly emphasises that 'to be a doctor is not for people like us'. A considerable number of the female interviewees from a working-class background dreamt about becoming medical doctors, but all of them end up by describing their desire in terms of life-ideal, a dream, very difficult to be realised. Even among the middle and upper class young people only the most diligent students tend to confront the competitiveness of medicine. There were some middle and upper class participants who admired the profession of medicine, but were not prepared to sacrifice their free-time, as mentioned in this chapter by Alexandre. As the possibility of becoming a medical doctor seems to be unrealistic in Neide's 'space of experience', she considers her father's advice and takes into account the option of becoming a teacher in Biological Science. She explained her satisfaction in relation to the way she reconciled her father's expectation and her own desire thus:

> Neide- Eu me acho mais ou menos satisfeita, porque eu gostaria de ajudar o meu pai e mais algumas pessoas e não muito satisfeita porque o meu sonho é fazer artes cênicas. Fazer artes cênicas em Pernambuco é para passar fome. Eu pretendo não abrir mão das artes cênicas. Arrumar um trabalho, fazer ciências biológicas e somente depois que me formar viajar para o RJ e fazer artes cênicas. **I think I am more or less**

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satisfied, because I would like to help my father and other people. Less satisfied because my dream was to do scenic arts. To do scenic art in Pernambuco is to starve. I don't intend to give up scenic art, but first of all I need to find a job, pass biological science at Federal University, that is difficult, and then travel to Rio to do scenic art (Dom João).

Neide's narrative is very typical among working-class Brazilians. Feeling unable to pass the university exams straight away and feeling that they need to find a job to help financially at home, they are likely to focus on a career as a possibility rather than a certainty. The economic conditions of the outside world and their low quality of education in school limit their options. At the same time, they keep constructing a narrative that articulates their life-desires.

> Cristina- Eu queria fazer medicina, tentar ajudar as pessoas, fazer cirurgias de graça, mas tive que desistir. Meus pais não têm condições de pagar uma faculdade para mim. A Federal é pública, mas eu desisti de fazer. Vou trabalhar, ajudar em casa, pagar cursinhos e fazer ciências biológicas. **I wanted to do medicine to try to help people, to do surgery for free, but I had to give up, because my parents cannot pay for the university. The Federal is public, but I gave up. I will work, help at home, pay for courses to prepare me to pass biological sciences** (Dom João).

By trying to understand the reasons why these young people still include in their articulations their desires for the 'ideal' professions, I encouraged them to talk more. They tended to express that, even if their reality did not allow them to concretise their professional dreams, it is important for them to keep their dreams alive as a way of 'motivating life'.

> Cristina -Preciso sonhar pra viver. É pra gente não levar tudo a sério, que talvez sonhar seja uma saída. **You need to dream to live. It is not for us to take everything too seriously. Maybe to dream is an alternative** (Dom João).

As the biggest challenge of these young people's lives in the present moment is to find a job, in any field they get offered, working-class young people try to confront the first obstacle and deal with the present, instead of setting long term plans. By continuing with their daily routines, and acknowledging the necessity of finding a job, they are able to keep their motivations alive and seek to transform their daily lives. At the same time they show a great capacity to remain positive by seeing a 'dream as an alternative'.

> Paulo-- Não dá para pensar em vida ideal o negócio é deixar rolar. Ir vivendo e vendo. Só posso decidir no momento em que estiver acontecendo. Não sei como vai ser a minha vida daqui a cinco ou seis anos. **It is not possible to think of an ideal-life. The thing is to live the opportunities as they appear in the daily life. Keeping a life and**

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searching for better possibilities. I can only decide when I have something to choose. I don't know how my life will be in five to six years time (Dom João).

Working-class participants' aspirations to a career demonstrate their difficulties in anticipating future possibilities. In a similar vein the middle and upper class Brazilians also showed resistance to making long-term plans regarding their professional lives. Unlike the middle and upper middle-class English whose life-opportunity seems to enable them to construct images of their future life-styles, working-class Brazilians are aware of how their career routes depend upon job opportunities. They depend on getting a job in order to be able to invest in a university course.

> Antonio- Antes de mais nada eu tenho que arrumar um trabalho em qualquer coisa, pois só meu pai trabalhando não dá. **Before anything else I have to find a job in something, because only my father working is not enough for living** (Dom João).
> **
> Cristina- Se eu conseguir arrumar um emprego, qualquer que seja... primeiro vou procurar como secretária ou recepcionista. **If I can find a job in anything...first of all I will search for a work as a secretary or receptionist** (Dom João).

As working class young men and women are forced to accept the uncertainties and risks of the labour market, they are likely to conceptualise risk differently from the middle and upper middle-class English young people. Since working-class lives in Brazil are surrounded by risks, they perceive them as a necessary motivation rather than an obstacle.

> Antonio-Engloba tudo, acho que quando a gente não corre risco é quando a gente corre risco. **There is risk in everything. I think that when we don't face risk is when we face the most risk** (Dom João).
> **
> Paulo- Risco é não arriscar. **Risk is not taking risks** (Dom João).

As working-class Brazilians are not allowed by their economic conditions to define career decisions in their present lives, their narratives are based on hopes. Their initial hope is to find a job upon the conclusion of their secondary education. For them, the overwhelming risk that can impinge negatively on their lives is to stay in their restricted environment, instead of continuing to struggle and taking opportunities as they appear in their day- to- day life. As Antonio and Paulo are unable to picture a life without risk, the meaning associated with it is positive rather than negative. Risk is seen as a challenge that a person needs to face in order to get things in life.

Although the Brazilian working-class confront wider risks than middle and upper classes, all participants understood risk similarly.

> Ana Maria- What does risk mean to you?
>
> Claudia-A existência do risco nos faz lutar e tentar conseguir o que se quer até o fim. **The presence of risk makes us struggle and try to achieve what we want until we get it** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> **
>
> Carla- Tudo tem risco. Risco faz parte da vida. A gente tem que aprender a lidar com ele, criar coragem e seguir em frente. **In everything there is risk. Risk is part of life. The thing is to learn how to relate to risk, become bold, and go ahead with the things a person wants in life** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> **
>
> Alexandre- Viver aqui no Recife é arriscado. A gente pode sair de casa e levar um tiro, mas também pode encontrar o nosso grande amor. **To live here in Recife is risky. We can leave the house and get shot, but we can also meet the love of our life** (Colégio São Francisco).

This is different to Chris, the middle class English young man, who studies in St Joseph's and anticipates a life without risk or barriers. Neither the working-class Brazilians nor the middle and upper classes ones tended to articulate life without incorporating risk. For them 'in everything there is risk', 'risk is part of life', and it 'makes us struggle and to try to achieve what we want until we get it'. The challenge is learning 'how to relate to risk' by becoming 'bold' and 'going ahead with the things a person wants'. To live without accepting risk is very difficult for the Brazilian participants, because anticipations are embedded in life experiences. Brazilians, particularly from big cities or working-class backgrounds, learn from an early age that 'life implies risk'. It is in this context that Alexandre emphasises that 'we can leave the house and get shot, but we can also meet the love of our life'.

From the narratives of the Brazilian participants we can question the straightforward relation drawn by Sennet (1998) between the lack of predictability in life and corrosion of character or egoistic practices. Even when recognising that life is tied up with risk and that there are possibilities of not achieving a university education, the common narrative among the working-class participants is to improve their material life conditions and help their family by buying a house in a better and safer neighbourhood in Recife.

Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, anticipation of a career is very tied up with the interviewee's categories of identity, particularly class and gender. English participants from middle and upper middle class backgrounds were much more likely to describe their future lives as established and successful professionals in their long-term life plans. For them, success is very linked to effort, and then they perceive opportunities in life in terms of the ideology of meritocracy, believing that everyone who is competent and hardworking has an equal chance to succeed in life. However, as we saw in this chapter, middle and upper middle class young people even in England, a western developed country, have access to different schools and, consequently, universities. For instance, the upper middle class young women from Magdalene School have articulated their aspirations by describing their plans to go to traditional and very prestigious British Universities, for example, Oxford and Cambridge.

The English interviewees from working-class backgrounds perceive reality differently from the higher expectations of the middle and upper middle class in their country. The working-class do not tend to anticipate the university they are planning to go, as they are not sure if they are going to be offered a place by any university they have applied for. For working-class English young people, university is not seen in terms of definite choices, as tends to be highlighted by middle and upper middle class in England, since it depends upon examination results.

The ways the Brazilian participants from both working and middle class backgrounds centralise professional life is more closely related to the working-class English participants. Although Brazilians from the middle and upper classes receive a wide range of support to invest in their careers, they seem to worry about balancing professional life and other contexts of living, as for example, their relationships with friends and family. To construct a solid professional life tends to be more risky in Brazil than for the middle and upper middle class English. As middle and upper class Brazilians observe their parents' experiences of working until late at night, with limited free time to participate in the family daily routine, they seem to be resistant to sacrificing

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their inter-personal relationships. The English and Brazilian working classes also focused on the importance of relationships in their lives. In this context, The English working-class interviewees did not tend to anticipate going to a university far away from their family home. As I examined throughout this chapter, career does not only include professional aspirations, but intersects with hopes of being in social and spatial proximity to their family, particularly in the cases of Brazilian participants and the working-class English interviewees.

Furthermore, young people's aspirations in terms of career and work are very related to expectations of future lives, not only in terms of what they actually expect to have, but also of more idealised outcomes. For example, while the Brazilian middle and upper class young people still desire similar standards of living to their parents, they tend not to narrate this aspect in explicit ways. Their emphasis is on having more balanced lives, with more flexibility of time than their parents have to participate in the family daily routine.

English middle and upper middle class participants, as well as aspiring to go to the most prestigious universities, envisage having financial stability, with pleasant and comfortable life-styles. These young people are prepared to work hard. However they do want to have enough money to travel abroad during their holidays, hoping for big and comfortable houses, and big and modern cars. In this sense, from all the participants interviewed, the configurations of aspirations of the English young people from middle and upper middle class backgrounds are the closest to the generalising and abstract social theory of life-style. However, as we shall see throughout the other empirical chapters, even the middle and upper class young people's configuration of aspirations are far from fitting in completely with the characterisations, already defined in the Chapter 2 of life-styles.

Among all the participants it became clear that the working-class Brazilians were the least likely to anticipate the future. For them a career is a dream that has never been part of their lives. In this context, if they get a job which enables them to pay for preparing for the *vestibular*, they foresee the possibility of changing their families life and their own entirely by having a career.

The fragments of narratives have demonstrated that a career is still included in all of the research participants' aspirations. Differently from Sennett's (1998) argument, the 'flexibilisation' of work has not threatened investment in a career. For some of the interviewees, for example the middle and upper class participants, the impact of flexible work tied to global opportunities has tended to broaden their professional dreams of living and working abroad.

Finally, as I examined in this chapter, and it will be shown throughout the empirical examples in the following one, the casualisation of labour does not necessarily erode social bonds or feed individualistic ethics. On the contrary, the majority of my participants have configured throughout their fragments of narratives the significant importance of their emotional bonds.

Chapter 4: Hopes of Family Ties and Friendship

This chapter describes and analyses the ways relationships with family and friends are included in young men's and women's aspirations. Differences and similarities between young people's narratives are exemplified here in part to enable me to identify how far there is evidence to support Giddens' pure relationship (1992a) and Bauman's (2003) liquid love in the narrations of the participants.

Young people's aspirations for their relationships with parents and their anticipation of family formations seem to be very interwoven with the different ways independence, as an emotional and practical construct, is experienced by them. The different meanings associated with independence relate to the ways people express emotions and experience intimacies. As we saw in Chapter 3 young people's perceptions of careers are deeply embedded in social positioning and their experience of opportunities, encouragements, and constraints.

The meaning of 'space of experience' has been borrowed from Skeggs (1997) when she refers to metaphors of spaces and places such as location and positioning. This signifies that whenever I refer to 'space of experience' I am including both social positioning and spatial locations. People shape personal interactions and live them across social class, gender and national culture in their town/city/state- their space of experience, in highly heterogeneous ways (Jamieson, 1998).

In the first section, young people's narratives in terms of independence are highlighted. I address how the different ways of experiencing independence reflect upon family ties. In the second section of the chapter, young people's articulations of family formations are illustrated. This includes young people's desires/ lack of desires to have their own families. In the last section of the chapter, there is an attempt to understand the ways interactions with friends are experienced across the groups of young people interviewed. Friendship may open up new configurations of relationships and emotional expression, as the

emphasis on independence, along with the need for its recognition, does not tend to affect relationships with friends in the same way as it does with parents.

1. Constructing independence in the context of family relationships

In the same way that the construction of adulthood varies according to people's 'space of experience', so independence as a central category of adulthood also varies. To identify how independence is constructed according to the particularities of one's life, it is central to understand the ways in which flesh and blood subjects produce meanings and incorporate them into narratives.

As Giddens' (1992a) 'Pure Relationship' and Bauman's (2003) 'Liquid Love' have become popular in contemporary academic writings, in the sense of describing the patterns in which adults' intimacy is lived today, I relate them to the articulations of the participants' aspirations. Both concepts have been already described in Chapter 2, therefore here I will only point out briefly the common aspects examined in this chapter. Their perspective on independence incorporates the 'ideological construct' of western contemporary societies, marked by the processes of the privatisation of social life (Giddens, 1992a; Lodziak, 1995), and the offloading of functions onto private instances (Beck and Beck-Gersnsheim, 2002). Self-identity is defined by individual choices, talents and their self-invention (Beck and Beck-Gersnsheim, 2002), which is characterised by individuals' capacity for reflexivity and quick decision-making (Giddens 1992a). Both Giddens' pure relationship (1991) and Bauman's concept of liquid love (2003) are sustained by the pleasure and the immediate gratification experienced by the couple. Pure relationships are driven by intimacy, based on deep sharing and mutual knowledge, but disconnected from constraints and difficulties faced in daily life. Liquid love, for instance, does not request even intimacy, since it is characterised by loose ties. The central aspect for the people who live liquid love is not to have tied commitments, as they can involve burdens and cause strains people feel unable to bear. Bauman says that contemporary people rationalise their lives, by participating in network connections that are already marked by disposability, and so they can remain 'in control of things'. The urge to control life, by avoiding investment in relationships, impels people to be afraid of creating durable ties with non-predictable outcomes, such as family and long-term love. Both theories

disregard the repetitive duties and commitments of daily routine and centralise autonomy, which is required by anyone able to choose a life-style (Illouz, 1997). By living liquid love and pure relationship, people are likely to come together for no other reason than the appreciation and pleasure of each other's company, without taking into account responsibilities or roles.

Another perspective on independence likely to be expressed in people's narratives is in association with individuals' axes of belongings, categories of social formations, positioning and 'space', such as gender, social class, local or national cultures, and so forth. The existing categories do not necessarily operate according to the demands for private and autonomous 'independence' as constructed in Giddens (1992a) and Bauman (2003). The lives of young people are influenced by dual relationships of dependence and independence. Independence here is lived in the context of young people's multiple identifications, and personal particularities (Pilkington and Johnson, 2003). As young people's lives nowadays tend to be dynamic, interconnected by different relationships, spheres of life, and interactions with the local, the national and the global, they may be independent to choose the type of work, career, leisure activities, and friends, but remain dependent on the family's financial support. Also the contrary is possible; young people may be independent in terms of material life and feel the need for the support of friends, the roots of the local and national cultures.

It is important to bear in mind that the significance of independence may vary according to location and cultural factors. For example, independence as commonly expressed in England, particularly by my middle and upper-middle class research subjects, may be concretised in terms of leaving the parental home and going to university in another part of the country. In Brazil, middle and upper class young people may still go to university in their home city and be considered independent.

In addition, the research has to consider the detailed context of people's individual circumstances as analysed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000). By relating closely to people's experience, we perceive that even in cases where individuals share common social characteristics, the impact of social

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positioning, local culture, and family relationships may still be very different. Also, the ways people construct their subjectivity cannot be explained by singular views on social-cultural contexts, as if they were simple determinants. To understand people's aspirations, their sense of intimacy and independence, we have to examine relationships between the social processes that impact on people's lives and the ways subjects produce socio-cultural dynamics (Henriques, et al, 1984). Subjects are not only produced within social processes, but they also produce tactical ways to respond to cultural elements that may reinforce their identification as adults.

As is recognised by the vernacular common sense, independence is defined by autonomy, but the characteristics, of autonomy do not incorporate the same elements in different locations and cultures. This chapter explores how the processes for living, experiencing, and understanding independence are embedded in subjects' locations and positioning.

1. 1 Leaving the Parental home in England

According to Skeggs (1997) one of the key issues that identifies English middle class kinship is the individuality of persons, the psychological independence, which contrasts with the lack of individuality of the 'masses'. We are going to see later in this chapter that the dynamics of kinship in Brazil, particularly in the Northeast, make the recognition of individuality difficult, because of the extreme emphasis on collective interactions and interdependence of family members. From the context of an English dynamic of kinship, it is not surprising that the majority of the English upper-middle and middle class young people interviewed articulated narratives based on the privatisation of the self and the social life, constructing independence in terms of physical and emotional 'detachment' from parents.

> Sally- When we go to university we are expected to be completely independent, to sort out our own things and not to rely on anybody (St. Joseph's School).

Sally internalises and expresses very explicitly what Walkerdine et al. (2001) point to as the understood path to a rational, autonomous and mature being among the English middle and upper classes. She says that she is 'expected to be completely independent'. From what she points out, Sally's meaning of

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'completely independent' is the possibility of sorting out her 'own things and not to rely on anybody'. Sally configures independence as expressing confidence. It seems that particularly among this social group in England the bourgeois order of the free agent has a high relevance. The free agent is constructed in terms of the rationalisation of autonomy and emotions. Young men and women tend to 'perform'[42] the rupture process, dissociating from the recognised depictions of dependence in their surroundings. By incorporating discourses around independence they attempt to assure themselves and others that they are ready to cope with the exigencies of becoming an adult in English society. By focusing on the process of moving from the parental home, young men and women in England from middle and upper class backgrounds not only shared with me their enthusiasm about leaving their parents' home, but their desire for living as far away from their hometown as they possibly could. In so doing, they acknowledged the possibility of allowing themselves to decide convenient times for going back for visiting, rather than feeling pressurised to do so.

> Claire - I am looking forward to it. I am going to apply for a university in the South of England. Can you imagine being on your own, going out with your friends, being free of restrictions of parents, and visiting them only when you feel like it? (Magdalene School).

From the articulations of Claire it is possible to notice her enthusiasm for living in the South of England, far away from Nottingham. Especially among middle and upper-middle class young women this attitude of planning to study as far as possible from their hometown reflects their expectations of living this part of their lives without interference from parental controls. It seems that young women, in both countries, are likely to feel less free to go out and interact with friends than young men. To feel free may be only guaranteed for Claire if she lives far away from her parents. Young women envisage their lives in universities as being rid of curfews and restrictions that still impact upon their current lives. Focusing on the restrictions imposed by parents, Emily shows a certain irritation with her mother's control over her:

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42 'Perform' in this context is exactly the opposite of Butler's notion of 'performative parodic' (1997), that is the setting of practices and bodily dispositions that are marked by different 'presentations'/ 'representations' from what it is expected (parodic manners). 'Perform' as appears here means acting, replicating, reporting on things in the ways expected to reproduce norms.

> Emily- She is still treating me as if I was younger, and we have loads of arguments. Sometimes I want to do things and she doesn't like them. She does not like it when I am out late at night with my friends, she does not like the clothes I wear when I go out at night. I am very excited at the prospect of going to university and sharing a flat with friends. (Magdalene School).

From Emily's fragment of narrative the expectation that is anticipated in the process of going to university becomes clear. Emily feels that she is still treated as if she were 'younger', without the autonomy 'to do things' she likes, being out 'late at night with (her) friends', and choosing her own clothes to 'go out at night'. In Emily's view, if she were an adult, she would be able to do all these things, without parental restrictions. In the context of going to university Emily foresees that she will get rid of control over her by going to 'university and sharing a flat with friends'.

Parental protection of young women seems to reinforce their desires for moving as far away as possible from their parents' home, at that time of their lives, when they are intending to build and consolidate their independence. In this way, the narratives of the young women are likely to incorporate the emotional 'apartness' of independence. The middle and upper class boys on the other hand tend to envisage the scenario for their future lives by narrating it with a more practical turn, reproducing their self-identity in terms of engaging with self-discipline and self-management.

> Fred- When you reach this sort of age nobody can really stop you from doing anything. Depending on you, you can go to university and do your best. I will study the computer industry, set up a computer company and earn loads of money. And, everything starts when you leave your parents' home. It means that you've got something. It's a sense of achievement (St. Joseph's School).

Fred in his narrative illustrates what has been highlighted by other young men participants at St. Joseph's. For Fred, when a person reaches his age 'nobody can really stop (him) from doing anything'. It is as if the possibilities were in his hands and it were up to him to construct his own life. In certain ways, Fred incorporates the approaches of the self-inventive individual of Giddens (1991) and Featherstone (1991) by stressing how the choice of life-style and plans depends on him, as the owner of a computer company who can earn 'loads of money'.

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As already examined in Chapter 3, for young English men and women from the middle and upper-middle classes, achievement in life depends very much on themselves. As long as they are committed and prepared to dedicate themselves to their careers they are able to earn money and be successful. It is interesting how the perspective of independence, associated with unlimited freedom and opportunities, is incorporated into the narratives of these young people. The difference here among the middle and upper-middle class young women and young men is that female participants speak about the process of moving home, whereas the males seem to consolidate their narratives in terms of outcomes after finishing university. These outcomes are strengthened by the sense that nothing and nobody can stop them.

As we can see from Fred's, Sally's, Claire's and Emily's narratives, their expectations of autonomy are emphasised in a very strong way along with the idea of a 'life of one's own'. This expression is directly associated with freedom and control over life. The narratives of my other middle and upper class participants in England are constructed in reference to this desire to 'become actors, builders, jugglers, state managers of their own bibliographies and identities and also of their social links and networks' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

In England, particularly among the middle class, both parents and the young persons expect the young adult at 17/18 years old to leave their parents' home, go to university accommodation, and get a university loan. In this social group, to leave the parental home is one of the most important signifiers of educational success. Parents from middle and upper-middle classes usually pay off, or help their children to pay part of the student loan. Not being able to leave the parental house causes feelings of failure both to parents and young people from this social background in England. In the context of the participants' achievement and independence, the priority of moving away from parents is seen throughout their narratives. The tactics put forward by these young people to assure their parents of their independence may vary according to their experience of life, and their categories of belongings. Also what became evident to me after concluding some interviews is that the relevance of leaving the parental home should not be interpreted as unloving relationships with parents.

Ann- Of course we will still miss our parents. To move is what is expected of you. It's the way of life. It's your attitude towards building your own way of life. It's nothing to do with going away from your parents (Magdalene School).

As Ann illustrates, the act of leaving parent's home after finishing school is an embedded aspect in the process of growing up as middle and upper class in England. As she says, it is 'what is expected of you' to build 'your own way of life', but this is 'nothing to do with going away from your parents'. Leaving parental home, even by choosing to stay as far away as possible, does not mean that the young men and women do not love and care for the parents. From what the interviewees shared with me, leaving the parents' home seems to be an achievement for both parents and young people, because it shows that the person has succeeded and is able to 'sort him/herself out'. This has been an expression that has commonly appeared throughout the interview processes with the young people from this social group.

As we can already observe by the ways these participants describe their future process of moving home, their narratives of independence are highly influenced by the self as confident and autonomous; at the same time they relate to the ways that means to independence are recognised through family relationships. It is interesting to bear in mind that the dynamic of constructing independence changes according to the practical support given by the families to the participants when they finish school. The young women who are still receiving parents' financial support to pay university fees and/or accommodation tend to articulate their narratives of independence in terms of emotional 'detachment', by showing they are emotionally capable to build up their own lives. The English young men interviewed, across all social classes, independently of the kind of support received, were unlikely to talk about their emotional needs.

On the one hand, young men and women do continue to accept the practical caring offered by the parents in the sense of getting help with the mundane daily activities, e.g. cooking, cleaning, relying on pocket money for transport, and being helped to finance university fees and accommodation. On the other hand, the female participants of this research tend to mention the need to handle their moments of feeling low, without relying on their parents' support.

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Sometimes, without realising how the practical and emotional caring is blurred, young men and women try to make a distinction between those two.

> Claire- our parents want to see us performing well. They want us to face challenges and pressure on our own (Magdalene College).
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> **
>
> Chris- my parents always say ...they encourage me to be more independent. hum ... They don't like to...don't get me wrong, they like to help me, but they don't like to help me too much. Because they like me to be more independent. Hum...They want me to grow, to be adaptable, a little bit more (St. Joseph's)

Claire's and Chris's articulations of independence do not mention dependence on parents in terms of practical caring. Accepting from parents such services as cooking, and cleaning or financial help does not seem to conflict with their independence. However, both Claire and Chris seem to acknowledge how the emotional capacity to 'face challenges and pressure on (their) own', 'hold yourself together', as said by other participants, are linked to processes of 'growing up'. Through the participants' articulations, independence seems to be central to their recognition as adults in England. It is interesting to observe that Claire configures independence by putting together words such as 'performing well', 'face challenges and overcome pressure', 'on our own'. Emily in other ways reaffirms Claire and Chris's narratives around independence by highlighting the relationship between emotional independence and the importance given to keeping life as private as possible.

> Emily- yeah, everyone is really private. No one likes talking to other people very much about private things. Not like adults and stuff, they don't tend to talk to their friends about private things. I think that this is quite English (Magdalene School)
>
> AM- what do you mean? Don't they talk about...?
>
> Emily- they don't really talk about anything that is important. British people always seem to be talking about daily matters. Because they can talk about that easily. I think that English people have real difficulties in expressing feelings to each other (Magdalene School).

What these fragments of Emily's articulations seem to show is how she draws a relationship between her identification as English and the ways adults engage with each other in her 'space of location'. She states that 'everyone is really private', and adults 'don't tend to talk to their friends about anything that is important', but always 'about things of daily matters'. Her approach here seems to illustrate that being identified as an adult, independent person in middle and

upper class English surroundings, means knowing how to hold yourself by not 'expressing feelings' to others. As becomes evident below, Emily associates being an adult with not putting burdens on other people's shoulders. In this vein, Emily reinforces her adulthood in relation to her parents by 'performing' an adult's habitus (in Bourdieu's sense)[43]. By performing as an adult, reproducing embedded and naturalised behaviour in English' culture, Emily emphasises that only by drinking, is she capable of speaking her mind.

> AM- In which sense do you link this with yourself of not allowing you to express feelings?
>
> Emily - I don't express my feelings very often not to my mum and dad especially. Sometimes to my friends, but normally when I am drunk. When we get drunk we talk about anything. But a lot of the time we don't (Magdalene).
>
> AM- And why not?
>
> Emily- I don't know. I just think that you don't want to impose upon people, and making them listen to you. If you keep quiet then you don't have to talk with other people, you don't have to tell them things that might be uncomfortable. Whereas if you drink, you just talk about everything. (Magdalene).

Emily's reproduces in her narratives not only the practice of not 'expressing feelings' as something expected by adults in England, but also the influential 'habitus' of her social group. Interestingly, this influential way of behaving in England has been particularly mentioned by my male participants 'as typical of male performances'.

> Bill- Boys are more reserved in talking about feelings. Boys can put on a face and keep silent and girls start to cry when they feel upset. Women let all go. They don't have as much pressure on them (St Joseph's).

Actually Bill reproduces the toughness that is included in the dominant representations of masculinity (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Frosh, et. al, 2002), and connects the practice of putting on a face and keeping silent with the social pressure put on males. However, from the interviews with the middle and upper class girls, what they articulate has been similar kinds of performance linked to the male label of 'being tough and strong'. The girls seem to be aware that in order for them to participate and compete in the professional field, originally a male space, they are expected to incorporate cultural aspects that have been

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43 The meaning of habitus by Bourdieu has been explained in Chapter 2

previously associated with masculinity: for example the practice of drinking and 'feeling loose' to 'talk about anything' has been emphasised by both male and female participants.

By being discreet, not 'imposing uncomfortable things on others', 'keeping quiet', Emily follows the trajectory of the rationalisation of emotions that is very much expected in her social surroundings. In this sort of environment, the girls are prepared to be self-assured, and often 'cleverness' tends to be linked to the rationalisation of emotions (Walkerdine et. all, 2001). Emily and other middle and upper-middle class girls revealed their unwillingness to share feelings with their mum and dad.

> Mary- I think you have your friends, and saying whatever you want to your parents is different. It is meant to be different. They are the ones who are pushing you hard and are making sure you respond to things (Magdalene School).
> **
>
> Emily- You cannot really discuss everything with your parents. My mum is still treating me as if I was younger, and we have loads of arguments (Magdalene School).
> **
>
> Claire- I don't know. I don't really relate to them. They are just like my mum and dad, so I don't bother telling them things. I would rather tell my friends. My parents also are not bothered, I think that I've just to learn on my own and make the right choices and go to them only if I need to (Magdalene School).

Middle and upper middle-class young women show in their narratives exactly the opposite of Gidden's pure relationship in terms of deep intimacy. However, it is relevant to mention that Giddens' (1992a) account of intimacy illustrates the couples' relationships and not other types of relationships within the family. The relationships between parents and children seem not to be marked by deep allusions to disclosing intimacy and the need to share emotional lives as stated by Susie in her fragment of narrative below. It seems that the parents' 'practical caring' of everyday life is the central aspect expected by the participants.

> Susie- O... I know that my mum loves us to pieces, and she works ..., but it's just practical things like she is not there in the morning, we don't know where she is at night. ... We love each other, but she is not very much a mum in terms of being in the house, preparing our breakfast, being there when we go to bed (Magdalene School).

From Susie's narrative the ambiguous feelings she has in relation to her mother appear throughout her entire interview. Susie does recognise that her mother 'loves (them) to pieces', but she thinks her mother fails to assume the roles of a

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mother 'in terms of being in the house, preparing breakfast, being there when they go to bed'. Actually, regarding the absence of parents, the majority of my interviews from both countries complain about their lack of contact time, the fact of not seeing much of them during the week, and not eating together. When parents seem not to assume the expected dominant roles, young people tend to feel the lack or absence in a very strong way[44]. Susie feels that her mother does not act in the way she expects of a mother in a western nuclear family. Chambers' research (2001) contextualises Susie's expectations, pointing to the fact that family is lived as an ideological construct. In this way, ideas about family are represented through discourses that include those that influence and interact with people's vision of 'family' as identity. Even though Susie's talks openly about the ways her mother loves her brothers and her, which is not very common among the other girls interviewed, the fact that her mother neglects to care for Susie and her brothers in a practical sense irritates Susie. Relationships with parents, in middle and upper-middle class surroundings, are much more embedded in practical caring that takes place in their routines, than in the desire for pursuing and disclosing emotional relations.

Even the middle and upper class girls who propagate the discourse of emotional 'independence' complain at the same time about the lack of time their parents spend at home. With this, we can ratify that the insistence of the middle and upper class girls on determining the specific roles as parents is likely to relate to present needs to re-affirm their adulthood. However, according to the girls, the strict roles played by parents leave less space for them to relate to one another as people, keen to build up friendship and spend leisure activities together. The problematic aspect of Giddens' (1992a) pure relationship consists exactly of the lack of emphasis on the daily routines and duties that people have to confront in their daily lives. It is very difficult to envisage how people can share intimacy if they are not facing together the difficult moments and the burdens that tend to impact negatively on the daily routine. The participants tend to imagine an ideal type of relationship with parents, where the obligations

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44 The majority of the young people interviewed, Brazilians and English from all social groups, are likely to feel their parents do not spend much time with them at home particularly during the week. Even when they are aware of parents' justification regarding the demand of work, they talk about the absence.

as parents are forgotten, but at the same time they are not happy when the parents' fail to be present in their daily caring, as illustrated by Susie. The contradiction is that being present day-to-day does imply the necessity of dealing with oppositions and conflicts, which do not tend to be pleasant.

> Ana Maria- Would you prefer your parents to be closer to you as friends?
>
> Claire- I don't. I prefer them to be my mum and dad rather than friends. You need to respect them, and they will never be as able to understand you as friends in the same way as those who are your age and share the same sorts of experiences (Magdalene School).
>
> **
>
> Emily- We are probably going on a holiday my friends and me to the seaside. Last summer, I had to work and I did not have the chance to go on holiday. My parents went on holiday for three days. I could have gone with them, but I preferred to stay at home (Magdalene School)
>
> Ana Maria- Why didn't you want to go with them?
>
> Emily- There aren't any of my friends there. It is just mum and dad. It's boring.

Claire's narratives along with others from middle and upper-middle class girls I interviewed suggest that the formal relationships they have with their parents, which tend to dominate, do not lead to emotional sharing. From their discursive approaches this sort of emotional distance is fundamental since it means they are acting like adults, corresponding to expectations that mark their spaces of experience.

Emily also illustrates a typical view of her social surroundings. It is possible to observe that among this group of young people leisure activities tend to be shared more with friends and not so much with parents. English young people mentioned spontaneously that they do not find family trips as interesting at this time in their lives as they did in the past. At these age, friends do not tend to interact with each other inside family homes as often happens in Brazil

The different patterns of family relationship and friendship within family homes do not mean that these young women, as Ann illustrated in the beginning of this chapter, do not have strong emotional links to their parents or are afraid of committing themselves as Bauman's concept of liquid love suggests. They are attempting to be recognised as more adult by their parents. Because of that they try to reproduce the adulthood dynamics that are expected from them. The

emotional sharing with parents becomes difficult to reconcile with the young girls' attempts to display 'maturity', 'strength', and so on. Emily will not share with her mother her fragility, since her mother already 'treats her as if she was younger'. Claire and Mary will not open up their insecurities and doubts to their parents, as they perceive parents' expectations of them in terms of self-capacity to learn 'to make the right choices' and 'make sure they respond to things'.

Young people's relationships with parents are very much based on what is expected of them and confronted by them in their life surroundings. As young women were traditionally connected with their roles as wives and mothers, the construction and affirmation of independence tends to concern them more than young men. It seems that since young men are naturally positioned as the ones who will leave the parents' house and construct their lives directly connected to the outside world, they do not tend to 'represent' their independence from their parents as the young women participants do. For this reason, talk about independence concerns practical matters. These fragments of narrative took place in the focus group with the young men at St. Joseph's School.

> Joe- My parents will be always here if I need something (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Fred- By moving you can have the house in the way you want (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Bill-When you leave your parents' home, it means that you've got something - a lot of freedom (St. Joseph's School).

The middle and upper class boys expressed their links with their home by acknowledging that their parents would continue supporting them throughout their studies. In this sense they do not focus on the need to break from the caring protection of home. ' My parents will be always here if I need something'. They also tend not to talk about confrontation or relationships with parents in their anticipation of freedom. Their articulations are much more focused on their anticipations of future lives, and freedom is visualised without the need for it to be negotiated. Fred seems to be certain that he will 'have the house in the way he wants'. Young men tend to illustrate moving away from the parents' home by prioritising the excitement that they hope to come along with the change. The more practical type of support described by the young men interviewed is actually in line with the different encouragement to express emotion young men and young women receive from parents and other adults in their lives (Allan,

1996). However, it seems that the middle and upper class girls, as they are expected to be professionals in the labour market, are incorporating the processes in which emotions tend to be rationalised.

Among English working-class young men, neither the fact of leaving home nor freedom, have been mentioned in the context of family relationships. For them their means of independence are not illustrated by the change of environment, nor by the desire of leaving their parents, but by the fact they have chosen to start a university course that they hope will broaden their life opportunities. The fragments of narrative illustrated below took place in Nottingham College during the Focus Group with the young men.

> Jonathan- it is your own choice to come here (Nottingham College)
>
> AM- does it not have anything to do with your parents' expectation or other things like that?
>
> Alex- No. I have made this decision. My mum wanted me to get a job instead of coming to college. It is my choice coming up here. (Nottingham College)

As the majority of the boys I interviewed left schools at sixteen and are already engaged in some sort of job, they opted to continue living at home. These young men are not preoccupied with ratifying their independence from their parents in the same ways as the middle class subjects. Both Jonathan and Alex made clear that it was 'their choice, their decision to come to College'. They do not mention much about their relationships with the families of birth, but they describe themselves as happy with the fact of living at their parents' home. They do not expect their relationships at home to be affected by their decision to go to university. As Alex says his mother did not want him to go to university. She preferred Alex to get a job right away. Probably due to the lack of pressure to perform well at school and college, their articulations in relation to family of birth were not often made present in their narratives.

Among the working-class young men and women the preoccupation with autonomy did not appear in their interviews. Working-class young people tend to feel more rooted to their home environment and hometown and less enthusiastic about leaving home. As has already been mentioned by other researchers, in addition to the working-class attachment to their roots, the decrease of low-skilled and unskilled job opportunities for school-leavers in the

period called by social theorists 'late modernity', compels them to remain living in their parents' home for longer (Roberts, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). The few occasions in which the working-class young men mentioned their families in the context of their interviews were in relation to their expectations of helping their parents' standard of life as young people engage with their future careers.

> Rick- What I want is to buy a better house for my mum and dad as soon as I get a career (Nottingham College).
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> Allison- I would like to be a physiotherapist and help my parents to buy a house in the countryside (Nottingham College).

Even though working-class young men make clear their attachment to home, they tend to exclude from their narratives expressions of emotional support as do the middle-class ones. What actually is very often emphasised both by young men and women from working-class backgrounds, like Rick and Allison, is their desire to 'buy a better house for mum and dad' and concretise some material dreams of their parents. For example, Allison's parents wish to have 'a house in the countryside' and she hopes to make their dreams come true.

Differently, the working-class girls talk about their needs not only in a practical sense or material context of helping parents, but embedded in deeply emotional interactions. Sue, a working-class girl from Nottingham College, is very willing to express her emotional longing to stick to her roots. Interestingly, it is important to observe how her emotional attachment has influenced her career choices. Sue has decided to do law at Nottingham Trent University, as she feels unhappy with the possibility of being away from her family. As will become clear later, the reluctance to move away from the hometown and the family surroundings is also presented by the Brazilian interviewees. I suggest that in the working-class environment in England, among the girls, the rationalisation of emotion and fears is embedded less in young women's social signifiers and habitus, than in the middle class surroundings. Sue works to help her parents to pay for her education and other life expenses. By working and studying at the same time Sue in certain ways feels less pressurised to negotiate her adulthood with her parents.

Sue- I just don't like to be away from my family or anything. I like the support from my family, because they really support me. They support me with my education, you know pushing me, and saying come on Sue, don't give up, and all this you know. I just feel comfortable having them with me while I am going through that stage (Nottingham College).

Sue's willingness to reveal her need to have her parents around, encouraging her, 'pushing' her, and ' saying come on Sue don't give up' is very similar to the type of narratives produced by male and female Brazilians as we are going to see. Sue and my Brazilian interviewees do not feel less adult because they express the necessity of parents' support at a practical and emotional level. One aspect that has appeared often among the working-class females I interviewed was their belonging to mixed ethnicity. For example, Sue's father is from Cuba and her mother from Ireland. Because of this she categorises herself as 'British from mixed race'. What I am pointing out here is that the mixed ethnicity of my working-class young women participants may also have reflected on the different ways they express emotion with their parents.

As the interconnection between the practical and emotional caring is much more blurred in Sue's surroundings than in the spaces of middle and upper class young participants, Sue's relationship with her mum and dad tends to be described by her as closer and less formal.

Sue- You do keep something to yourself, don't you? But, yeah I can talk to them. I am open with them about mostly everything. They are really like friends to me. They really make me laugh. My dad is really babbling, and my mum is as well. We all get on really, really well (Nottingham College).

From Sue's relationship with her parents we can see how it differs from the formal relationships among the middle and upper-middle young people I interviewed in relation to their parents. Actually, the obscure boundaries between the roles as parents and friends characterise very much the social relations of Brazilian society. With this I am not saying that all family relations in Brazil and in the English working-class are close and intimate. Actually, Lisa, a working-class girl in England, does not get along with her mom, since she feels, due to some problems she got involved in during her adolescence, her mother is unable to trust the fact that she has changed.

Although family relationships are embedded in social positioning and location (space of experience) every family has its own individuality, so that

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representations of families tend to be incomplete. I am not dismissing the fact that common practices cut across the space of experience of those who share them. One common element is the need for both rootedness and disconnection. These are expressed, however, in differentiated ways across social groups, gender, ethnicity and national culture. Just as in England, negotiation of dependence and independence in Brazil is centred on young people's interactions with parents.

1.2 Leaving the Parents' home in Brazil

The process of growing up as an adult takes place differently and much later, particularly with middle and upper class Brazilians. Especially when the young person lives in big cities with broad and good university options, the person is not expected to leave the family house to go to university. After graduating from university, even when a person has already his/her own job, parents expect their children to remain living at home until they get married. Since marriages among the middle and upper class nowadays are happening much later, people remain living at their parents' home until they are in their late twenties or early thirties.

> Luciana- Todo mundo junto ainda na mesma casa, fazendo suas atividades, trabalhando e voltando no fim do dia para casa. Quando tiver na universidade, com um trabalho, vou poder sair mais à noite, o que eu acho ótimo. Por enquanto, meu pai não quer que eu saia de jeito nenhum. **Everybody is together in the same house, going to work and coming back every day. When I am at university, with a job, I will be able to go out more often which I think will be great, because nowadays my father doesn't agree to me going out at night often, no way (Colégio São Francisco).**
> **
> Daniel- E, até já discuti com meus amigos, mas a gente acha melhor ficar em casa. Gosto da companhia dos meus pais e não tenho a mínima vontade de morar em casa só. **Yeah I have already discussed with some friends, but we agree that it is better to remain living at home. I like my parents' company and I don't have any wish to leave in some place alone (Colégio São Francisco).**

Luciana's and Daniel's narratives are very typical of middle and upper class backgrounds, especially, from the Northeast of Brazil. In the family house, as mentioned by Luciana, 'everybody is together... going to work and coming back everyday'. Luciana believes that even remaining living with her parents, after going to university, she will be able to enjoy her freedom and go out more often at night. A common complaint from all Brazilian young women is about the strict control of their parents over their activities outside the house. This control may

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be explained by the actual fact that girls tend to be more protected by parents, especially, during their school years, since in this period they insist on going out regularly, they start dating, and so forth. At the same time, the state of Pernambuco, where the research took place, has been ranked by a recent youth development report, written by researchers of UNESCO Brazil, as the state in Brazil with the second highest index (per 100.000 habitants) of death, caused by violence, traffic accidents, homicides and suicides- among young people from 15 to 24 years old (see Waiselfisz et al., 2004). The state of Maranhão has the lowest index per 100.000 habitants of the country for death caused by violence among young people, which is 21.34. The State of Rio de Janeiro has the highest index in the country at 128.57, and Pernambuco the second highest at 127.97 (Waiselfisz, et al, 2004: 153). Violence, particularly in the capitals of Brazil, is possibly another reason why parents are so afraid of allowing their sons and daughters to go out with friends at night.

Daniel has a very independent personality. He is a member of a music band and often plays in bars at night. His parents do not approve of this, or of his arriving home late, but even in the face of his parents' opposition and some restrictions, he prefers to remain living at home. These narratives suggest one common characteristic which Brazilians, especially from the Northeast, share with one another. They see themselves as very gregarious and having difficulties in living on their own. The family home is not only a physical space. The interaction with family members takes a central role in people's daily routine, and is still one of the most fundamental references for social identity entanglements[45]. After marrying, upper and middle class young people from Recife are likely to prefer to continue living in surrounding suburbs, close to their parents' home and to the rest of the extended family. The extended family in the Northeast of Brazil remains central in young people's relationships (Freyre, 1957; Damatta, 1994).

> Alexandre- O que eu quero na minha vida é ser feliz. No futuro, para eu ser feliz eu acho que tenho que estar sempre com os meus amigos, arrumar um bom trabalho, viver perto da minha família, com minha esposa e filhos, perto dos meus primos, que

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[45] The world entanglement here is an engagement with Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle, stressing the temporal process in which the practice of entanglement takes place. This has been discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

são também meus melhores amigos, tios, tias, avôs. Para mim é isso... é fazer isso... e aí está tudo certo. **What I want in my life is to be happy. Now, in order to feel happy I think I have to be always with my friends, to find a good job, to live near my family with wife and children, near my cousins who are also my best friends, uncles, aunts, grandparents. For me this is everything that I need** (Colégio São Francisco).

As we saw from Alexandre's articulation of happiness his social relations with friends and family members are the main components to his well-being. Family relations in Brazil are very likely to intersect with other spheres of life as, for example, social gatherings, and friendships. According to Lins de Barros (1987) in her empirical work with middle and upper class grandparents in Brazil, she found that grandparents' houses tend to be organised to have spare rooms for their grandchildren. The roles played by grandparents are also very important to the Brazilian working class. Some of the working-class interviewees, especially those who were abandoned by their fathers, live in their grandparents' house. For the middle and upper class, grandparents' homes tend to be a meeting point, where memories are extremely powerful.

Silvana- Eu moro com meus avôs. Eles são tudo para mim. Faz cinco anos que eu não vejo meu pai e minha mãe nunca foi mãe. Meus avôs foram mãe e pai. **I live with my grandparents. They are everything for me. It's been five years since I have seen my father. My mum was never a real mother. My grandparents have been mother and father** (Colégio São João).
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Júnior- A minha avó era a minha vida, porque às vezes eu deixava de sair com meus amigos para ir pra casa dela. Não tem jeito, desde que ela se foi é uma eterna saudade para mim. Quando ia na casa dela, eu encontrava todo o resto da família e dormia de mãos dadas com ela na cama do lado e a gente sempre vivia conversando. A falta é uma coisa imensa. **My grandmother was my life, because sometimes I would prefer not to go out with my friends and go to her house. There is nothing I can do... since she died I feel an eternal nostalgia. When I used to go to her home I used to meet the rest of the family. We used to sleep holding hands. Her bed was next to mine. We would be always talking. Her absence is something immense** (Colégio São Francisco).

Silvana's grandparents played the role of extremely close parents to her. From what she said they 'have been mother and father'. Silvana emphasises that 'they are everything for me'. In her articulation she says that her 'mum was never a real mother' and she has not seen her father for five years. Júnior had a similar relationship with his grandmother; a greater identification is very difficult to find in life. Exactly because of this, he feels 'an eternal nostalgia' as nothing and nobody can replace her space in his life. His grandmother's house was not only a place to meet the extended family, but an environment in which his emotions and sharing were profoundly experienced – ' We used to sleep

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holding hands'. One aspect that is important to highlight here is that Júnior's relationship with his grandmother does not really fit with the model of sharing, described by Giddens (1992a), and Bauman (2003) where the mutual roles of daily lives are disregarded and emotional attachment among family members is described as being 'corroded' (Sennett, 1998). Júnior's grandmother used to take him to school and football training, whenever his parents were unable. Besides this, Júnior helped to look after his grandmother when she was ill. The emotional sharing was constructed based on each other's daily needs and not only on leisure time and/or on special moments of pleasure, as in Gidden's pure relationship.

The young people interviewed in Recife tend to have meals with or to meet up with their extended family, particularly grandparents, at least once a week. As Júnior mentioned, grandparents actually tend to be very involved in the daily routine of their grandchildren. In the case of working-class Brazilians a very typical experience, as highlighted by Silvana, is to live with grandparents when the child does not receive the father's support, or for financial reasons, when grandparents are the owners of their own house. This aspect has been exemplified in Chapter 3.

The involvement of middle-class young people with their families is also incorporated in leisure activities. Among the young people I interviewed there is a tendency to spend leisure time with family members and friends in family' homes or in second homes on the coast or in the interior of the state. Leisure time especially among the middle and upper class Brazilians tends to be experienced within the nuclear and extended family group, involving grandparents, and other relatives, such as uncles, aunts, and cousins, differently from the experience narrated by my English interviewees.

> Márcio- Meu pai trabalha muito, mas no final de semana ele faz questão de ficar com a gente. Ele pega a lancha e leva minha mãe, meu irmão, amigos nossos e eu. Ele curte os nossos amigos e a relação com os amigos dele e os da minha mãe é como de tios.É uma grande farra. **My father works very long hours during the week, but at the weekends he dedicates his time to us. He uses his boat at our beach house and then my mum, my brother, our friends, and I go on the boat. My father likes the company of our friends and my parents' friends are like uncles and aunts to us. It is big fun** (Colégio São Francisco).

In Brazil, a close friend of a house member is very likely to become intimate with the rest of the family members. The friend tends to call the house owners 'uncle' and 'aunt'. It seems that in England the parents of young people tend not to participate as much in his/her intimacy, nor to mingle with their children's friends particularly of the age group of my interviewees. In general the participants of the research, as Márcio points out, described their leisure moments with parents and friends enthusiastically - 'It's big fun'. There is also a certain satisfaction in having the father's full attention, whose work-life Márcio evaluates as very busy - 'the weekends he dedicates to us'.

Brazilians from both middle and working class backgrounds live longer in their parents' home from childhood through adulthood. The roles of children and parents, from the experiences of the Brazilian interviewees, by involving leisure activities throughout the entire lives, get much more blurred than in the case of the English participants. This association with young people's leisure activities and friendship may explain the reasons why Brazilians perceived their parents more as friends than the middle-class English interviewees.

> Márcio- Minha mãe é bem aberta assim, ela entende as necessidades de um jovem. Ela sabe que eu tenho as minhas necessidades com estudo e ela exige isso. E como eu tenho notas boas, ela não tem problema comigo quanto ao colegio, essas coisas. Ás vezes tenho necessidade de sair sozinho com minha mãe para conversar e aí a gente vai ao shopping, ao cinema. **My mother is very approachable. She understands the needs of young people. She knows I have to study and she expects this. But as I have good grades, she does not have problems with me in terms of school, this sort of thing. Sometimes I feel the need to go out only with her to chat, and then we go shopping or to the cinema** (Colégio São Francisco).

As Márcio points out, in his age group, the roles of parents and children become much more weakened. To be recognised as adults in the Brazilian context is not linked to the rationalisation of emotions. At the same time, as I have stated before, since Brazilians are unlikely to move away from parents' home when they go to universities, their relationship with parents is less influenced by the need to play adults' roles. However, Brazilians throughout all social classes tend to complain about the close control of parents in relation to their leisure activities, because of the fear of violence. These young people believe that becoming older will give them more freedom to go out with friends at night.

Besides the strong identification of the Brazilians in connection to the family sphere, the economic instability of the country is certainly another fact that

contributes to young people remaining longer at parents' homes than happens with the working-class in England. Living at the parent's home throughout their young adulthood is something that is expected by the Brazilian middle class and is part of a very significant element of their plan configurations. It has to do with emotional and practical securities. Engaging with a new life routine by relying on the emotional and the more practical care of the 'folks at home' encourages these young people to face the insecurity of their future lives. Working-class Brazilians also remain living in parents' home for a longer time. This occurs even in the case of early pregnancy, and marriage. Without completing a secondary education, a person in Brazil is unlikely to be able to find a job or make a living. By not being able to count on welfare benefits, social programs, quality public services, the family becomes one of the few institutions of support and exchange that a person can rely on. Unemployment, unlike in Sennett's (1998) analysis, does not pull people apart in Brazil, but unites family members. In this context, the strong desire to 'stick to one's roots', an expression illustrated by Sue ('British, mixed race' working-class), can be understood in terms of the Brazilian narratives. Living with parents after marrying is not necessarily a non-conflictive issue, but does help working-class people to deal with their economic constraints and share their lives practically and emotionally.

Cristina- Eu adoro morar com minha mãe, porque minha mãe é tudo na minha vida, mas quem casa quer casa. Não é que incomoda é que sempre minha mãe tem o gosto dela, ela quer uma coisa de um jeito e eu quero de outro. Na verdade, a gente não teve condições financeiras de morar numa casa só. De todo jeito se não fosse minha mãe para ficar com meu filho, enquanto estou no colégio, eu não podia continuar estudando. **I love to live with my mother, because my mother has always been everything in my life, but whoever marries wants a house. My mother does not bother me, but she has her own ways of doing things. She wants some things her way and I want them my way, but in truth we did not have financial conditions to afford a house for ourselves. And, if my mother was not at home, I could not continue studying because of my son** (Dom João).

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Eduardo- Eu só quero mudar da casa dos meus pais quando casar com alguém, porque família é o que a pessoa tem de mais importante. É com quem você pode contar, em quem você vai se inspirar, com que você vai viver a sua vida. A sua formação depende dela. **I only want to move from my parents' home when I get married, because your family is your most important possession. You can count on your family and get inspiration from them. You can live your whole life with them. Your perspectives on life come from your family upbringing** (Colégio São Francisco).

From the narratives of the working-class and middle/upper class Brazilians we can observe not only the strong emotional attachments these young people tend to feel towards their family, but also the openness with which feelings are

expressed. Cristina represents the image of her mum in a very powerful way-'My mother has always been everything in my life'. Being abandoned by her father, Cristina places her mother as the central figure of her life, from whom she receives all the support she needs. After marrying, Cristina does still recognise how much her mum means to her, but she acknowledges her need to live in another place with her husband, to feel she is already a housewife, capable of managing the house activities. Cristina's desire to have her own house reinforces her capacity to recognise herself as a married woman, able to take care of her life, and the house, without the daily support of her mother. Eduardo perceives how his development as an individual is connected to the type of upbringing and influence he received from his family of birth. In his opinion, family impacts not only on a person's perspectives on life, but also on a person's 'inspiration' in life. Probably this feeling of being so bound up with family may be characteristic of a society like the Brazilian one, in which the emotional and the rational boundaries are not precisely defined (Damatta, 1994).

Brazilian family lives are not characterised by the recognition of the individual's autonomy, as a free agent, psychologically independent from parents (compare to Walkerdine et al, 2001). The importance given to relationality or interdependence and co-dependence reinforces strong interactions and identifications with families. Living with this co-dependent process of becoming an adult there is not a rigid separation between the private sphere of a young person's life and his/her communal life as a specific member of the family. As family life in Brazil is entangled in the young person's life in multiple and interactive ways it is much more difficult for the Brazilians I interviewed to configure a defined picture of their individuality independent of family relationships. Also as Brazilians tend to live with their parents for longer periods of time than English young people, the process in which individuality, practical care, and intimate relations are constructed is likely to occur within the parental homes throughout different times in a person's life. The relationship between personal autonomy and family intervention in Brazil is not so clearly defined as in England. The individual claim for autonomy and the family practice of intervention need to be constantly articulated and negotiated.

> Daniel- a gente aqui depende totalmente de pai e mãe. A vida para classe média é bem diferente dos outros lugares, não temos que fazer nada na casa. Em outros aspectos os pais cercam a vida da gente por inteiro, o que dá uma sensação de proteção, de amor intenso. Ao mesmo tempo, você fica sem saber do que é capaz sem eles. Morro de medo de perder meus pais. **Here we depend totally on father and mother. The life of the middle class here is very different from other places. We don't have to do anything in the house. Our parents surround our lives entirely. This gives a sense of protection, and intense love, but at the same time you don't know what you are able to do without them. I am extremely afraid of losing my parents** (Colégio São Francisco).

As Daniel states, this strong need for family support makes a young person's confidence in his/her independence more fragile. As young people count on parents for almost everything 'our parents surround our lives entirely', they find it difficult to frame a life without a parental presence. Interestingly, the majority of my interviewees express their fears in life in terms of losing a family member. This may have to do with the level of violence in Recife or the impossibility of configuring their lives without the parents' presence. As family life impinges very strongly on Brazilian young people's articulations, independence from family does not appear as central as in England. My Brazilian interviewees' expression of independence becomes much more fragmented. Independence in Brazil is very much associated with financial means to support oneself rather than in terms of a life of one's own.

Differently from English middle class surroundings, emotional interactions and sharing are not associated with lack of maturity or emotional fragility. Brazilians from middle and upper class backgrounds tend to construct their discourses around independence in terms of their abilities to cope with the practicalities of their future daily lives. They foresee their experiences of independence in relation to their desires for living a short period of time abroad. The majority of my Brazilian middle and upper class participants plan to spend from six months to a year abroad. Their purpose is not only to learn a foreign language, but also as a means of confirming to their parents and to themselves their capacity to live far away from home, both in emotional terms and by engaging with practical activities.

> Alexandre- Primeiro, eu quero aprender bem o inglês, pois é o básico que o mercado de trabalho exige. E também é uma experiência do tipo assim... aqui, a gente depende tudo do pai e da mãe, lá não. A gente vai ter a preocupação de pagar o aluguel, pagar as contas, entendeu? A organização de tudo, não vai ter empregados para vir e tirar as roupas sujas. É tipo assim de você criar mais independência, responsabilidade, esse tipo de coisa. Não que eu seja irresponsável, mas meu pai e minha mãe não sabem o

quanto sou responsável, entendeu? **First of all, I want to learn English, because it is a minimum requirement for any job. Besides, I want to have an experience like... here we depend on our mother and father for everything. Abroad will be different. We will have to pay for the rent, pay for our bills do you know what I mean? To tidy up, there we will not have employees to separate and wash our dirty clothes. It is the kind of experience to build more independence, responsibility... this type of things. It does not mean that I am irresponsible, but my dad and my mom don't know how responsible I am, do you know what I mean?** (Colégio São Francisco).

Alexandre's experience is not uncommon among middle and upper class Brazilians. Parents are very keen to pay for their children to experience six months to a year in Europe or North America, after they finish the last year of high school and university entrance exams. Upper class Brazilian young people do not tend to have practical skills in terms of housework, as significant numbers have employees working full-time in their homes, thereafter parents encourage them to have an experience of a more independent life-style. Independence is then constructed among these young people as an achievement that has different connotations in specific times of these young people's lives.

Márcio- Eu acho que você só tem independência quando puder sair da casa dos pais, tiver um trabalho, uma certa estabilidade econômica, ao lado da sua nova família. **I think that you only have independence when you are able to leave your parents' home, by having a job, with a certain economic stability with the family you will form** (Colégio São Francisco).

Being able to cope with the short-term experience abroad only reassures these young people of the possibility of looking after themselves in the practical terms of cooking, washing their clothes, living in a foreign country, and learning a language. This sort of independence is seen as an achievement. It shows their capacity to look after themselves. However, it does not signify a totally independent life. First of all, experience abroad is sponsored by parents and not by the young people themselves. In addition, some of the young people interviewed say that they just want to go abroad along with a friend or cousin of the same age. Márcio states that Brazilians tend to live a more prolonged period of dependence than English people. As university students, middle and upper class Brazilians are likely to work only as trainees; therefore, they do not have the financial conditions to leave their parents' home. The full independence of middle and upper class Brazilians is only visualised in the context of finishing university, finding jobs and getting married. Among my middle and upper class

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Brazilians, their fears are deeply connected not only with violence, but also the fear of unemployment.

> Daniel- Eu quero começar a minha vida, algumas coisas, por exemplo, passar no vestibular, entrar na faculdade, mas tenho medo de não conseguir ter minha vida, viver no sufoco e ficar dependendo dos meus pais. É esse o meu medo, porque aqui é o que acontece no Brasil, isso acontece com muita gente. Inclusive, com pessoas bem preparadas. **I want to start my life, for example, by going to university, but I am afraid of not managing my life, of struggling and remaining dependent on my parents. This is my fear, because here this is common. This happens even with people who are very capable and with high educational credentials** (Colégio São Francisco).

As Daniel points out independence is much more related in his social group to the possibility of being able to sort out his practical life. Bearing in mind the different levels of risk that impact on the lives of working-class people in Brazil, middle class young people feel that education does not guarantee the financial conditions for making a living, as Costa has confirmed (2003: 38)[46]. Actually, my middle class interviewees expressed their fears of finishing their university degree without a job, and having to depend on their parents.

Working-class Brazilians, although they do not have the financial resources to spend time studying abroad, are much more engaged with the practicalities of daily living than the middle and upper class Brazilians, as for example the duty of tidying up the house, cooking and gardening. Even though working-class Brazilians' dependence on their family of birth may remain after marrying, if they need to live in their parents' home, their process of independence begins with their first job.

> Antonio- Minha maior barreira no momento é não ter emprego, não ter dinheiro para ajudar em casa. É nao conseguir que alguém ouça a minha opinião em casa. **My biggest obstacle at present is not having a job, not having money to help at home. It is not being able to make somebody listen to my opinion at home** (Dom João).

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46 Although the number of years spent studying do not guarantee employment, the youth development report written by researchers at UNESCO-Brazil (Waiselfisz et al., 2004) shows that when comparing the number of years spent in formal education, the greater the number of years spent in education, the less likely a person is to become unemployed and the more likely they are to have a higher salary.

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As Antonio highlights the fact of being unemployed reinforces his impression that he is not take seriously by people at home- 'nobody listens to my opinion at home'. For him the lack of a job and financial means to help at home diminishes his possibility of being recognised as an adult by himself and others.

Finally, we are going to see in the next section how entanglement with social living conditions and expectation in terms of independence impinge on young people's plans for having their own family.

2. Family Formation

The desire to have a family cuts across the narratives of all my participants from Brazil and England from all social groups interviewed. The differences found in their narratives are in terms of their future plans for establishing stable romances.

2.1 Early Romances

Differences in narratives are at their most noticeable when those of Brazilian working class females are compared with those of English middle and upper class females. Working-class Brazilian females, more so than young men, live in contexts where leisure activities are very restricted for them. The restriction of activities and locations available to young people has been mentioned by Pilkington (1994) in her research with young Russians in the beginning of the nineties. Besides the material constraints, their parents associate them with duties inside the house, in order to keep young people busy enough to avoid contact with the dangerous world of the streets. For those living in contexts described as 'monotonous and repetitive', early romances appear as means to innovate and fulfil girls' fantasies. The lack of a boyfriend causes great frustration among the Brazilian young women participants.

> Angela- O que está faltando na minha vida no momento é um namorado. Eu sou muito tímida com os meninos. Só tenho amigas mulheres, porque quando alguns dos meninos chegam para conversar comigo fico muda. **What is missing in my life at present is a boyfriend. I am very shy with boys. I just have female friends, because when the boys come to speak with me I just can't say much** (Dom João).
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> **
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> Josilene- Se eu tivesse um namorado minha vida seria muito mais empolgante, pois pelo menos teria alguém para conversar, falar sobre tudo, sonhar. **If I had a boyfriend my life would be much more exciting, because I would have somebody to chat to,**

to talk with about everything, to share dreams with and to go out much more with (Dom João).

As shown in the narratives of both Angela and Josilene the perspective of sharing their actual lives with boyfriends, besides the company they can count on, adds the possibility of an idealised and enjoyable future life. Angela associates her desire to have a boyfriend with 'what is missing in my life in the present moment'. Josilene foresees the possibility of having a 'much more exciting' life if she had a boyfriend. To dream about some pleasure in a context of such uncertain lives brings excitement into the daily routines as described by Francisca.

> Francisca -Eu adoro ficar em casa sozinha, porque aí posso ficar lavando os pratos, escutando músicas românticas, aí esqueco da vida e fico imaginando minha vida de casada com Binho. **I love to stay at home alone, because I can wash the dishes, listening to romantic music, then I forget about the daily life and start imagining my married life with Binho** (Dom João).

The beginning of an intimate relationship fulfils the young women's lives. By going out with a young man approved by the family, young women start being happier by falling in love, and reducing the monotony of their daily routines. Dating a man approved by their families, in a city that is still marked by patriarchal relations, offers the young women interviewed the chance to go out more often, obtaining permission from parents for sightseeing, and experiencing a higher sense of freedom. All these aspects help them to break with the burdens of house cleaning, school homework, and their excessive time at home.

As their aspirations towards a career are directly associated with other spheres of life, for example, marrying and having children, there is not a strong opposition among this group of girls to early intimate relationships. They are aware of the fact that their dreams of having a successful career and a big wedding celebration will not necessarily happen. They tend to focus on the need to live day to day without planning too much, so they can enjoy pleasant times as they occur.

> Neide- Não dá para pensar em vida ideal o negócio é deixar rolar. Ir vivendo e vendo. **It is not possible to think in terms of an ideal life. The thing is to live and decide as things appear.** (Colegio Dom João).

Feeling happier while experiencing romantic relationships induces the young women to idealise a shared life with their boyfriends as soon as possible. They are likely to think that they will become more independent by living with or getting married to their boyfriends, and the fact of being a mother will make them feel more complete, as Cristina also previously thought.

Cristina, who became a mother while she was sixteen, did not anticipate that early pregnancy would be an obstacle to pursue her plans for becoming an independent woman in the future. She describes her wish to be a mother in the context of being able to fight for what she wants without postponing her life. As her future career would have to depend upon the completion of secondary education, and the possibility of getting a job, she felt 'ready to start living'. To be a mother was incorporated in Cristina's composition of her dreams. Thus, the birth of her child is narrated as the realisation of a dream.

> Ana Maria- Do you see your early pregnancy as an obstacle to carry on with your desire to being an independent woman in terms of work commitment?
>
> Cristina- Veja eu sempre tive esse sonho de ser mãe, eu acho que toda pessoa tem. Eu não era casada , mas já tinha data marcada e eu sabia que meu marido ia assumir e não me abandonaria como mãe solteira como minha mãe foi abandonada. Daí pensei que casando e tendo um filho teria mais liberdade. Minha mãe sermpre me prendia, não deixava eu sair para canto nenhum. Aí pensei que teria mais liberdade depois de casada, com meu filho e meu marido. **See I always had this dream of being a mother, I think every person has this dream. I was not married, but we had already arranged a date to get married, so I knew my husband would not abandon me and our children as my father did with my mother. I thought I would have more freedom after marriage, accompanied by my son and my husband** (Dom João).

Because of the incidence of early pregnancy in the working-class school, male participants, even though they express the desire to have a family of their own in the future, tend to avoid early commitments.

> Antonio- Depois de ter um emprego é logico que quero casar, por enquanto fico somente com um namoro de leve, mas depois quero ter uma família e dar para os meus filhos as oportunidades que não tive. Uma vida sem amor é tipo uma planta sem folhas, o amor na minha vida vai ser uma vida completa, mais bonita e mais completa. **After getting a job it is obvious that I want to marry, but meanwhile I want only a light relationship, without great commitment. When I get a job I want a family to give to my sons the opportunities I did not have. Life without love is like a plant without leaves. The love in my life will make it complete and more beautiful** (Colégio Dom João).
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> **
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> Paulo- Pelo que vejo os meus amigos que começaram a namorar cedo acabam dançando, porque suas namoradas engravidam. Daí eles não conseguem estudar e o emprego que arrumam é somente temporário. Conheco muita gente, meus vizinhos

mesmos, que tem 6, 7 filhos, não tem uma profissão, não tem emprego, não tem nada para sustentar os meninos. Isso é vida...? **From what I can see my friends who started to date in an early age end up in trouble. Because their girlfriends get pregnant, then none of them are able to continue studying and the jobs the men find are only short-term. I know many people, my neighbours who have six, seven children, and they don't have any profession, any job, they don't have anything to maintain their children. Is this life?** (Colégio Dom João).

Throughout all the interviews I had among with the Brazilian working-class males the issue of forming a family appeared spontaneously. They consider a family as life continuity and the possibility of making their lives more fulfilled. All the working-class boys have mentioned what Antonio said about 'give to my sons the opportunities I did not have'. Paulo's preoccupation with early commitment is shared among the young men interviewed, as they are aware of the level of poverty that confronts families in their social surroundings. Young women in certain ways tend to idealise more their future as mothers, perceived in the sense of independence, and therefore do not consider the negative consequences of early pregnancy. Besides the idealisation that comes with the feeling of being in love, as financial conditions and job security are not predictable for these young women anyway, they decide to live for the moment instead of waiting for an unpredictable stable life.

Cristina's urge to start living her adult life as soon as possible, speeding up her adulthood process, did not allow her to enjoy freer and more pleasant time. As soon as Cristina had her baby, she had to assume the routines and obligations of an adult in working-class surroundings. Her transition from adolescence to adulthood happened quite drastically. Cristina ended up with more duties. Her husband works at fixing computers seven days a week, and she is expected to help him in his work. She does not only have to engage with her duties as a housewife and as a student, while her mother looks after her son, but she also has to seek her first job as soon as she completes secondary education.

2.2 Delaying Gratifications

Differently from the perspectives of the working-class Brazilians towards intimate relationships, the English middle and upper middle-class females have a long-term plan in relation to commitment. They tend to concentrate on their professional careers and foresee having a family as only happening after they have some success in their careers. Intimate relationships do not tend to appear spontaneously during the interviews with them, but only in the context of describing their images of a completely fulfilled life.

> Ana Maria- if you had money for a house, for travelling and a career, would your life be completely fulfilled?
>
> Mary- A nice relationship I suppose. Getting on well with people, having nice friends (Magdalene School).
>
> Ana Maria- And, how about sexual intimate relationship?
>
> Mary- I suppose it would be. You would feel like you know when you are in the 30's really (Magdalene School).

English middle and upper middle-class females, like for example Mary, construct almost a kind of defensive discourse in order to avoid the possibility of falling in love before having accomplished career satisfaction. In the articulation of their narratives they are likely to demonstrate how much they are prepared to accept the deferment of gratification in relation to love and family formation. In contrast to what Bauman (2003) argues, these young women are not looking for liquid love, as they expect to engage with their careers, and build a stable relationship to form a family. Deferment of gratification impacts very much on their lives.

I suggest that the middle and upper-middle class women, in building their life paths by focussing on their career ambitions, are reflecting upon women's secondary place in the labour market[47] in terms of salaries and higher managerial positions. They then tend to rationalise their discourses in terms of intimate relationships. In my opinion the constructions of postponed gratification in relation to intimate relationships is analogous to their narratives of emotional

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47 As shown in the first section of Chapter 3, even though work opportunities are likely to be higher among the females in the UK, males salaries are still higher in comparison to female.

independence towards parents. By attempting to ratify their capacity to build a life on their own, they deny to themselves the importance of combining romance with professional life.

> Ana Maria- And, how about intimate relationship?
>
> Lucy- I don't think it is that important. People used to measure success particularly by whether you got married or not. I don't think this is on anymore (St. Joseph's School).

I realised throughout the interviews with Joan and Lucy, which were held together, that the young women were engaging with an influential discursive position in their surroundings. Therefore I attempted to 'break' with their incorporated defences. I focussed on how they felt about the fact of having a family and living romances in a later stage of their lives.

> Ana Maria- If you are successful in terms of your career, would you be keen on having romances or this is not really an issue for you?
>
> Lucy- In my case I think it's important for women to get into a family stage. I think relationship has to come before a career automatically. And, if I found the right person, whoever it is, I would be happy to have a family and everything. I think it would be more important ultimately (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- Are you saying that you would be able to combine a career and a family?
>
> Lucy- I would like a career first. I would like to be able to achieve something in a career, before settling down and having a family (St. Joseph's School).

From my dialogue with Lucy, Joan and other young women from their social group it is possible to identify a very strong rationalisation about the need to succeed in a career before committing themselves to love and family formation. This more rationalised discourse does lack the flexibility to combine the two aspects of life as they may appear at the same moment in their life. From this perspective they seem to incorporate a strong ideological 'construct', related to Gidden's notion of reflexivity[48]. This model in which the young women rationalise their emotional lives reinforces their potentials through mental and intellectual capacities rather than the emotional maturity to combine the various aspects of life. In this sense, career realisation and sexual intimate happiness become almost mutually exclusive. Walkerdine et al., (2001) and Johnson and Walkerdine (2004) have pointed to problems facing upper-middle and middle class women in terms of having difficulty in becoming pregnant at a later age. Women, particularly, from privileged social class backgrounds, are likely to

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48 The concept has been discussed in Chapter 2˙

reach high status careers that may become very demanding. In this context, these young women plan to postpone maternity until their later 30's or earlier 40's. However, what is happening is the reaction of their physical bodies against fertility at a later age.

Sometimes, however, young women's articulations of choices do not appear without ambiguity. At times in the interview, Lucy and Joan break with their intellectual 'discourses' of the contemporary female, linked to the idea of success, and the achievement of the pinnacle in their career, and let their personal desires appear and reveal more of themselves.

> Joan- yes, to have a family is very important almost to everybody, really. I think it means that you have self-respect (St. Joseph's).

It is interesting how Joan connects the family stage with the notion of self-respect. She might be suggesting that to deny the possibility of living a happy family life is a way of denying personal happiness. She completes the sentence by emphasising the importance of personal interactions.

> Joan - Interaction is the whole point of life. However, it is very relevant to develop serious intimate relationships at a stage of your career when you can afford to share a life together (St. Joseph's).

This attitude in terms of planning the future according to career development has appeared extensively among the English young women from privileged social backgrounds. Indeed, as I already pointed out, having a family cuts across the narratives of all the English middle and upper class female participants.

> Amanda- Everybody wants a kind of steady relationship (Magdalene School).

> Barbara - Most people assume they are going to get married, and have children at some point. If you ask people this is not just a hope, I think that we just take things for granted (Magdalene Schools).

As we can see in this focus group at Magdalene School, with the exception of Elisabeth[49] who has already been introduced in the thesis, these young women do not neglect the desire to build up a steady relationship, to get married, and have children. The young women's narratives should not be related to Bauman's liquid love (2003). The participants did not mention their desire to live 'network relationships', where 'no commitment' and unstable relationships are likely to dominate. These young women have difficulties in envisaging stable relationships in their short-term future planning, because they centralise the professional aspect and postpone the realisation of other aspects of life. However, by articulating their fragments of narratives the participants are certain that they will have stable relationships and family in their long-term future lives. As Barbara remarks, being with someone, having children 'is not just a hope…we just take things for granted'.

It seems that among all the social groups interviewed in the research the theoretical frameworks of life-style, constructed in terms of no limitations of choice and the individual potential of being successful, have impacted most on the lives of white, middle and upper middle-class young men and women in England. This social group tends to incorporate into their future anticipations the ideological rationalisation of emotions.

I am not sure whether the young women's desire to postpone family formation relates to freedom of choice or their insecurity in terms of not being able to guarantee privileged positions in the labour market as females, unless they commit themselves to it. These young women at certain stages of their life may perceive that emotional links are not necessarily able to be postponed/delayed. Life may force people to undergo experiences that they have not even planned.

2.3 Family Formation as life goes by

For the English boys from middle and working class backgrounds, and for working class girls, family formation appears as desirable and meaningful in their future lives. Differently from the middle and upper class young women, the relationship between career success and family formation was not articulated in their narratives. Even though English upper and middle class young men have

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49 Elisabeth's name first appeared in Chapter 1.

very ambitious career paths, they did not mention the issue of balancing career and family. Even in developed countries, like England, the main activities of family are still assumed by women (Beck, Beck- Gernsheim 2002; Chambers, 2001; Illouz, 1997; Segal, 1990).

> Chris- Oh yes, I think it would be. I mean, now, I am not particularly interested in intimate relationships at the moment. But it will be. I am sure I will... and, I would like to be with someone and have children. I think. At the end of the day, I would like to be part of my own family and have my own children. That's what I'd ideally like to do in the future (St. Joseph's School).
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> **
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> Rick- It's nice to be with someone, sharing. It's like settling down. If you meet the person you really love, you want to be with her. She becomes part of you. (Nottingham College)

English young men from working and middle class background are more likely to include the subject of family formations by revealing the meanings of 'settling down' as Chris and Rick pointed out. For them settling down means becoming part of a family formed by them. Rick relates the experience of being with someone 'you really love' to the significance of settling down. He feels that love is when the loved person 'becomes part of you'.

The working-class girls, even though they relate 'family of my own' to the means associated with settling down, tend to express their views in more emotional terms. They are more likely to refer to intimate stable relationships as the central aspect, the foundation of life. From this perspective, even though they desire successful careers, they seem unlikely to delay their emotional and intimate experiences. Having a family is something that the working-class females articulated as the central aspect of living, the dream they aim to realise.

> Allison- what matters in life, a house and not having anybody to share it with. To have children must be one of the most meaningful experiences in life. You improve yourself as a person and pass on things in a better way than you learned (Nottingham College).

The narratives of Alison and the English young men interviewed are very much in line with the desires of the Brazilians to form a family. For Brazilians of all social groups the family is the basic structure that a person needs to live. Some of my interviewees mentioned that the family reinforces their feelings of being someone in life. They meant that with a family there is no risk of feeling alone. Actually loneliness has been something that Brazilians tend to fear in very strong ways.

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Alexandre- É lógico que vou querer família. Família é a base de tudo, imagina eu com sessenta anos, vovô, já pensou ser um sozinho na vida? **For sure I want to have a family. Family is the basis for everything. Imagine me sixty years old, a grandpa, have you thought about being a loner in life?** (Colégio São Francisco).

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Claudia- Eu odeio ficar sozinha. Quando não tem ninguém em casa fico no telefone o tempo todo. Família é a certeza de que você tem alguém toda hora. **I hate to be alone. When there is nobody at home I stay on the phone the whole time. Family is the certainty that you have always someone** (Colégio São Francisco).

It seems that to have someone, and to feel a part of a social group is indeed extremely important for Brazilians. Alexandre seems to believe it impossible that someone could choose not to have family. For him, the lack of family is associated with 'being a loner in life'. Claudia expresses how she 'hates to be alone' and characterises the family as 'the certainty that you have always someone'. As a Brazilian living abroad I understand the meanings associated with this 'fear and hate of loneliness'. One of the embedded aspects of Brazilian culture, particularly in the Northeast of the country, is collective interaction, so the sense of not participating in this collective environment is indeed very difficult and painful. The family is a collective institution in Brazil. As I have pointed out in the first section, this reinforces the configuration of a person's identity.

As shown throughout the first section of this chapter, for all my interviewees, having a family is fundamental. Among the Brazilian young women and men from middle and upper classes and working-class young men one of the most difficult aspects is the inability to foresee the time when they will be able to form a family of their own, because of financial insecurity. For this reason, the majority of these young people I interviewed were reluctant to make long-term future plans.

Marcela- Eu não faço planos assim. É esperar para ver. Não dá para saber quando vou encontrar alguém com quem quero construir a minha vida. E além disso tenho que ter emprego. **I don't make plans like that (in terms of 4, 5 years). I need to wait and see. It is not possible to know when I will meet somebody with whom I want to construct my life. Besides this, I have to have a job** (Colégio São Francisco).

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Eduardo- Só sei o que vou fazer daqui a dois anos, porque estou estudando para entrar na faculdade. Podem acontecer imprevistos, pode acontecer alguma coisa errada. **The only thing I know is what I intend to do in two years time, because I am studying to enter university. Unpredictable things can happen, it may happen that something goes wrong.** (Colégio São Francisco)

As Eduardo and Marcela demonstrated, the middle and upper class Brazilians, especially, oppose the possibility of making long-term plans. As they see their parents struggling to provide the best for them, without being able to spend time at home with them due to work responsibilities, they internalise the difficulties of providing a good life for their children.

> Eduardo- O que mais quero é ter uma família. É o ponto mais alto. No topo, mas se você nao tiver um trabalho para dar as condições que seus filhos precisam, como você pode planejar uma família? **What I want the most is to have a family. This is on the top of my future dream. It is what I most want in life, but if you don't have a job to give the conditions that your children need, how can you plan to form a family?** (Colégio São Francisco)
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> **
>
> Luciana- Acho que a vida só é completa com marido, filhos, mas eu quero tambem ter uma casa própria, e quem sabe uma de campo e uma de praia, e dá uma vida boa para os meus filhos. **I think life is only complete with a husband, and children, but I want to own a house, and who knows one house in the countryside and other on the beach. I want to give a good life to my children** (Colégio São Francisco).

Although Luciana may project a life that is above the average of a good life when she mentions 'a house on the beach and another in the countryside', she is actually reproducing the life her parents offered her. Upper and middle class Brazilian participants tended to idealise the possibility of offering standards of living similar to those their parents gave them. However, these young people actually fear that they will not have the financial resources to pay for private education and private health care, as those public services are likely to be low quality in Brazil. The Brazilians interviewed tend to prioritise family above other aspects of life, but they foresee the difficulties of sustaining a family. For working-class young men to get married before having a career would reduce the possibility of getting a job other than manual work. For middle and upper class Brazilians to form a family before having a stable job would reinforce their fears of depending financially on their parents. This fear of not having enough money to provide for themselves and their families, and of having to depend on their parents' resources, has been stressed as one of the biggest frustrations they can have in life.

Although Brazilians do not envisage a family in their short-term future planning, they are not expecting to get into the top or the managerial stage of their careers before having a family. This is very different from the aspirations of, particularly, English young women from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. The major reason why my Brazilian participants choose to

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pospone having a family is a matter of lack of a predictable and sufficient income. It is becoming more difficult for middle and upper middle-class young couples to own their house and have enough money to pay for their children's education and health care in Brazil.

3. Friendship relationships

Among all the participants interviewed friends play a very important role in their lives. Actually, one of the common complaints among the young people is their restriction in terms of time to spend time with their friends.

> Allison- I am working at college for my A levels, and also working at the supermarket, so that my life at the moment is clashing with my friends' schedule. My life is not very nice at the moment because I am not able to see my friends as often. I would like to spend loads of time with my friends, it gives me pleasure to be around them (Nottingham College)
>
> Ana Maria- Why are the relationships you have with your friends so important?
>
> Allison- Because with them I can just trust and be open. We can say whatever we want and nobody gets offended. I worry about not spending time with my friends otherwise they may feel I am abandoning them. When I spend a lot of time without seeing them, I feel abandoned by them (Nottingham College).

This is a very typical perception among the young women in England across all social classes I interviewed. All, with the exception of Elisabeth, emphasise the centrality of friends in their lives. According to Hey (1997) the most valuable company for the young females in England is their best friends. Friends tend to be the ones they count on for everything, to share experiences and a deep sense of openness, without thinking of what they should or should not say. The friendship group has such an influence on the daily routine of the young women that it impacts on the ways the young women are likely to feel. When they are unable to share their time with their friends, they tend to feel sad, as Allison expressed. These young women feel unhappy if they do not spend time with their friends, and fear their friends may 'abandon them'. For these young women membership of their friendship group reinforces their sense of belonging. Unlike what Sennett (1998) and Lasch (1979) stated in their analyses of characters in the contemporaneous cultures of narcissism and flexibility of work, the young women interviewed care deeply about the ways their friends feel.

> Barbara- I feel bad when my friends have problems and I am not able to help them. This type of thing spoils my day, and makes me feel low (Magdalene School).
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> **
>
> Sally- I think friends are the most important company in the world. People that you can moan at when things are not going well, and that you can go out with. You feel socially included, really, when you have a good set of friends. So I think friends are really important (St. Joseph's)

Sally sees friends 'as the most important company in the world'. For her having a 'good set of friends' not only makes a person feel socially included, but also guarantees a person has somebody to count on and 'moan at when things are not going well'. The young women cannot envisage a life without friends. The ways their friends feel tend to influence how they feel, as mentioned by Barbara 'when my friends have problems and I am not able to help them it spoils my day, and makes me feel low'. This means that these young women's happiness in life is closely connected to the happiness of their best friends.

As we can notice, the feelings that the English young women have towards their friends are very similar to what the Brazilians described towards their nuclear and extended families. In this regard I am not minimising the importance of friendship for the Brazilians I interviewed, as they also consider their friends relevant 'presences' in their life. The point here is to stress that the ways English young women tend to describe their friends relate to the Brazilians' description of families. Friendship for English young women ratifies their sense of being able to count on a community of affinity and it strengthens their feelings that 'there is somebody there that cares for you'. With friends they are certain that they are not alone, but 'socially included'. The line between emotionality and rationality seems to be much more blurred in English female friendship than in parental relationships.

The centrality of friendship has been stated as the most important relationship by the gay young male I interviewed[50]. For him, friendship is the guarantee that he is not going to be socially excluded. The impact of friendship to Ray is so crucial that it has guided even his choice of university. As he has many friends in Scotland, he has decided to go to University there.

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50 From all the young people I interviewed only one student mentioned his homosexuality.

Ana Maria- When you think about the short-term future what does appear as the main worry?

Ray- To feel alone after finishing school and going to university. I want to go to a university where I have friends around, because being gay I worry about fitting in with university and people. Meeting people there that I can rely on (St. Joseph's).

Ray worries about fitting in well in the sense of being able to make friends, because he is aware of the fact that at university he might be in a minority community. He envisages the importance of meeting up with gay people and of being part of a gay community. Throughout Ray's interview he expresses the importance of finding a place where he can meet a whole range of people, in order to have more chance of meeting with those he identifies with.

Ana Maria- Why did you chose this specific university?

Ray- This university is not exactly vibrant or anything, but its got some communities, including a gay community...this sort of thing, that's why I am quite happy (St. Joseph's).

From what Ray says in his fragments of narrative, it is possible to notice his difficulties in being accepted. According to Mac an Ghaill (1994), in English secondary schools, as elsewhere, in the social world, a masculine heterosexual perspective is pervasively dominant. The strict pattern that regulates masculinity in schools makes gay students suffer great pressures, feelings and fears. Aware of these pressures and fears, Ray incorporates the importance of being near his friends in his choice of university.

However, Ray's fear and anxiety expressed in the process of leaving school and of choosing a university should not be explained in terms of his homosexuality alone. One of the communalities found between the English females and all Brazilian interviewees is their apprehension of leaving school and dissociating themselves from their friends. The Brazilian participants too emphasised that they cannot anticipate a future life far away from their school friends.

Juliet- I am not really excited, because I am really shy. I have been here for the last six years, so I have all my friends here. And, now, I don't know what it is going to be like on my own, without seeing my friends everyday (St. Joseph's).
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Luciana- Aperta meu coração saber que logo, logo eu não vou ver minhas amigas todos os dias. **It saddens me to know that very soon I will not be able to see my friends every day** (Colégio São Francisco).
**
Márcio- Eu estava comentando com o pessoal eu adoro vir para o colégio, venho às vezes de tarde, mesmo sem aula para encontrar meus amigos. Fica difícil de imaginar

que não vou ter mais isso. **I was saying to the people from school I really enjoy going to school. Sometimes I come in the afternoon even if I have no lessons to meet my friends. It is difficult to imagine that soon I will not have this anymore** (Colégio São Francisco).

**

Carla- Fiz muitas amizades nesse colégio e estou com pena que vai acabar. Tenho medo que minhas amigas se distanciem, eu fico triste por conta disso. **I made many friends in this school and I am afraid now that the school is finishing. I am afraid that my friends will lose touch, I am sad because of this** (Colégio São Francisco).

From these narratives it is possible to understand how engagement with friends contributes to making the lives of these young people more meaningful and enjoyable. The school environment, in spite of my participants' complaints about homework and pressure, is surrounded by an atmosphere of intimacy that binds these young people together. All the interviewees portrayed a link with their friends that is based on intimacy and openness, even though the ways intimacy is lived in the daily lives may differ.

For example, the English young men were likely to represent their friendships in terms of sharing practical activities. When these young men 'feel low' they seek to engage with practical activities, such as computer games, watching movies, playing football, ie, sharing 'things you spend time doing', instead of sharing their 'state of being', their emotions. They even associate this type of practice with 'girls stuff'. These fragments of narratives below are part of the focus group at St. Joseph's.

Joe-Girls fall more out with each other than boys do (St. Joseph's School).

Bill- Girls, I don't know, they are loose. They tell everyone else how they feel. Boys like to keep to themselves. Boys can put on a face and keep silent. And, girls start to cry when they feel upset.

Ana Maria-Don't you tend to reveal how you are feeling?

Bill- we don't show it to our friends as girls do. That's why men are more stressed than women, because they keep it inside. Women, because they let all go, don't have as much pressure on them (St. Joseph's School).

As we can observe throughout the fragments of the focus group, young men in certain ways feel proud of the capacity of men for self-control - the dominant pattern of masculinity (Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). At the same time they do feel that stress and pressure tend to impact more on them. Even when not sharing openly the ways they feel, friends are the ones these young men tend to spend the majority of their time with. When they are down, the

upsetting feelings are diminished not in open verbal communication, but by telling jokes, going to a pub with a friend, listening to music, and so forth.

Even in Brazil, where the boundaries of emotionality and self-control are much more flexible and blurred than in England, there is a difference between how the young men and the young women I interviewed share their feelings with friends.

> Alexandre- Ah não sei é conversa... é ficar conversando e assim se sentir que você vê que as pessoas gostam de você, aí se fica conversando e as pessoas vem e perguntam conselhos a você, entendeu? De você saber que alguém dali precisa de você, gosta de conversar com você, entendeu? **Ah I don't know it's chatting, chatting and feeling that people like you, then you chat and your friends can ask for advice, do you understand? Then you know that somebody there needs you, enjoy chatting with you, do you understand?** (Colégio São Francisco)
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> **
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> Márcio- É bem difícil me encontrar triste, normalmente eu resolvo meus problemas. **It is very difficult for me to feel sad, but normally I solve my own problems.** (Colégio São Francisco)
>
> Ana Maria- Don't you speak to your friends?
>
> Márcio- A gente sempre conversa bastante. Tem um amigo meu que os pais se separaram e a gente sempre fala bastante, a gente sempre conversa assim. **We always talk quite a lot. There is a friend of mine whose parents got divorced and we talked quite frequently between us, we always chat like this** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Carla- Eu falo quase tudo para as minhas amigas. A gente sabe como a outra está em somente olhar. A expressão facial mostra tudo, se está triste, aborrecida, irritada. **I say almost anything to my friends. We know how each other is feeling by just looking at each other. The facial expression shows everything, if a person is sad, upset, irritated** (Colégio São Francisco).

By the type of language we can note how young women and young men express differently their friendship relations. Men are much more obscure in describing the kind of chat and the sharing they have with their friends – 'I don't know, it's chatting'. For Alexandre, chatting becomes associated with the feeling of being important to friends and the fact that his friends also need him. However, the type of need does not tend to be described in detail. Márcio, at first performed 'the toughness' associated with male identity by saying 'I solve my own problems'. When I encouraged him to speak more about his friendship he tended to explain the sharing by demonstrating how much they chat –'we always talk quite a lot'; and by mentioning that he supported a friend whose parents got divorced.

Carla's relationships with her friends are illustrated in a very open way. The deepness to which the sharing is described is identified by the other person's

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expression. They share so intimately that she is able to 'read' how her friends feel by looking at them. These analyses of how emotion is shared among friends do not try to minimise the importance given to friendship among young males. The young males I interviewed tended to show enthusiasm in spending leisure time with friends.

> Alexandre- Eu mesmo já deixei de viajar com minha família toda, pais, tios e avôs para Europa, para ficar na praia com meus amigos, ir para Olinda no Carnaval e pro centro do Recife. A curtição que eu tenho com meus amigos é demais. **I decided not to travel with my family, parents, uncles, and grandparents to Europe. I prefer not to travel but to stay at the beach house with my friends, to go to Olinda and the centre of Recife during Carnival. The fun I have with my friends is awesome** (Colégio São Francisco).

Alexandre's example actually illustrates very clearly how much the company of his friends means to him to the extent of giving up travel with his family, which is also very close to him. These examples demonstrate how intimate relationships need to be interpreted and understood in terms of specific contexts. Even though family relationships throughout all the social groups in Brazil are likely to penetrate all sorts of aspects of a person's life, friendship relations in comparison with family relationships are articulated differently. This means that there are times when friends' company tends to be preferred and other times when it is the families' social time.

> Daniel- Eu gosto de viajar com minha família e meus amigos. A diferença entre os estilos de viagem é grande, mas gosto de viajar tanto com amigos como minha família. Com os amigos as viagens são somente para diversão, sair, paquerar, curtir a noite até de madrugada. Com a família é mais para conhecer lugares, ir para restaurantes e ficar conversando com a família. **I like to travel with my family and friends. The difference is about styles of travelling. With my friends the trips are only leisure, going out, dating, enjoying the night until morning. With family it is more about knowing the places, going to restaurants and chatting with the whole family** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Luciana- É lógico que eu adoro conversar com minha mãe, mas a conversa com minhas amigas é completamente diferente, a gente tira muita onda. É brincadeira, besteira, novidade... **Of course I love to chat with my mother, but chatting with my friends is completely different, we just take the micky of each other. It is joking, stupid things ...** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> **
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> Andreza- Minha relação com minha mãe é ótima. Saímos juntas, compramos roupas, conversamos bastante, mas não gosto de conversar com ela sobre namoro. Não é que ela diga nada, mas porque mãe é muito ciumenta e sempre quer proteger. **My relationship with my mother is great. We go out together, we buy clothes, we chat a lot, but I don't like to talk with her about boyfriends. She doesn't say anything, but it is because mother is a bit overprotective** (Colégio São Francisco).

By observing the different contexts that involve these young people's lives, we conclude that friendship interactions tend to be marked by the mutuality of

serious, innocent, joyful, playful, and childish aspects of life. Relationships that Brazilian young women have with parents, much more with mothers than with fathers, are based on enjoying mothers' company, sharing activities in daily life, but without sharing as much their intimate relationships with young men and their more childish ways of acting.

Conclusion

As I have discussed in this chapter, relationships with parents are very much entrenched in the different ways adulthood is recognised and expressed in specific surroundings. For the Brazilians the separation of emotional and practical support is not really perceived as an expectation upon them. This means that the Brazilian participants of the research tended to anticipate their independence from parents, by living at home while working, meeting their own friendship groups, working hard at their studies and other duties, and so forth. I suggest that, because emotional attachment and closeness to both the nuclear and the extended family are very common to the majority of the Brazilians, particularly those who live in the Northeast of Brazil, these young people tended to express clearly their aspiration to build up their future lives physically and emotionally close to their family of birth. This desire of the Brazilians is not perceived as a failure, as happens in the social and cultural contexts of English young people, especially those from middle and upper middle class backgrounds. To put it differently, the rationalisation of emotion, including the unwillingness to share emotions with parents, is not associated with maturity as it is in the context of English middle and upper middle classes.

Upper and middle class Brazilians want their parents to recognise their maturity to cope with life. Alongside the necessity, imposed by the the labour market for knowing a foreign language, particularly English, middle and upper class Brazilians incorporate into their short-term plans their wish to spend between six months to one year in a foreign country to reinforce their parents' trust in their capacity to look after themselves. All Working-class interviewees, as they are already engaged in practical activities at home, and tend to work outside home from an earlier age, are unlikely to feel pressurised by their parents and/or cultural 'common sense' practices to produce rationalised narrative. The middle and upper middle class English young women tended to be the ones who most

rationalise their narratives, by alluding constantly throughout their fragments of aspirations to their plans to leave home as soon as possible. The English young men also showed enthusiasm for leaving home, but were unlikely to stress the emotional aspects of the relationship with their parents.

I suggest that, in contrast with Giddens' pure relationship, which accentuates the centrality of intimacy and neglects the more practical aspects of daily life, the English young women configure a rational articulation of emotional narrative of independence from parents, especially their mothers. In so doing, these young people ratify their wish to see their mothers playing the role of mother, and not of a friend. I suggest that these young women articulate very rationalised narratives as means to 'prove' to their parents their ability to cope with the exigencies of their future daily routines far away from home.

It is interesting to point out that the English young men from all social backgrounds seem to construct their independence in terms of descriptions of their envisaged future lives, in practical terms, rather than in relation to the emotional implications of family relationships. Young Brazilian men tended to speak less about emotional support than the Brazilian young women, but more than with the English young men. We saw throughout the Brazilian young men's articulations at different times that they often tended to refer to the necessity of counting on family support. However, they do not tend to clearly express how much they share emotional problems with their friends. This later issue also was common among the English young men who expressed that they are 'tough', and not 'loose' as the girls, 'who fall onto each other all the time'.

Regarding friendship we could see how it is important to the young people I interviewed across nationality, gender, race and class. The only difference between genders refers to what I have already mentioned above: the fact that young women are more likely to configure in their articulations their tied emotional links with friends. The working, middle and upper middle class English young women have stressed how their friends' unhappiness impacts negatively upon them.

The desires to form a family cut across all social groups interviewed, contrary to Bauman's argument on liquid love. The majority of the interviewees both in England and in Brazil, across class, gender, race and ethnicity, incorporate at least in their long-term plan the aspiration to have 'a family of their own'. However, because of the middle and upper middle class English young women's rationalisation, they ended up producing ambiguous configurations about family formation and their career success. This group of young women put together their configurations of aspirations by highlighting their lack of desire to marry before their thirties, so they can establish their careers in today's competitive labour market, and become recognised by their professional success. Alternatively, whenever these young women allowed themselves to speak their minds openly, they romanticised their narratives by referring to the 'man of my life'. This dream is in fact very clearly expressed among the young working-class Brazilian women, as it is configured in terms of adding excitement to their monotonous daily routine.

Finally, it is interesting to note how gender differentiated power relations were produced in the articulations and refigurations of these young people's aspirations. I suggest that the middle and upper middle class young men did not articulate in their aspirations the need to postpone intimate relationship, marriage, and the appropriate time for becoming fathers, because they feel they would not be expected to stop working. In the same way, even if the working-class Brazilian young men complained about their daily monotonous lives, they showed the desire to avoid serious commitment which may lead to marriage, until they have a job. This shows that these Brazilian working-class young men feel that if they become fathers while they are young, they will be the ones to work (the breadwinners), while their wives will stay at home looking after the house and the children.

Chapter 5: Locating Aspiration: The National and the Global

The analysis that follows is based on young people's accounts and perceptions of their nations, and of their nation's relations with other countries. I attempt to show how the self-image and feelings of the nation are displayed by the young people I interviewed and incorporated in the articulation of their aspirations. The emphasis on national cultures and their relations with other nations[51] is not debated in terms of official historical events, but in the ways the nations are identified in the anticipations of the future lives of the young people interviewed.

This chapter is structured in three sections. The first one describes the Brazilians' emphasis on happiness. The approach to happiness is discussed as a national feeling, and a life-tactic (De Certeau, 1988). Tactic is understood here to be similar to De Certeau's definition, as an action that accepts chances and opportunities, which appear in a specific time and place. The 'articulation' of happiness seems to be intrinsically associated with the impossibility for Brazilians of planning ahead, along with hopeful expectations. It is to this context of 'apparent' contradictory fragments of narratives that Garcia Canclini's (1995a) definition of hybridity is addressed in this thesis. Hybridity is conceptualised by Garcia Canclini not as a perfect 'mixture', but as the possibility of multiple elements, even opposing ones.

The second section highlights how English participants exhibit a strong attachment towards their nation, expressed by feelings of pride and a strong

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51 In agreement with Johnson (1993) it is inconceivable to focus on the nation without examining international relationships.

work ethic. At the same time they mention intense desires for feeling relaxed and 'laid back' which are often associated with holidays in foreign countries.

Finally, the third section focuses on how the experience of living in their own countries influences young peoples' perceptions of globalisation as future opportunities and/or constraints, in a way that goes beyond social positioning.

1. Brazil as perceived by the Brazilians Interviewed

Even though some characteristics of Brazil in the context of social and cultural elements have been already discussed throughout previous chapters, it is important to focus here on some embedding aspects of the 'representation' of Brazil as a nation in terms of its cultural production.

To emphasise the feelings of the Brazilians' interviewed in the context of how they relate their aspirations of Brazil as 'their nation', it is crucial to contextualise some of the characteristics of Brazil in order to make sense of the participants' narratives.

The Brazilians interviewed articulated their anticipations in relation to the search for happiness. They considered happiness as the most important 'point' in life and very linked to the ways Brazilians deal with life. From the participants' narratives throughout social classes, gender and ethnicity, it came across that Brazilians' happiness and hopes are felt almost as a 'national pride'. My interviewees were likely to be keen to relate their anticipated future practices to the ways Brazilians, particularly the disenfranchised ones, confront suffering and inequality. At the same time, they enjoy dancing, participating in the carnival and other popular parties, going to crowded beaches, socialising, and so on. My Brazilian participants' fragments of narratives tend to include the possibility of making choices that fulfil them as human beings, by producing feelings of happiness and of the possibility of making people around them also happy.

The relationship between social inequality, poverty and deep attachments to relational and personalised links, besides the concern with emotional matters,

cut across the different spheres of living, in personal, intimate and collective spaces in Brazil. This is a common topic studied by Brazilian sociologists, for example Buarque de Holanda, (1996 [1936]); Freyre, (1957); and Damatta, (1994, 1997).

In addition, since Brazil is seen by the participants as a nation that celebrates life, I discuss the relationship between the participants' search for happiness and the national discourse of it in the following section.

1.1 Setting the context of Brazilians' cultural elements

There are many elements that appeared in the Brazilians' descriptions of what makes them identify Brazil as a country in which happiness is centrally manifested.

> Márcio- Vem Brasil vem a música brasileira que é bem legal, tem influência local, a nossa percussão, do africano, do cubano, de outros lugares. Ao mesmo tempo tem sua particularidade extraordinária. **When I think of Brazil, I think of our music, which is very cool. It has been influenced by our own locality, our percussion, by Africa, by Cuba, and at the same time retains an extraordinary individuality** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Júnior- Vem o nosso futebol arte, criativo, empolgante, apaixonante. **I think of our artistic football, creative, enthusiastic, passionate** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Antonio -Eu acho que a cultura brasileira é o que compõe a nossa vida, a comida caseira temperada na medida, danças, música, festas regionais, carnaval. O carnaval incorpora tradições do índio, do negro e de todos os outros povos que formaram os brasileiros. É a maior manifestação de alegria. E alegria tanto dando e recebendo é o que connecta o sentido da vida. **I think that Brazilian culture is what composes our life. It is our homemade and tasty food (prepared with different seasonings), our dances, music, regional parties, and carnival. The carnival incorporates many traditions, from the Indigenous, the Blacks, and all other people who formed the Brazilians. Carnival is the greatest manifestation of happiness. To feel and propagate happiness is what really matters in life.** (Colégio Dom João).
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> Eduardo- O que é bom daqui do Brasil é que tem diferenças de misturas de raças, bem diferentes das outras culturas. O que foi uma coisa muito positiva, sem preconceito como tem em outros países, como por exemplo, os Estados Unidos com a Klu Klux Klan. **What is good here in Brazil is that there are different racial mixtures. This is something very positive, without the prejudice seen in other countries, for example the United States with the Klu Klux Klan** (Colégio São Francisco).

From these narratives, we can observe that one of the common topics that cut across these fragments of narrative is the enthusiasm with which Brazilian

cultural elements are described. Talking with my interviewees about Brazilians and Brazilian culture enabled them to reveal one of the central elements that marked our conversation and which was made apparent in many different ways: the cultural aspects that they associate with Brazilians' happiness. We may observe how the elements mentioned by the interviewees reveal in practical terms Garcia Canclini's (1995a) notion of hybridity. He describes hybridity as drawn from the older process of 'mestizaje' (religious syncretism). From Canclini's perspective on hybridity is a process that produces a culture based on diverse sources and references. For example, the popular is not a purely preserved cultural object, but the result of fusions from diverse cultural elements. Hybridity as a concept engages with the deconstruction of binary oppositions. In agreement with Garcia Canclini, I argue that in Latin America, modernisation coexists in the same present, different, historical temporalities, as for example, the semi- industrialised capitalist economy alongside the high-technological 'financial capitalism'. The co-existence of different temporalities extends to the cultural sphere, and it is exactly within the cultural dimension of Brazil as a nation that my participants tend to concentrate their enthusiasm. In the construction of Brazil as a nation the argument about the distinctive features of being a mixed country ('miscegenated'), formed from rich, different traditions and races, was developed by cultural entrepreneurs and intellectuals to proclaim Brazilians' cultural 'singularity'. It follows that the Brazilian social system incorporates modern values without abandoning traditional practices, which are extremely personalised. Brazilian culture and its social dynamic are entangled in traditional, personalised relationships and some elements of western modern individualism (Oliveira, 2000; Damatta, 1994; Gomes, et al., 2000). The refiguration of diverse elements, associated with personalised relations, tends to be the feature of the nation that is spontaneously articulated by my respondents in the context of Brazilians' happiness. The participants' pride is revealed through their descriptions of cultural aspects of the nation. The positive allusions to the cultural aspects of Brazil by the participants in this research include hybrid elements that are joined together, connecting different aspects, even paradoxical ones across different periods of Brazil's history as a past colony and nation. In other words, the key cultural aspect incorporated in many of our manifestations is the 'harmonisation' dynamism of our differences and contradictions. In this sense, the 'hybrid' aspects of our culture, in Garcia

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Canclini's definition of the term, are exemplified by the music, the regional food, the popular dances, and the racial miscegenation, as related by the interviewees. Carnival, local popular dances, football, religious syncretism, racial miscegenation and the preparation of Brazilian foods, are expressions of connections between multiple elements, from different origins, the Indigenous, the Portuguese and the Black ancestors and their culture, that are embodied in Brazilian cultural formations. The Carnival, the popular dances and football are associated with pleasure, passion, and happiness. They are represented in such living and 'naturalised' ways as if they constituted Brazilians' 'essences':

> Marcela- Carnaval, festa. O povo aqui é muito alegre, todo mundo gosta de festa. O brasileiro é animado- **Carnival, party. Everybody here is happy, everybody likes party. Brazilians are fun people** (Colégio São Francisco).

Marcela's narrative and those of other interviewees, shown above, link their sense of 'Brazilianness' with creative football, happiness, partying, the tasty food and the Brazilian racial 'mixture'. Taking the sort of 'dynamic' mixtures into account Eduardo compares Brazilian racial integration with the racist movement of the Klu Klux Klan in the United States. In this sense, there is a strong tendency among the participants of the research to celebrate Brazilian 'racial democracy', visualised by them through the racial miscegenation.

Miscegenation is portrayed in the light of its harmonising aspect that attempts to minimise physical and biological differences by creating an intermediate category, such as the *mulatto* (the general name given to a person who is mixed from black and white parents), or *pardo,* which refers to all racial mixtures. It is in this sense that Damatta (1994) refers to the inadequacy of relating to Brazilians in terms of the simple dichotomy of Blacks and Whites, a dominant classification in Western Europe and the United States. For Damatta, because of the Brazilians' intense racial mixture not only among blacks, whites and indigenous peoples, but also with migrants, such as Italian, Japanese, Dutch (particularly in Pernambuco), German, and so on, skin colour in Brazil can only be understood by incorporating 'intermediary categories'.

The unique character of Brazilian food is the result of the process of borrowing and exchanging elements of all social and cultural traditions that formed Brazil

as a nation. Besides the 'richness' of the ingredients, the combination of various seasonings, 'our homemade and tasty food' as Antonio highlights, includes cuisine of different cultural traditions and the different 'combinations', created by the Brazilians. Besides, the act of eating is indeed a fundamental social and interactive occasion for Brazilians. Through the preparation and the process of eating, Brazilians welcome guests, engage in conversation with friends, commemorate special occasions and moments, and celebrate the social dimension of living. It is interesting to note that many of our national dishes require not only different ingredients, but also several people to be involved in the preparation. There is also a fascination in the Brazilian enthusiasm for food and abundance (Freyre, 1957; Damatta, 1994).

It is in the vein of incorporation, integration, and harmonization that Eduardo describes enthusiastically the Brazilian 'myth of racial democracy', a myth that is not addressed in the thesis to question the validity of young people's cultural beliefs and the incorporation of the national elements that shape their identities. The myth is understood here in the light of Gramsci's meaning of common sense. As already highlighted in Chapter 2, Gramsci's (1971) definition is based on the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become 'common' in any given epoch. In the same way that 'folklore' does not develop in a vacuum, common sense is a conception of the world, uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments. For Gramsci (1971), as common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, to refer to it as a confirmation of truth is a nonsense. Common sense has an intimate relationship with religion in terms of the predominance of the immediate product of crude sensations, such as the superstitious and the mostly embedded elements, shared among people from similar collective, cultural imagery. It is relevant to bear in mind that Brazilians' celebration of the 'mixture myth' in terms of 'democracy' actually illustrates the complexity of Brazilian culture, combining the passion for the samba, cachaça (Brazilian brandy), football, and personal and affective relationships between employers and domestic employees. The complexity of those articulations, though penetrated by feelings, does still represent and promote different power relationships. It is in the context of unequal power relations and different life opportunities across social classes, gender and race in Brazil that Damatta

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contextualises Brazilian's 'myths', 'common sense' in terms of a 'relative democracy' (Damatta, 1997:16).

As Brazil has been a colonised country, lacking a past identification with its roots and celebration of its 'native' elements, the process of putting together those elements of its national identity was supported by the body of work in the field of Brazilian literature, characterised by attempts to celebrate the individuality of the nation (Candido, Antonio, 1965; Damatta, 1997). The effort of constructing a discourse of the national identity of Brazil is marked by the cultivation of national roots, tracing differences from Europe, especially Portugal, and celebrating the nation's distinctive features in association with Brazilians' daily activities and cultures. The ideas that cut across past 'common sense' and are still impacting on the present, as addressed by the young participants of the interviews, are components of Brazilian 'hybrid formation', already emphasised above. It is fundamental to re-state here that I am not going to discuss fully the extent to which Brazilian cultural openness and 'racial democracy' is valid, but to recognise their inclusion in the participants' fragments of aspirations. My participants' narratives stress their personal and cultural identification with the country. In other words, their perceptions of Brazil's common sense in association with 'hybridity' and happiness strengthen their feelings of rootedness towards the nation and produce personal and collective identities.

Going beyond the narratives of young people we can identify that Brazilian 'racial democracy', as a generic concept, disguises the distinctions between races, at the same time reinforcing harmony among the Brazilians. The myth of Brazilian racial democracy is a fundamental aspect that integrates the descriptions of the 'components' related to happiness, particularly among the middle class interviewees[52]. My participants in general did not tend to identify the remaining differences in terms of life opportunities between white and black

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52 The Brazilian middle class participants are less likely to be black or have dominant black physical features than the working-class Brazilians. This means that they are less likely to suffer the kinds of prejudices that though 'hidden', in many times not clearly spoken, are still present. This can be confirmed by looking at the Chapter 3, regarding work opportunities among Whites and 'Pardos', including blacks, in Brazil.

young people. In a recent study developed by Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scienctific and Cultural Organisation) in Brazil, the organisation created the Index for Youth Development, or IDJ. The index is aimed at measuring the quality of life of young people from 15 to 24 years of age in the country. In Brazil there are 4.2% of young people from this age group illiterate (Wailselfisz et al., 2004: 44). Among the young population of blacks, *mullatos,*[53]and other intermediate categories (the population classified as *parda* includes blacks and mixed race) there are 6.4% illiterate from 15 to 24 years old. Among the whites from the same age group there are 2% illiterate (Waiselfisz et al., 2004:49). From this data we can see that the percentage of illiteracy of white young people is less than a third of that of the *pardo* population. The differentiated access to Education does have an impact on life-chances, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3.

By addressing the more 'contradictory' aspects of Brazilian racial democracy I am not denying that Brazil is a racially mixed country or saying that intimate sexual relationships across races have not occurred. As well as intimate sexual relationships, social relationships among people of distinctive races or skin colours happen in less conflictive ways than in the United States. It is relevant to point out that, even though not expressed by the participants, racial democracy in Brazil is still being discussed in terms of life opportunities, including educational literacy, which is higher among the whites than in the black and *parda* Brazilian population (Waiselfisz et al., 2004).

Another illustration of Brazilians appreciation of intermediate categories (Damatta, 1994) or hybrid ones can be seen in the cultural manifestation of the nation that takes place in Márcio's description of Brazilian music (as previously quoted). He focuses on the influence of Africa, Cuba, and other countries, yet at the same time he stresses 'an extraordinary individuality'.

> Luís- A gente tenta manter as tradições como maracatu, caboclinho. Tem os costumes, as tradições pernambucanas. Eu acho lindo. O nosso carnaval é um espetáculo que absorve todos os nossos sentidos. **We try to maintain the traditions like *maracatu***

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53 Mulatto is not an appropriate category to illustrate all kinds of miscegenation that happens in Brazil. The classification of skin colour tends to be complex in the country as emphasised by Damatta (1994), since there are specific names for expressing specific racial mixture.

> *and caboclinho.* **We have tradition, the traditions of Pernambuco. These are beautiful. Our carnival is a spectacle that takes over each of our senses** (Colégio São Francisco).

It is important to observe that in Luís' fragment of narrative the national, the regional (Northeastern) and the specificity of Pernambuco 'cultural representation' are stated. With this we can see concretely how the mediation of the national, the regional and the local come together. Among my participants the enthusiasm for Pernambuco's cultural tradition and attachment to its folklore and popular culture is celebrated. In certain ways, the centrality of Pernambuco as the most important economic centre of the sugar industry, from the beginning of Brazil's colonisation, is remembered in terms of Pernambuco's cultural and mixed 'tradition', perceived by the interviewees in terms of richness.

> Daniel- Sei lá, por exemplo frevo, aqui você tem o frevo, o mesmo frevo desde mil novecentos e pouco. Aí até está tocando frevo no carnaval e todo mundo está lá dançando e todo mundo gosta. Não é como em outros países que o que fica é a cultura do comércio. O que eu gosto daqui é que a gente guarda nossas origens, sabe? **I don't know but for example frevo, here we have the frevo, the same frevo since the beginning of the 19th century. The *frevo* (a popular dance) is played during the carnival and everybody is there dancing and everybody likes it. It is not like other countries where the media culture is dominant. What I like here is that we keep our traditions, do you know?** (Colégio São Francisco).

Through Daniel's fragment again the individuality of Pernambuco's popular dance, such as *Frevo*, is associated with the image of Brazil as a culturally rich country. It is in this context that Daniel shows a certain resistance to the global 'mass media culture', and alludes to the cultural value of the 'traditional' popular dances.

It is interesting to observe that, at the present time, some authors defend globalisation as if there were unilateral and homogeneous outcomes (Giddens, 1990; Robertson, 1999; Wallerstein, 1999) Brazilians exemplify Massey's (2001) contrary notion of the constant mediation of the local, the national, and the global. My participants tend to celebrate their attachments to local characteristics - Pernambuco's traditions. Brazil is a society characterised by a high level of inequality and regional diversity. Additionally the Northeast of Brazil is one of the poorest regions in terms of economic conditions and human development, but it is marked by strong regional identities. The Northeast has been portrayed by its inhabitants through popular music, regional literature, popular stories on the subjects such as drought, poverty, the courage and

strength of its population, beauty and hospitality (Penna, 1992). Evident in the narratives of my interviewees is the expression of a certain 'pride' in being from the Northeast. The same happened with the image of the state of Pernambuco, which has lost its economic power, but is referred to by my interviewees in relation to its relevance in cultural and artistic movements, including dances, bands, music, and so on. As Pernambuco lost its economic power, many of its population, particularly those of working-class origin along with Brazilians from arid areas of other states in the Northeast, have been forced to migrate to the Southeast of Brazil. However, it is essential to say that in certain ways the past of Pernambuco is still present [the present and the future are mediated by the past (Ricoeur, 1988)] in the various ways traditions are reproduced through social attitudes, cultural manifestations, the architecture of colonial houses and churches, etc. By focusing on Pernambuco's historic process one may understand the reasons why young people are constantly reconstructing the links of Pernambuco with the roots of Brazil as a nation.

It is the harmonious incorporation of traditions that cut across different 'temporalities' and makes the carnival, as Luis puts, 'a spectacle that captivates each of our five senses'. According to Damatta (1994), carnival represents the days of happiness and fantasy, in which the myths of the absence of hierarchies and of the power of money dominate. In this sense it does not matter who you are, whether or not you have money or prestige. The carnival is a popular party to which everybody is welcome. Although my participants have not mentioned the existing divisions manifest throughout the carnival, it is important to highlight that in spite of the presence of all social classes, identification of social groups can still be easily achieved whether by manner of dress, the company or the presence/lack of security guards. The identification with the locality reinforces the connection of the young people interviewed with the nation. In spite of social and economic constraints, young people reproduce in their narratives the ways life is manifested and celebrated in their ' space of experience'. In this context the comparison of Brazil as a nation with the participants' perceptions of other nations, is incorporated in their narratives of aspirations as is illustrated later in this chapter.

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1.2 Depicting Brazilians' happiness

> Márcio- Povo brasileiro...vem na minha cabeça que sou parte disso. Quando somos pátria somos pessoas, que compartilham muitas coisas. **Brazilian people... it occurs to me that I am part of them. As a nation we are people who have many things in common** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> **

> Francisca- Nós somos diferentes. A alegria do povo nordestino, a espontaneidade, o contato físico, o calor humano. Os ingleses pelo que escutei são muito sérios, não gostam de festas. Não tem manifestações como a do Galo da madrugada, que arrastam milhões de pessoas. **We are different. The happiness of the people from the Northeast of Brazil, the spontaneity, the physical contacts, the warmness of the Brazilian people. The English people as I hear are very serious. They don't like parties. There is no manifestation like the 'Galo da Madrugada'** [54] (Colégio Dom João).

Some Brazilian historians and sociologists, for example Damatta (1994; 1997); Buarque de Holanda (1996 [1936]) explored how, in a country so unequal and separated by life-opportunities, the cultivation of happiness and emotional links is so central among the population. Francisca compared Brazilians' spontaneity, warmth, and tactical contact, in terms of highlighting the national experience of happiness that, in my participants' view, is part of every Brazilian's life, independent of their social status. She even compared Brazilians' spontaneity and happiness to her perception of the English people. From Francisca's representation English people are seen as ' serious. They don't like parties'. Although it becomes clear that English participants' feel less 'laid back' in comparison with Spanish and Italian people, they have not mentioned any aspect in relation to happiness. Probably, as happens across different cultures, happiness is differently expressed in England and Brazil. Márcio relates his personal identity with the national collective identity in a very direct way: ' As a nation we are people who have many things in common'.

Through our cultural celebrations Brazilian economic and social inequalities are temporarily forgotten and the presence of the intermediary, the myth, the dual sides of things, dominate. People even without solving their problems in practical terms remain trusting that circumstances may change to improve their lives. The fear of violence, the unpredictability of future life, and hope for the future are combined during the national celebrations and through Brazilians'

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54 The 'Galo da madrugada' or 'Cock of the Morning' is the opening event, which inaugurates the start of Recife's annual carnival celebrations. Millions of people take part, indeed the event has been cited in the Guinness book of Records as having one of the biggest crowds ever.

religious practices. The religion of the country is manifested with or without syncretism, in practice or as a hidden presence. It is entangled in the idea that human justice can be always questioned, that God's justice may delay, but does not fail.

> Francisca- Os brasileiros empurram com a barriga. Como será amanhã? Deus dirá. E se nao der a gente corre atrás. O humor chega a esse ponto e isso é bonito. Se o dólar tá alto eles continuam saltitantes, sem esquentar a cabeça. **The Brazilians confront their unresolved problems with their "tummy". What will happenned tomorrow? God will decide. If it is not possible, we face the problem. The humour gets to this point and this is beautiful. If the dollar is high Brazilians remain vibrant, without 'heating their heads'** (Brazilian popular expression) (Colégio Dom João).

The cultivation of happiness is constructed in a very powerful way as a national characteristic, almost as if it is independent of the social positioning of the people. To a certain extent the lack of predictability of the Brazilian economy has always impacted on the lives of all social groups, though in different ways. During the eighties the price of consumer goods could increase in the course of only one day. Now, the parity of the dollar with the *real* is constantly affecting the credibility of external and internal investors as well as the financial condition of the population.

As Francisca expresses, Brazilians had to learn how to deal with financial constraints and the impossibility of planning. As mentioned already throughout the thesis, because of our historical economic instability Brazilians from all backgrounds are very reluctant to set long-term plans.

> Daniel- Depois vou pensar no que vou fazer, eu estou tendo uma base para vários caminhos. Tenho primeiro que concretizar a base, entrar na faculdade e depois ir escolhendo. **Later on I will choose what I will be doing. I am thinking of many different possibilities, but first of all I will have to achieve the basic requirement, go to university and then make decisions** (Colégio São Francisco).

This is typical of the Brazilian participants I interviewed. The only difference is in regard to social class, since working-class participants are more tentative in terms of believing in the possibility of going to university. The historical economic instability of Brazil is incorporated into young people's articulation of their future as an embodied 'history' that mediates the present and the future.

The interesting fact to mention here is that what most impresses Brazilians and gives them a certain sense of pride is the capacity of the population to deal with

negative and harmful experiences by avoiding *maniqueismo* (manicheism), (opposing 'dichotomic' categories).

> Daniel- Povo brasileiro vem na minha cabeça que sou parte dele e me orgulho disso. **When I think of Brazilian people I am aware that I am part of them and I am proud of this** (Colégio São Francisco).

The Brazilians interviewed saw happiness as embedded in the 'life' of the nation. Daniel illustrates this by articulating his pride at being Brazilian. His pride is reinforced, because Brazilian happiness is not experienced in a utopian context, but through mediations of positive and negative experiences.

> Alexandre- No momento que você pisa na rua você sabe que está correndo risco. Você sai de casa, você pode levar um tiro em um assalto ou você pode encontrar um grande amor. **Every time that you step out of your house you know that you are at risk. You can be shot during a robbery or you can meet a great love** (Colégio São Francisco).[55]

Alexandre actually illustrates the life-risks in Recife by talking about them as possibilities rather than negative factual outcomes, as I discussed in Chapter 3. In the same way that he portrays risk as having many possibilities, happiness seems to be lived in Brazil as an intermediate category that is constantly attempting to activate the positive outcomes. From the context of living in a both vibrant and violent city, happiness appears in the narratives of the Brazilians I interviewed as an art of living.

1.3 Brazilians' happiness as an embedding feeling or/and a life-tactic

> Eduardo-Aqui no Brasil, aqui no Nordeste, tem muito o esforço das pessoas tentarem ser felizes, não desistirem. **Here in Brazil, here in the Northeast, people make the effort to be happy, and not give up** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
> Antonio- As pessoas aqui são muito calorosas, mesmo sofrendo, sempre estão abertas ao riso. Os brasileiros são calorosos, receptivos e animados. **People here are very warm. Even when suffering they are always smiling. Brazilians are warm, receptive, and fun** (Colégio Dom João).

Comparing Eduardo's and Antonio's fragments of narratives we can observe how the argument that reinforces Brazilians' happiness goes beyond social status. Both participants acknowledge the difficulties, the struggles at the same time that as they recognise how 'people make the effort to be happy ...', and to

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55 Violent threats do not only happen in the streets. Many Brazilians from Recife have had their houses burgled and have suffered threats inside their homes during robberies.

smile. The presence of happiness, as Antonio mentions, seems to diminish the suffering, but is also a way to remain hopeful of positive outcomes, without 'giving up'.

Due to the fact that Brazilian cultural manifestations are often accompanied by music, dance, food, and loud laughs, happiness appears in young people's narratives as an engagement with Brazilian cultural aspects, and also as something that goes beyond that. From this second perspective Brazilians' happiness appears almost as an embedded characteristic.

> Daniel- Eu não conheço muito bem os outros países pra saber, mas eu acho que o brasileiro é muito feliz, não é? O brasileiro esquece dos problemas e vive sua vida feliz. Qualquer lugar que eu vou sei lá...Eu estou lá no prédio e está o porteiro rindo, eu vou p/ outro canto tem outra pessoa rindo. **I don't know other countries very well to know if this happens in anywhere else, but I think Brazilians are very happy, aren't they? The Brazilian forgets about his/her problems and lives his/her life happily. Wherever I go.... if I am in the garage of my flat I see the porter smiling. If I go somewhere else there is another person smiling** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
> Eduardo- As pessoas são satisfeitas com o que tem. **People here are satisfied with what they've got** (Colégio São Francisco).

Daniel extends his interpretation of Brazilians' happiness by reference to Brazilians' willingness to smile. He strengthens the earlier argument that happiness is 'manifested' in all social classes, by mentioning that he sees 'the porter smiling'. By recognising the difficult conditions that might characterise the life of the porter, who probably earns insufficient for a basic standard of living, Daniel connects happiness with Brazilians' smiling 'nature'. Eduardo even acknowledges that Brazilians are 'satisfied with what they've got'. Daniel, along with other Brazilians I interviewed, especially the middle-class, expressed his understanding of Brazilians' happiness with admiration, as they identify the daily hardship of living in a Brazilian shantytown, lacking a basic infrastructure. In this context what is known in the country as '*o jeitinho brasileiro*', (the charming and friendly manners), and '*malandragem*', (the 'tactical' reactions) (Damatta, 1994), become the key for understanding Brazilians' happiness. These terms can be described as Brazilians' 'ways around' to sort out problems, and conflicts, by personalising relations and even rules and laws. These attitudes are characterised by the domain of the 'person' that is differentiated from the meaning of individual. The latter is the subject of universal laws and does not depend on any kind of collectiveness to be identified. From the perspectives of

my participants, Brazilians' *'jeitinho',* and *'malandragem',* very personalised ways to 'sort things out', are described as sustaining happiness.

> Daniel- Brasileiro é alegria, malandragem, em si, tem sempre um jeitinho de arrumar as coisas. **In general Brazilian people tend to be happy and 'scoundrel'. This means that they have always a way of finding out what they want to know** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> Ana Maria- A scoundrel, in which sense?
>
> Daniel- É mais disso das brincadeiras, eu falo malandragem disso nao é de roubar não. Porque as pessoas aqui têm uma hora que têm que contar piada, fazer alguma brincadeira sobre alguma coisa. Toda hora as pessoas estão fazendo brincadeira com alguma coisa para quebrar com o lado sério, problemático. Prefiro que seja assim do que ficar aquele peso. **It has more to do with jokes, I am not talking about stealing or causing harm. People here tend to make jokes or tease. Constantly people are taking the mickey out of something to escape from the serious side, the problematic one. I prefer to be like this than to be carrying a heavy weight** (Colégio São Francisco).

Daniel articulated the *jeitinho* and the *malandragem* of the Brazilians in a very innocent way. He mentioned them as if they did not cause any damage, and as if they were 'tactics' to deal with the burdens of the daily life in more enjoyable and pleasant ways. Tactic as used here does not require a calculated action, as De Certeau's (1988) definition of the term suggests. However, tactic does incorporate from De Certeau's definition the absence of a proper locus. Tactic is used here as a mastery that activates humans' capacity to play, teasing out the negative aspects, and making them more bearable.

The *malandragem* and the *jeitinho* are mentioned by Brazilians interviewed in terms of the ability to deal with the many negative aspects that affect their daily lives. I suggest it is because of the context in which those expressions are described, times when my participants are trying to make sense of Brazilians' happiness, that they do not identify the negative side-effects of *malandragem*. The *jeitinho brasileiro/ malandragem* do incorporate the Brazilian ways of relating to one another socially, but can also be used to reduce the validity of the law by articulating a sense of personal privilege and prestige to resolve problems. In this case the prestige of the person involved is used to break the effectiveness of rules. By this I am not trying to say that Brazilian participants are uncritical in their perceptions of inequality, violence and, so forth. Their critical positions will be clarified in the next chapter, where I deal with political activism.

> Márcio- O Brasil economicamente assim tem muita gente que está em prejuízo, faz arrumadinho e isso não é certo. Em relação a algumas coisas você fica mais livre da lei, que não faz mal. Por exemplo, quando um guarda de trânsito pára e você está sem carteira de motorista, você dá dinheiro para ele ir embora. Acho que isso não tem problema nenhum já que você tem a carteira de motorista e não causou mal a ninguém. **In Brazil economically there are many people living in terrible conditions because of the corruption of people in power. This is not right, but there are occasions when you get fre of the law and it is not negative. For example, when a traffic police man stops you and asks for your driving licence, but you have left it at home. In this case, you can give money to him. I think that there is no problem, since you do have the driving licence and you haven't caused harm to anybody** (Colégio São Francisco).

Márcio recognises how economic corruption harms people's quality of life. At the same time, he does not realise that by giving money to the police, even though he does have the driving licence, he is reinforcing actions contrary to the law. The 'blindness' to the negative consequences of the *'jeitinho'* and *'malandragem'* may be explained by the excessive bureaucracy of the public sectors and the lack of trust in the representatives of the law. Another possibility is that, since public and personal issues overlap easily in Brazilian society, people fail to recognise that by breaking the law they are contributing to making the system more inefficient and unfair to those who do not have cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986).

As *'malandragem'* and *'jeitinho'* are expressed in my participants' narratives at the personal level, without a direct link to consequences for the social system, they are interpreted as the Brazilian ability to be fun, social, and tactically creative in their personal and conversational manners.

> Márcio- Não sei, esse é o jeito brasileiro de tudo. Jeito brasileiro mesmo. É você falar com a pessoa na esquina e a pessoa responde e está conversando com você sem problema, eu acho legal isso aqui. **I don't know how to explain this Brazilian way of doing things. It is just typically Brazilian. It is to speak to somebody in the street, then the person answers and starts to chat with you without any problem. I find this great (Colégio São Francisco).**

My participants tend to value social characteristics that break with introspection. They recognise that the talkative manners of the Brazilians make them feel more relaxed and less isolated. In this context the young people speak of the 'happiness' of the nation in their descriptions of the idealised person they want to share their lives with in the future.

Marcela -Eu quero encontrar uma pessoa sociável, conversador, que não fique estressado à toa. **I want to meet a person who is social, who is easy to talk to, and who does not get stressed easily** (Colégio São Francisco).

**

Eduardo- A prioridade é que a pessoa seja carinhosa, inteligente, sociável e goste de conversar, que saiba lidar com o estresse relaxadamente. **The priority is to meet a person who is tender, intelligent, social, who enjoys talking and interacting, but also knows how to deal with stress in a relaxing manner** (Colégio São Francisco).

**

Antonio- Quero encontrar uma pessoa que seja boa com as pessoas, atenciosa. **I want to find somebody who is good with people and attentive** (Colégio Dom João).

In the context of personal aspirations, Brazilians tend to describe the national characteristics that they most appreciate: the capacity to be happy, social, and easy to talk to, even in difficult times. The fact of being social, and open to discussion is very relevant in the Brazilian context. Brazilians' leisure time is often spent with groups, such as friends and family.

As the Brazilians I interviewed perceive sociability and the capacity for dealing with ambiguous situations as important characteristics, they are likely to confront desirable/non-desirable aspects of living, by creating intermediate approaches. In the process of describing dreams and fears they diminish the negative sides, by reinforcing the hopeful ones.

Francisca-Quem tem sonhos não é louco, louco é quem não tenta realizá-los. Se você tem um sonho na sua vida então vá atrás. Se você não conseguir pelo menos você lutou. **A person who has dreams isn't crazy, it would be crazy not to try to achieve your dream. If you have a dream in your life, go ahead with it. If you can't realise it at least you try** (Colégio Dom João).

Francisca constructs her articulation of dreams by playing with possibilities and impossibilities as non-oppositional elements. It is clear that she reinforces the feasibility of her dreams, but she also prepares herself to deal with the impossibility of making them come true. In so doing, she focuses on the importance of struggling, of continuity, and of being able to carry on without giving up. In this context, she constructs her aspiration by keeping her options open, without feeling restrained by the obstacles of her working-class surroundings.

Daniel- É claro que morro de medo de perder meus familiares devido à violência. Às vezes, fico apavorado, mas o medo também provoca você a procurar desafios, a não se acomodar. **It is obvious that I fear losing my family members due to violence. Sometimes I get on edge, but fear also makes you look for challenges and not become passive** (Colégio São Francisco).

The ways Daniel describes fear is linked with the Brazilian participants view on happiness, which cannot be understood as a purely reductive approach, focusing on, for example, access to leisure and comfortable standards of living. Fear is normally interpreted as a negative aspect of life, as Daniel points out by mentioning his fear of loosing family members due to violence. He manages to transform it into a challenge, an encouragement for not '... becoming passive'. Referring to Alexandre's narrative illustrated earlier in this chapter we can note that his perspective on risk is very similar to Daniel's interpretation of fear. Alexandre also develops a positive outcome of risk and considers it as an unexpected happy possibility of meeting a great love. What both Daniel and Alexandre expressed is how it is unhelpful to understand people's happiness in terms of their actual material circumstances and opportunities for having a safe and secure life. Finally, what may help understanding Brazilian accounts of happiness is to look at the importance of hope: the ability to see the two sides of the situation and the importance given to personal relationships and sharing in the participants' perception of the nation .

2. English pride as internalised 'presences'

> Chris- I think that there is a connection between me and England, because that is where I come from. I am obviously going to be affected by that. And, I am going to think and feel in the way that most people do in England (St Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- When you talk about English national culture what comes into your mind?
>
> Chris- Straight way when I think of English culture I think more of a lot of unity whereas in other countries, they don't seem to get that. A lot of unity and a lot of patriotism. There's quite a lot of patriotism in England. Because we are very interested in our sport that's one cultural aspect...interestingly, not the traditional English scene, I don't think it's there anymore (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- What is the traditional English scene?
>
> Chris- I mean cups of tea, horse riding, the sort of picnic in the park. I don't think it is present anymore. I don't think it's the culture we have anymore. Hum... I think it is much more sport orientated, more patriotic than it used to be (St. Joseph's School).

Chris does recognise how the presence of the nation is internalised in his feelings and in his ways of thinking. In agreement with Billig (1995) I argue that as thoughts, reactions and symbols become turned into routine habits, they become lived out, and are therefore difficult to remember and to be clearly articulated. Yet, they tend to influence people's life-experiences and their

anticipation of aspirations. For instance, at the same time that the pride of being English is difficult to configure, it impacts on the ways the English participants' prioritise one aspect to the detriment of others throughout their configurations of experiences and anticipations of future lives. As is discussed in detail below, pride in relation to English work ethics ends up by reinforcing the centralisation of the practice of work in the English participants' daily routines.

The most embedded 'common sense' in the national culture is the one most difficult to identify, but as I demonstrated above it tends to impact on the ways people act. The English young people I interviewed have experienced the pride of being English, even though I had to gather their configurations of pride, by interacting their different fragments of narrative. The perception of Chris associated with patriotism indeed expressed the opinion of my interviewees. On the other hand, his notion of England as a united country has been challenged particularly by the English working-class and by people from mixed cultural origin and ethnicities, as I will discuss further in the next sub-topic of this chapter.

Chris's affirmation of pride in terms of sport made a lot of sense to the focus group with the young men from St. Joseph School. My five male participants were very acquainted with local, national and world games. As they identified the Brazilian success at football, a common ground among our national cultures, they contributed more spontaneously in the group discussion. I could perceive how football is indeed an event that unites England as a nation.

> Ana Maria- what are the things associated with the English way of life?
>
> Fred- Football on Sunday morning. Football on Sunday afternoon (St Joseph's School).
>
> Bob- Football on Saturday (St Joseph's School).
>
> Joe- We enjoy playing and watching football everyday (St Joseph's School).

English football, particularly among the male interviewees, is something the English are very proud of, and very enthusiastic to talk about. They reminded me that even though England has not had as good performance in the past World Cups as Brazil, England is the creator of football. It is also relevant to highlight how their interest in football is a major feature of their daily lives. The

majority of them, as pointed out by Fred, Bob and Joe, integrate football into their routines and weekends. In addition the young men's descriptions of a life dream are articulated in terms of their perceptions of a professional football player's life.

> Bill- My dream would be to become a professional football player. I think everybody would like to be that. You know, playing football you get to play a sport you love, and get paid 600 pounds per week (St Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- All of you, would like to be a football player?
>
> EVERYBODY ANSWERED YES
>
> Simon- yes, but we know this is not going to happen. Of course, being a football player would be a dream. You play football and everyone loves you. Score a goal and you are like a God. Besides, you have money, a nice car, and big houses (St. Joseph's School).

From these narratives it is possible to relate the English enthusiasm for football and how the images of a good life are associated with football celebrities. Being a professional football player in England is associated by the young men with doing something they enjoy greatly, besides all the elements of a desirable life-style, expressed by Simon, in terms of popularity, ' money, nice car, and big houses'. The strong attachment of these research participants to football, including the ways they incorporate it into their daily lives, is an example of how the nation is present in these research subjects' lives and dreams.

Apart from football another cultural aspect that I have noticed English people are proud is in relation to the popularity of English music. They recognise the impact of English music across the world. In this sense they highlighted that English people are not only good at creating the beats of the songs, but, especially, the young women also focused on the lyrics. Music is a very important presence in young people's daily routine. The relevance of music to young people has been acknowledged by ethnographic research across the world, as analysed in Pilkington's research with young people in Russia (1994) and across ethnographic research in relation to clubbing practices in Britain (Malbon, 1998; Thornton, 1995).

> Kathryn- Everywhere I go I can listen to English music. Our music is very good. (Magdalene School).
> **
> Joe- we love buying CDs. I listen to music almost everyday. I like what sounds good. I like the beats of the song (St Joseph's).

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Young people's relation to music in their daily lives, both by playing it and desiring to obtain more and more CDs, as revealed by Joe, have been widely presented in the narratives of English and Brazilian young people. The difference is that the English participants, as stated by Kathryn, not only recognise the quality of their music, but also identify it as a global phenomenon. The Brazilians appreciate the quality of Brazilian popular music, but they resent the fact it is not widely propagated across the world. The difference in terms of global cultural impact will be further discussed in the next section of the chapter. Again as football and music are very popular aspects of both Brazilian and English culture, they are highlighted spontaneously in young people's expression of their interests in life.

On the other hand, among the English people I interviewed at least Chris's argument on the lack of identification with the traditional English scene of 'cups of tea, horse riding, the sort of picnic in the park' appeared to be typical among the young people.

> Emily- I don't support the queen or anything related to the monarch. We pay too much tax (Magdalene School).
> **
> Mandy- In the past English were very posh people. We are not like these people that go horse riding. I want to banish it. We do have our problems (Nottingham College).

From the narratives of Chris, Emily and Mandy the presence of the monarchy that is directly associated with English tradition tends to be negatively expressed. For Emily, the monarchy is very expensive for the country to sustain and does not yield any concrete return. Coming from an unprivileged neighbourhood in Nottingham, Mandy goes beyond her quotation by acknowledging some concerns in relation to gun problems, and to drugs that are associated with young people. In this sense, she is very critical of the 'posh' image of England, since Mandy perceives it as a denial of current social problems that confront some areas of the country. Even though the majority of the English people I interviewed did not support the monarchy, some mentioned that it strengthens the sense of English cultural identity. As I pointed out above, other than the pride in being a sport oriented culture and a talented country in music the configuration of other elements of English patriotism was not

mentioned spontaneously. My participants found it difficult to explain the reasons why they are proud of their country. This means that people generally tend to recognise more objectively the elements that are more intimately involved in their daily routines and are also valued by them. I suggest that the English history of imperialism and the concentration of power in the hands of the hierarchical aristocratic elite might have contributed to making national pride hard to express in more concrete ways, as happenens with German people nowadays, due to the history of Nazism. Perhaps this is just an interpretation from somebody that in fact is not English and has found English young people's difficulty in expressing in clearer ways their likes and dislikes about their country intriguing. However, by reading texts, produced by academics interested in English national identity, written particularly during the eighties onwards, I have become aware of the fast transformation that has impacted upon England. It may be the case that the lack of clarity of my subjects' views on the components that form their national identities can be explained in terms of the transition from a white exclusionist British hegemonic nation to the contemporary England, where 'new ethnicities' can no longer be made invisible. Besides, Chris' and other interviewees' desire to move away from the 'traditional English scene', the traditional English heritage, celebrated intensively by Thatcher (Jessop et al, 1988), may relate to their dilemma in articulating English pride. At the same time I am not attempting to say that English heritage and past are not embedded in the 'common sense' of the English participants. As I have mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 there is not a rigid separation between tradition and innovation as both are re-invented continuously.

> Ana Maria- how do you see this patriotism expressed daily in England?
>
> Chris- Hum...in the beliefs of people. Most people I talk to... if I ever ask anyone I usually expect the answer yes we do love our country, and we are proud of whom we are. There is a lot of pride around in this country (St. Joseph School).
>
> Ana Maria- How do you think this pride becomes concrete? What are the reasons for this pride?
>
> Chris- I've never been able to touch on it myself (St. Joseph's School).
>
> **
>
> Allison- I've never been sure what the reasons are that people feel proud. I've never thought (Nottingham College).

As we saw in the fragments of narrative of Chris and Allison it is possible to say that English people feel proud of being English, but the elements which are associated with pride become 'embedded presences', and are difficult to articulate. Nations, for example, Brazil, which have never been hegemonic in the world economy and had been colonised are the ones more likely to develop a clear 'official discourse' or 'common sense' in relation to national identity. As Brazilian modernity has been characterised since its origin by the intersection of 'affective hierarchy' (the patriarchal family) with impersonal institutions of modern capitalism, it was consolidated with a strong sense of self (Souza, 2000: 192-194). Brazil's official discourse attempted to differentiate itself from Europe and was then based on the country's syncretism, a kind of a hybrid and 'peculiar' mixture of Europe and Africa.

Since England has not needed to position itself in the world as Brazil has, because of its hegemonic nationality both within the British Islands and in Europe during a long historical timeframe, the articulation of what makes England, England, i.e. what defines Englishness, is more difficult to describe for the English interviewees. The young people interviewed have difficulties in making sense of their pride in terms of concrete elements. It also may be the case that there is not a clear sphere of life in which these elements of pride are joined together. As acknowledged by Anderson (1983), English pride may be simply 'a community imagined' through language, though not completely articulated verbally. As Anderson clarifies, nations tend to inspire love, illustrated by poetry, prose, fiction, music and plastic arts (1983:141-142). This means that the love in relation to the nation can be expressed in different forms and styles, though the meaning attached to it can still be difficult to refigure. Secondly, while discussing England and the elements that form English culture, many of the interviewees were unclear as to the distinction between England and Britain. The perception of English cultures as distinguished from British cultures does not happen often among my interviewees.

> Joan - The union Jack flag. I mean I feel fairly British, because as I said before, England has not really joined the rest of Europe. It's kind of a close nation. We do have strong sense of identity (St. Joseph's School).

While discussing English pride in terms of sport and music, aspects highlighted by Lucy (the other young woman who participated in the interview with Joan)

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the latter expressed other elements in relation to English national identity. Joan emphasised her British identity in terms of her recognition of a national symbol, such as the Union Jack, and British partial integration into the European Community. Even though Joan has also Russian blood she recognises that she feels 'fairly British'. From Joan's fragment of narrative and all the rest of my English participants the terms 'English' and 'British' are virtually synonymous.

In what follows I have opted to analyse other elements of English culture that are not necessarily expressed in terms of young people's descriptions of pride, but impinge on the ways they view the nation. For instance, the fact that they perceive England as a 'multicultural society' impacts on the ways they identify the nation. At the same time that the sense of English culture becomes more blurred, their view on multiculturalism strengthens their image of England/Britain as a viable country that offers opportunities to themselves and others. As becomes clear throughout the discussion of this section, the interconnection between multiculturalism, available opportunities and work ethic constitute the basis on which England as a nation becomes present in young people's narratives of aspirations. The association of these three elements impinges on the kinds of narratives produced by my participants. It will become apparent throughout the other sections that there is a common ground among my participants based on the recognition of the strength of England in Europe and in the world, which underlines their sense of pride. As Allison says: ' we are small and we are quite strong in Europe. We look at ourselves as a strong country'. On the other hand, English young people's accounts in terms of 'unity,' 'multicultural society' 'equal opportunities' become much more qualified by their social positioning.

2.1 Multicultural England

The participants interviewed had difficulties in defining the concept of their classification of 'English people' in the present day, whereas in the past they recognised English people as white European Anglo-Saxons. At the same time, the English participants understand England as a nation more accepting and democratic than in the past.

> Ann- we have different nationalities living within our boundaries. I think that the definition of an English person has to be somebody that was born and lives in England (Magdalene School).

Ann along with my other participants found it difficult to identify what is peculiarly English in contemporary society. Their argument is that as England has so many mixtures of different cultures the components of English culture get harder to identify. This has been an argument especially presented by middle and upper class participants. In their opinion a positive aspect of England today is the fact that it has become much more accepting as a country of cultural and ethnic differences.

> Chris- I think we are adapting to this multicultural England gradually. I think it is making people a lot more accepting in the world. Because there is now less racism against other cultures. They are now become more part of us. So there is less difference between us. I think that's a good thing. We are learning how to accept different races and cultures a lot more (St Joseph's School).

All of the young people interviewed recognise the presence of many other cultures in England. This is identified as a favourable aspect. Although Chris acknowledges positively that other cultures are now merging into English culture and becoming a part of England, there are different opinions in this regard, particularly among English young people from non-English origins. For example, Joan, having Russian parents, feels more European than English. From her perspective England is quite isolated from Europe and maintains very much its kind of 'island culture', as she highlighted throughout her interview. At the same time in another fragment of articulation Joan has said that she feels 'fairly British'. Her perception in terms of England's isolation from the rest of Europe is illustrated by Joan's perception of the experience of English people when they go abroad.

> Ana Maria- Don't you think that England is a multicultural society?
>
> Joan- Compared to a lot of other countries, Britain, even though we do learn French and German is not... In a lot of countries, like France, people are much more likely to know English. English people are quite ignorant when they go abroad. They gather together and don't mix with people of the locality. They expect people to be able to speak English. A lot of countries do, so I think we are not as mixed as we could be (St Joseph's).

From the context of Joan's experience, she approaches England from the perspective of somebody who has lived in other kinds of multiculturalism. For her, England is still behind in respect to the openness to mix with others. The

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obstacle of not speaking other languages is indeed a barrier to communicating and interacting with the local culture. By exchanging information in English, local aspects are appreciated from a superficial approach that does not lead to a deeper understanding of foreign codes and symbols of communication.

Different opinions with regard to English multiculturalism lie in terms of young people's perception of openness or lack of interaction with others. Chris identifies that the multicultural side of England today has a positive impact on his personality and his life plans. For him, living in England, offers opportunities of having a more cosmopolitan life-style. He points out his respect for different cultures and his desire to know other countries around the world and actually live abroad.

> Ann- I think race relations in Britain are quite good. Epecially in big urban areas, we do interact well. I don't think there are big problems in integration of religion and race. But we do have this way of being closed politically to any involvement outside of Britain... very isolated, I feel that (Magdalene School).

Ann is not the only interviewee who remarks how English tolerance is better than previously. For her, even being an 'island culture' that does not define its position in relation both to the United States and to Europe, except when it feels it has to, England has managed to deal with cultural differences well. She says that harmony among cultures in England has an impact on her life to the extent that it encourages her to have a more complete picture of the ways people live across the world. On the other hand, among my interviewees either non-white or from a mixed cultural background the harmony among cultures is questioned, and so is the sense of belonging.

> Ana Maria- What is it like to live in a kind of 'multicultural society'? Does it bother you?
>
> Steve- No. There are so many different food, languages (St Joseph's School).
>
> Bill- No. But it does cause problems. For example, aggression like for example racism. Even in schools you find it. (St Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- where does it come from, if as you say, England is a multicultural society?
>
> Bill- they don't really live with other cultures. For example, it's mainly white people who don't mix really. Britain is a kind of multicultural society, but it's not really united (St Joseph's School).

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From Steve, a white English person, multicultural England impacts on his life positively, widening the possibilities of learning different languages and trying a broader range of food. For Bill, even being born in England, the fact of being black, from mixed race parents, and living in a society 'not really united' makes him unable to recognise his 'Englishness'. As Bill said in a different moment of his articulation: ' I am not English, I am a foreigner. I am mixed'. He identifies that 'racism is not as strong as it used to be', but the fact is that he continues to experience racism and difficulties in integrating with the white English people. In this sense, English multiculturalism has a less positive impact on his life.

From Juliet's account it is possible to suggest how the criticism around 'English multiculturalism' weakens some young people's cultural identity.

> Juliet- we just walk around London and we see so many different things. There are Marxist and Buddhist centres. They are quite multicultural, but in a broader outlook in terms of Europe, England is sort of out. England is a kind of in the middle, between America and England. It does not want to associate itself to either of them too much (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- And, how about you, how do you feel about this?
>
> Juliet- I feel more European than British. I don't feel exclusively English. I feel it's broader and it should be broader, to feel more European rather than British.

From Juliet's fragments of narrative, one aspect that becomes clear is how the English sense of cultural identity goes beyond English geographical borders. There are two simultaneous tendencies: one characterised by the partial association of the English with the United States and Europe. The other, configured throughout the interviews, is likely to view the whole of Britain as English territory. Juliet expressed her lack of satisfaction towards England's apartness from Europe by stressing the fact that 'she feels more European than British'. However, it is important to highlight that Juliet's father is Spanish. This might has an impact on her 'split' identity between being European and English. Ray, the only Scottish interviewee, described an existing diversity between England and Britain. The rest of my interviewees produced a narrative of similarity and/or unity. This may be explained by the fact that, other than Ray, I have not interviewed young people from other parts of the United Kingdom. I agree with Morley and Robins (2001) when they emphasise the hegemonic power of England's dominance within the UK -'Given the nature of the power relations, between the English State and the constituent parts of the UK,

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"Englishness" has long been the hegemonic component in the supposedly broader term of "Britishness" ' (Morley and Robins, 2001:4). This may explain the difficulties faced by the English interviewees in differentiating England from Britain throughout their fragments of narratives.

Susie, even being a white English girl, has a very particular and critical perception of her surroundings. Susie lives in a working-class area and can only afford to study at Nottingham High School for girls because she receives a scholarship. Susie lives simultaneously in two different environments. Her home is in a working class neighbourhood and at school her social time is spent among the upper middle class young women. By interacting with Susie I could immediately identify her assertive personality. For her, interacting with cultures around the world is completely different from experiencing English multiculturalism. Although Susie acknowledges the different cultures that exist in England, she addresses the reality, for her, of living in British multicultural society.

> Susie- the fact is that there are Indian restaurants, but they are British. They are in Britain. Certain curries have been invented in England. We have all sorts of different cultural diversity, you find Chinese people here, South Americans. You find all sorts of people here. All the different cultures have been brought in, a massive collection of mixture, ideas, and things coming up. But we still have a very strict democratic political system (Magdalene School)

Susie critically identifies that multicultural England, seen as a very positive mixture by the majority of the English I interviewed, has contributed only to a certain extent to a reduction in racism. She says that it has not necessarily led to equal sharing. It is a fact that migrants do contribute to cultural changes as can be observed by the availability of foreign food across England. Susie recognises that Britain now absorbs aspects of other cultures, whereas, in the period of Empire, these were perceived as inferior. This aspect has been examined by Morley and Robins (2001) and Wright (1985), when they stated that Thatcher's legacy has been profoundly marked by the celebration of English heritage and England's ' … "civilizing" mission in the world at large…' (Morley and Robins, 2001:6).

In the recent past, even though England has been subjected to diverse cultural influences, equality among cultures has progressed, but as yet is far from

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established. Finally, it is interesting to note in this section how people are subjected to multiculturalism in different ways and how this influences people's aspirations. Chris's experience of multiculturalism indulges his interest in trying new things from other cultures, as for example, spending some time abroad. Bill's view on multiculturalism does not relate to unity, but to racism and exclusion. From this perspective he feels less English and tends to explain his desire to remain in the country from a more practical point of view. From his context, Bill is of the view that in England there are more opportunities available than in other countries.

2.2 Wider Opportunities of life: Working Lives

An aspect that has appeared throughout the narratives of my English interviewees and which was articulated with a certain degree of pride, whenever pride was not the main aspect of our discussions, was the opportunities of life in England.

> Simon- It's different here. In some places people are already working from my age. Here, we don't really need to start working until we are about 18 (St Joseph's School).
> **
>
> Bill- we get free education and we get a lot more opportunities than in other countries (St. Joseph's School).

By engaging with the argument on equal opportunities I tried to encourage my participants to speak of how far they thought equality of opportunity exists in England. Here, again some fragments of narratives of Elisabeth throughout her participation in the group discussion in Magdalene School are portrayed.

> Elisabeth- I've always been to private schools, so there has always been a lot of pressure. My schools have always been very kind of academic. People who are here expect a certain standard of living. Having enough money, private health system, nice clothes, a house with a beautiful garden, and I'd quite like to have a BMW. You see yourself owning a normal house, and a car, this is kind of a normal life... I mean normal life in Britain (Magdalene School).
>
> Ana Maria- Do you think that the sort of things you mentioned is a normal life for people in this school or normal life in Britain generally?
>
> Elisabeth- everybody wants to go to university. But now again we are pushed in that direction. I think most people in Britain end up going to school, having a job so they can own their house.

The middle class young people that I interviewed tend to see their life-experiences as very privileged when compared to other countries, but they do not focus much on the differences inside England and Britain. These participants have access to the best in terms of material conditions, private education, their parents own big houses, and they want to be able to afford private health as Barbara, another participant, expressed during the group discussion. This desire suggests that the state health care system, the NHS, is not rated as being of a very high quality among the middle classes, otherwise Elisabeth would not have articulated her desire to have a private health system. Similarly to my Brazilian interviewees who do not recognise our 'jeitinho' as not always a positive aspect of the Brazilian culture, the English research participant also have difficulties in identifying that their experiences are not homogeneous across the country, and that the English working-class do face constraints.

Bill, the only interviewee, out of the whole group of participants (from England and Brazil) who described himself as black, lives in the Meadows area of Nottingham. The Meadows is a working-class, ethnically mixed neighbourhood. It is one of the areas associated with Nottingham's 'gangs'. Maybe the fact of living in a disenfranchised area of Nottingham along with his black identity reinforces his ability to recognise differences within England. Bill observed that there are good and bad schools in England, an aspect that the middle-class participants were unlikely to identify. The middle and upper middle class English participants, by not seeing the differences regarding opportunities across 'spaces of experience' within the country ended up connecting with the kind of homogeneous characteristics propagated by some theorists of life-styles (Giddens, 1991; Featherstone, 1991). Opportunities are mentioned as available across social positioning and only limited for those who fail to have personal motivation.

> Bill- No, not all schools in the country are good. There are a lot of bad schools, but the majority of people here have access to reasonable education. It depends whether you use or not use it. Some people just mess around. It's up to you if you don't take the opportunity (St Joseph's School).
>
> Joe- We have everything really. We have safety, police, education, we just miss a warmer weather, but this is beyond our control (St Joseph's School).
> **

> Claire- Schools are compulsory. If people have good grades, they can have good jobs.
> It's not based on ancestral wealth (Magdalene School).

It is important to observe how young people's perceptions of England as a society of opportunity reinforce their motivation. We can see that even Bill, who has previously stressed the differences within England in earlier articulations, says that 'the majority of people here have access to reasonable education'. It depends whether you use or not use it'. The recognition of opportunities encourages these young people to set future plans in a very structured way, particularly those from middle and upper middle class backgrounds. Besides, it also allows them to envisage financial security in their future lives.

> Joan- I see my future life as going to a top university, getting a highly paid stable job, a good set of friends and eventually a stable intimate relationship to settle down (St. Joseph's School).
> **
> Chris- I am not a materialistic person, but I do want to have financial security in the future. This is very important (St Joseph's School).

As these young people recognise that they live in a first world economy, a nation with opportunities and fewer limitations than in Brazil, they articulate their plans using more rationalised and predictable approaches. Joan's configures her future in a sequential order: 'I see my future life as going to a top university, getting a highly paid job, a good set of friends and eventually a stable intimate relationship to settle down'. Chris incorporates financial security as an element of his future life in a very confident way. With these examples we perceive how the nation has an impact on the ways young people set their life plans. This is in contrast to my Brazilian participants, including the middle class ones, who find it very difficult to set long term plans.

During the focus group discussion the young males in Nottingham College did not tend to focus on the dissemination of privilege of life-chances across England. However, they relied on the real possibility of entering university, even if not the top institutions in the country. The young males mentioned the fact that they left school when they were sixteen, because of their lack of motivation to continue. In this context, they said similar things as the middle class interviewees in terms of seeing social opportunities in England in the light of personal performance. Instead of analysing their current educational level by taking into account their performance, along with the lack of encouragement of

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their school environment, young people I interviewed in Nottingham College tended to interpret their situation in respect of personal failure or personal problems.

In chapter 3 I made clear how opportunities differ across England. An aspect that has not been clarified in that chapter is how English people, from middle and working class backgrounds, tend not to identify a certain degree of social inequality inside the country.

> Claire- We live in such a privileged country that the majority of people wish to live here. Otherwise the immigration police would not need to be so restrictive (Magdalene School).

As we can interpret from Claire's narration she tends to describe the image of England as a country of equal opportunities and with no serious problems. The remaining social inequality in England tends to be neither identified by my interviewees nor to affect their perception of national and personal aspirations. On the contrary, opportunities are very strongly linked to the common ground among my participants of seeing English people as hard-workers and ambitious.

> Sally- In England people dedicate a lot of their time to working. Having a job of some sort is a mark of self-respect to the majority of English People (St Joseph's).
> **
> Ana Maria- Are you able to see any common element shared by English people?
>
> Claire- I think that it might be somebody that plans things, time, that wants to get money and a nice house and wants status. I think that this is very important to most British people (Magdalene School).
> **
> Joe- yes, people here work a lot, because it does mean we are able to live comfortably. Buy the things you like (St Joseph's school).

From these different interviewees it is possible to understand the meanings behind the practice of work. The perception of English people is strongly inclined to dedication towards the work ethic. For Sally work is configured 'as a mark of self-respect'. She illustrates the pride associated with the practice of working articulated by other participants as well. In fact the value attributed to work seems to be linked with the possibility of seeing positive outcomes. The young girls from Magdalene School, even though pressurised by the expectations of teachers and parents and themselves do envisage the pursuit of a successful career in their future lives as achievable. In this sense the

dedication towards the work ethic does relate to opportunities and viability of future plans. This trust in the opportunities offered by the nation does explain the reasons why my middle and upper class participants have such high expectations in terms of their professional careers.

Another cultural characteristic recognised by Claire that impacts on the ways life is lived in England is the focus given to planning. As we see among my participants, they have a very clear notion of their future lives, particularly with regard to work issues. As indicated in Chapter 4, in terms of sequential order, people construct their narratives by prioritising professional success to the detriment of settling down. This emphasis has been illustrated especially among the upper middle class young women.

In addition to the value attached to work, my participants reveal a culture that reinforces the importance of 'being able to live comfortably' as said by Bill. Ray, who has been already introduced, particularly in the Chapter 4, is a working-class participant, from St. Joseph's School, and he views English culture as being oriented around the pursuit of wealth and its consumption. This emphasis on wealth is also illustrated in the following fragment from a young woman at Magdalene School.

> Emily- being important and having lots of money I think this is really important to a lot of British people. We are taught that we should be the best we can be (Magdalene School).
>
> Ana Maria- Is this an issue to you?
>
> Emily- I think I like to do it. I like to be important and I like to get money, but I think if I don't I would not be disappointed (Magdalene School).

Emily's opinion is indeed very typical of the interviewees. With regard to the working-class ones as we saw in Chapter 3, 'being important' is less emphasised. The materialistic desires of my participants tend to become focussed on the acquisition of a nice big house, a car and spare money to travel abroad.

Whilst acknowledging the money orientated culture and the pressure to succeed they highlighted the culture of drinking and foreign travel as coping mechanisms.

Ana Maria- Why do you think the habit of drinking is embodied in the English Culture?

Susie- It is incredibly relaxing. The youth, the young people go out and get very drunk, so it's a way of meeting people, a social interaction thing. You can get drunk and talk easily to people. That's why is so popular (Magdalene School).

**

Rick- you can relax, you can have a laugh more (Nottingham College)

Alex- It's like a different world really. You are not paying attention to others (Nottingham College)

Jonathan- Nothing is really serious when you're drunk (Nottingham College).

It is very interesting how the practice of drinking appears in the narratives of the majority of my English participants. I suggest that in a culture shaped by high expectations regarding the work sphere and the privatisation of emotional aspects of life, as has been highlighted in the previous chapter, drink becomes a way to 'speak your mind' and relax. The relaxing attitude is mentioned by Susie, Rick, Alex, and Jonathan and the other participants. Besides, the practice of drinking seems to encourage people to interact. As all the interviewees above expressed drink makes a person feel less self-conscious, by 'not paying attention to others', talking 'easily to people', taking things less seriously, and laughing more.

We can also see how the practice of drinking interacts with my participants' view of English people as not as laid back, particularly in comparison to the Spanish and Italians.

Ana Maria- Laid back in which sense?

Emily- People here always seem busy and they have too much to do. They are always rushing around places. I myself tend to do this (Magdalene School).

From the context of a busy life, with the lack of enough time to relax, my participants tend to overemphasise their life-ideals of having enough money for travelling abroad regularly.

Susie- The last time that I went to Italy I realised how the life there is different from ours. People live outside; eat late at night; sleep during the day even at weekdays. People do seem to enjoy life much more than we do here (Magdalene School).

Finally, Susie implicitly reveals the English national characteristic of being a work-oriented culture in contrast with the life-style in Italy. As already

demonstrated in this chapter, English people in general do articulate their aspirations by reinforcing the centrality of work in their life-plans at the same time that they want to have a financial situation that allows them to travel abroad. Travelling in this context appears as an alternative to relaxing and engaging with a more balanced life in terms of pleasure.

As the desire for travelling, as became explicit in the narratives of my participants, reveals their interest in knowing other cultures, I will deal with it further in the following section of this chapter. It will become clearer how the process of globalisation, in this particular example illustrated as expanding the possibility of travelling, is incorporated in the narratives of young people's aspiration.

3. Globalisation as incorporated into young people's aspirations

In the discussion to be developed in this section globalisation is debated in very specific and restricted ways. This means that globalisation is examined in relation to opinions and opportunities of young people while they are articulating future plans. There are occasions when globalisation tends to be described in the context of opportunities for consumption, openness to different life styles, travelling, in other words, as possibilities for interactions and exchanges. At other times, globalisation is reflected more in terms of barriers, restrictions, economic interests and even imperialism. I will not be aiming here to find a definition for globalisation, which would not be possible anyway, as it is an heterogeneous process (Souza, 2000; Ortiz, 1999; Massey, 2000). The main aim of this section is to illustrate the ways young people from different nationalities and social classes experience globalisation by living, or by feeling excluded from the process of 'unification of the world' in their daily routines. With regard to globalisation here it is relevant to highlight, that from the perspective of the thesis, globalisation gains its own individuality in the daily lives and in social practices of young people. The approach developed in this section supports Massey's (2000) argument that we do not live the compression of space and time (Giddens, 1990) in the same ways. Globalisation is analysed in this section in the light of differentiated social contexts in terms of young people's articulations of aspirations.

3.1 The meanings associated with travelling

> Ana Maria- What would you like to do immediately after you finish the A' levels?
>
> Chris- … I don't want to be in a position where I am very limited as to what I can do. I would like to go and see different countries. I'd like to go and see the Far East, East Asia, places like Japan and Thailand. I am quite interested in…. (St Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- Why are you so interested in knowing different countries? Is it a curiosity or something beyond?
>
> Chris- I think it's beyond that. I've always being fascinated by the culture of different…different nationalities really. Humm… specially, places such as Japan and Thailand. Not so much Korea, but they interest me a lot. (St. Joseph's School).
>
> Ana Maria- Why is that?
>
> Chris- Because, it is so different to what I am living now. It is a different world, completely different world. And, I would be so interested in going to see and experience it (St. Joseph's School).

The experience illustrated by Chris has appeared very common in middle class surroundings in England. Some students from St. Joseph's School and Magdalene School have mentioned their interest in knowing the different and exotic world by taking 'a gap year'. British young people interviewed from middle and upper class backgrounds tend to plan to take 'a gap year' abroad between finishing school and starting their university course. My English interviewees mentioned that globalisation has encouraged people to spend some time abroad as expressed by Mary from St Joseph's School: 'I think people are now starting living a year in America, so I think globalisation does affect, because there are a lot of people going to spend a year abroad, travelling, due to globalisation'.

For Chris the possibility of seeing 'different countries' does reveal the broader options he has in life. Travelling to places like the Far East illustrates his aspiration of not being 'limited to what he can do'. It is interesting to note that at the same time that the middle class English I interviewed value 'multicultural England' and the broader opportunities of travelling, made possible by the process of globalisation, they do resent the contemporary difficulties of identifying the elements of English cultural identity. In this context Chris says that as 'the Far East seems a lot more separated from the Western global

impacts', it rouses his curiosity 'to go to see, and experience' what he thinks is a 'completely different world'.

The idea of widening their world perspectives has been very much emphasised particularly by Chris and Susie. As Susie expressed in the previous section she feels the limitation of 'multiculturalism' in Britain and does recognise that being at a middle class school gives her a limited, 'narrow picture of the world'. In the process of planning her future life Susie stresses her desire to experience how people from 'exotic' parts of the world live. 'Exotic' seems to be seen by Susie as a characteristic of a land that has maintained its 'original' aspects, because of its separation from the western developed cultures.

> Susie- ... in future I want to go to India and China. And there are some places where they don't have even a concept of time. And, I am based very much in a Western middle class education. This is very much who I am so I want kind of explore the world. Have the right to have opinions. I guess I want to go and see how other people think, because I've just got Western thinking, British middle class thinking. I want to open my mind a little bit more otherwise I will not have the right to have an opinion, because I have such a narrow view (Magdalene School).

Although a significant number of my English participants incorporate in their aspirations the desire to see different parts of the world, as illustrated by Chris and, Mary, it is not common among the interviewees to perceive their experiences as limited. Susie's experience of reflecting upon her social positioning is very much linked to her personal history. First of all, her parents and stepfather have always been very open with her, allowing her to have 'all sorts of experiences, interesting food'. Besides, the fact that Susie interacts with different settings across social class and ethnicity seem to have contributed to making her very reflective and critical regarding her own categories of identity.

Interestingly, a kind of correlated experience for spending time abroad is mentioned across the middle and upper class Brazilians. The difference is that instead of saying they would like to see the ways people live in exotic countries, they are keen to experience the quality of life people have in developed countries. Besides, living a period of time abroad brings the opportunity to develop a greater degree of autonomy and to learn English.

> Alexandre- Assim quando acabar o terceiro ano, vou fazer intercâmbio. Vai eu, meu primo e uma prima para o Canadá .**As soon as I finish the *vestibular* exam I will**

participate in an exchange program. My two cousins and I are going to Canada (Colégio São Francisco).

Ana Maria-Why do you want participate in this exchange program for a year?

Alexandre- Primeiro eu quero aprender bem o inglês, pois é o básico que o mercado de trabalho exige. E tambem é uma experiência do tipo assim... aqui, a gente depende tudo do pai e da mãe, lá não. A gente vai ter a preocupação de pagar o aluguel, pagar as contas, entendeu? Não vai ter empregados para vir e tirar as roupas sujas. É tipo assim você cria mais independência, responsabilidade, esse tipo de coisa. Não que eu seja irresponsável, mas meu pai e minha mãe não sabem o quanto sou reponsável, entendeu? **First of all, I want to learn English, because it is a minimum requirement for any job. Besides, I want to have an experience like; here, we depend on our mother and father for everything. Abroad will be different. We will have to pay for the rent, pay for our bills do you know what I mean? To tidy up, there will not have employees to separate and wash our dirty clothes. It is the kind of experience to build more independence, responsibility... this type of thing. It does not mean that I am irresponsible, but my dad and my mom don't know how responsible I am, do you know what I mean?** (Colégio São Francisco).

Alexandre's experience is not uncommon among middle and upper class Brazilians. After finishing the last year of high school and doing their university entrance exams, their parents are very keen to pay for their children to experience six months to a year in Europe or North America. Since the Brazilian upper class young people do not tend to have practical skills in terms of housework activities, a significant numbers do have employees working full-time in their homes, the parents encourage them to have an experience of a more independent life-style.

The year abroad is an opportunity to encourage young people to develop their sense of responsibility and independence by organising their finances, and saving enough 'to pay for the rent, and bills'. In addition there is the experience of looking after themselves in a more practical way as expressed by Alexandre in terms of tidying up, doing the laundry, and so on. To invest in the English language is something recognised as a basic qualification for participation in the labour Market today. This requirement of the contemporary labour market, as well as computer literacy, within the context of the flexibility of work, is something the young people I interviewed identified, but they do not necessarily link it to the impacts of globalisation.

One aspect of the Brazilian national element that is produced in Alexandre's narrative of living abroad is his sense of rootedness to his life surrounding and gregarious ways of living. A common aspect that appears among my interviewees was the desire to spend time abroad accompanied by somebody

they know, as Alexandre states: 'My two cousins and I are going to Canada'. Differently from the Brazilians, English people did not tend to express their desires to spend time abroad accompanied.

> Ana Maria- Why do you want to live abroad?
>
> Eduardo- Quero ir ao Canadá ou à Suíça, pois a qualidade de vida nesses dois países é excelente. **I want to go to Canada or Switzerland, because the standard of living in these two countries is excellent** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> Ana Maria-In what sense?
>
> Eduardo- Dizem que a qualidade de vida lá é muito alta e eu quero ir lá para ver como é, qual é a diferença da nossa. **I have heard that the quality of life there is very high. Then, I want to go there to see how it is. What it is the difference compared to ours** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> Ana Maria- Eduardo, I just want to know what do you mean by quality of life? What are you including and excluding, do you know what I mean?
>
> Eduardo- A menor diferença social, a facilidade que a gente tem lá e garantias... em termos de saúde, um salário que dê para você viver. É você ter o hospital de graça, tem a questão da saúde para todo mundo, os policiais eficientes. **A low degree of social inequality, the benefits people have there, guarantees in terms of health, a salary that it is possible to live on. It's to have access to free hospitals, good health for everybody, and an efficient police force** (Colégio São Francisco).

Eduardo, as an upper class Brazilian, has access to a high life standard. In his free time he learns French and English, plays the guitar, works on his computer, has private maths classes, has drama lessons, and so on. At the same time, he is conscious of his privileged upbringing in a country that is characterised by low standard of public services, such as health, education, and security. For this reason, he wishes to see and 'experience' a part of the world where people are likely to have fairer and more equal life opportunities.

The plans of the middle-class participants in terms of living abroad are constructed in terms of investing in their education, independence and awareness of the conditions of living in the first world economy. However, differently from the English interviewees, the experience of living abroad for a short period of time is not mentioned in terms of the possibilities offered by the process of globalisation, but as a privilege of their social class belongings.

> Márcio- É isso eu estou indo para aprender o inglês, porque os meus pais estão pagando. Há muito tempo o pessoal daqui do colégio vai para fazer intercâmbio. E é um negócio caro. Agora, trabalhar no Exterior é bem diferente. Eu acho que eles não me dariam oportunidade facilmente, pois eles não tratam muito bem os brasileiros. **It is**

like this... i am going to learn English, because my parents are paying. This is expensive, but to work abroad is very different. I think that they wouldn't give me opportunities easily, because they don't treat Brazilians nicely (Colégio São Francisco).

**

Antonio- O estrangeiro nesses países como os Estados Unidos e a Europa é sempre visto como invasor, aquele que tá ocupando espaço dos habitantes do país. **The foreigner in countries like the United States and in Europe is seen as the invader, somebody who is occupying the space of the natives** (Colégio Dom João).

Even though the greater part of the Brazilian middle class I interviewed plan to spend time abroad, financed by their parents, they are very conscious of the limits they would find if they decided to work abroad. As Márcio highlights very emphatically, to enter into the first world to learn English is an investment in favour of the visited country. English courses tend to be very expensive for Brazilians, due to the devaluation of our currency. Márcio even perceives that the experience of learning English abroad is not a new phenomenon among the middle class, as he says 'for many years people from this school have gone abroad to learn English'. Even from his middle-class 'space of experience' he does not identify a direct relation between spending time learning English and the openness to the process of globalisation. On the contrary, Márcio points out the difficulties he would face if he decided to go abroad to work, when he says that 'they wouldn't give me opportunities easily, because they don't treat Brazilians nicely'.

Actually, what Márcio and Antonio seem to be suggesting is that Brazilians, who are neither members of the European community nor US citizens, face difficulties in obtaining permission to work abroad and tend to face great problems. For them the breaking of frontiers does not open up new opportunities, since it just happens in a limited numbers of countries. Márcio and Antonio's articulations reinforce Ortiz's (1999) argument that the apparent breakdown of frontiers for trading does not illustrate the end of boundaries, but new arrangements and limits.

As opportunities of travelling by the Brazilian middle class participants are not perceived in association with globalisation, the perception of my Brazilians interviewees from middle, upper, and working class backgrounds tend to be very similar. Their views of globalisation and its influence upon their plans are seen mainly in macroeconomic terms, and for the benefit of first world countries.

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Differently, English young people observe the weakening of their national borders, with a stronger closeness to continental Europe and other parts of the world. They feel that the broader opportunities for travelling and living abroad are indeed contributing to widening their life plans beyond British national boundaries.

3.2 'Global cultures' from the Brazilians' perspective

> Ana Maria- Don't you think that the global culture is impingeing upon us?
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> Luís- Eu acho que o principal é a atividade econômica do país. Eu acho que se não fosse isso não se pensa muito em cultura global. O povo do primeiro mundo que eu vejo é meio frio assim, no Brasil não. **I think that the main thing is the economic activity of the country. I think that if it were not for the economy nobody would think of global culture. People from the first world that I see are kind of cold, in Brazil we are different** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> **
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> Francisca- Regras globais só funcionam para os países subdesenvolvidos. Você não viu George Bush falar que se fosse necessário poluir mais pra que os Estados Unidos não passassem por uma crise de recessão na indústria, ele poluíria. Ou seja, ele quebrou um protocolo de diminuição da poluição do mundo. **Global rules are only set to under/subdeveloped countries. Didn't you see George Bush saying that if it were necessary to pollute more to prevent the United States from entering into a recession crisis, he would pollute. This means that he broke an agreement for diminishing the level of pollution in the world** (Colégio Dom João).

By looking at the narratives of Luís and Francisca it is interesting to observe how Brazilian young people find it difficult to expand the notion of globalisation to their spheres of lives, including work perspectives within Brazil, going beyond macro-economic consequences. It is relevant to understand that the rules that have been imposed on the Brazilian economy for many years by the International Monetary Funds (IMF) and the United States boycotts in Latin America, particularly during the seventies and eighties, certainly reinforce my interviewees' suspicions. Both Luís and Francisca highlight their perceptions of the unbalanced power among nation-states. Luís, in a generalised approach, pictures people from the first world as cold and probably not as open as the Brazilians. I suggest that Luís's fragment of narrative implicitly describes the unilateral outcome of the globalisation process. Bureaucratic processes encourage the flow of foreign goods and tourists into Brazil, but inhibit reciprocal arrangements. Francisca in her articulation perceives globalisation as a differentiated process depending upon the economic power of the nation involved. In this sense, she points out that United States broke the Kyoto protocol to protect its industry.

Attempting to engage with the globalisation issue in terms of young people's daily experience and life-plans, more from a cultural dimension than a macro-economic analysis of the process, I asked my participants to address 'globalisation' and 'everyday' together. In this context the English interviewees relate more easily to the topic than the Brazilian participants. First of all, contrary to what is argued by Robertson (1999), global culture is seen by my Brazilian participants as having only minor effects upon their daily ways of living.

> Marcela- É tudo tão diferente aqui e nos outros lugares. De um lugar para outro a maneira de você se vestir, a maneira de falar, a maneira de você se comportar, língua diferente e tudo...você pode até comprar algumas coisas semelhantes como sapato tenis, mas enquanto o americano vive de tenis, a gente aqui só coloca para esporte e lugares totalmente informais. Cada povo tem a sua cultura e a cultura brasileira, principalmente, a nordestina, é muito enraizada. **It is so different here and in other places. From here to other places the way a person dresses, the way a person speaks, the way a person behaves, different language and everything. You can buy something similar like for example tennis shoes, but while Americans use tennis shoes regularly, we here only use to practice sport or as informal wear. People have their own culture and the Brazilian culture, especially, the culture from Northeast of Brazil, is very rooted** (Colégio São Francisco).

Marcela presents a common opinion among the Brazilians. They continue to see cultural manifestations as very place-specific, including among the regions. As in the Northeast of Brazil there are strong traditions in terms of dance, music, food; my interviewees do not identify the impact of globalisation on their ways of living. They do recognise the common goods across nation-states as Marcela alludes to the use of tennis shoes, particularly worn by young people in Brazil. For her, even though Brazilians and Americans use tennis shoes, the occasions on which they are used are different. In this sense, global goods become localised.

Luís produces a similar kind of approach to Marcela. As a person who intends to do music in his undergraduate course he talks about the importance of the Internet in his life. The use of the Internet is a practice shared by the young people interviewed, especially the middle class ones who have private computers at home. Interestingly young people tend to perceive access to the Internet as something that, though important in their everyday routines in chatting through the net and searching the web, is a life-enhancing factor.

Another aspect they mention is how local cultural codes impact on the creation of different arrangements with the elements accessed via Internet. For example, Luís, whilst recognising the easier access to music of different countries through the Internet, emphasises that Brazilian music still retains its own peculiar qualities.

> Luís- Se você ver mangue beat, Nação Zumbi é uma coisa bem inovadora. Apesar de também usar elementos dos Estados Unidos, guitarra, existem os ritmos bem típicos da nossa terra. **If you paying attention to the movement mangue beat here in Recife is something completely innovating. Even though they use elements from the United States, guitar, there are rhythms very typical of our place** (Colégio São Francisco).

The Brazilians I interviewed, at the same time as identifying positive outcomes brought by the use of the Internet (eg. access to music and films from all over the world), do not foresee opportunities that the process of globalisation may offer to their future lives. The opinions of my interviewees about globalisation are entangled with disillusion rather than hope.

As a middle-class Brazilian, who has lived abroad, Márcio has experienced to a certain extent the daily life in a first world country. He lived five years of his childhood in Canada, while his parents were studying. Even though he does recognise that globalisation is a manifestation of and an integral part of the propagation of consumer goods, and the expansion of markets, he does not see the process as leading to equal opportunities.

> Márcio- Globalização tá acontecendo. No capitalismo tem Mc Donald, em todo o mundo, tem a Coca-cola, os carros já são quase iguais em todos os lugares, mas na maioria das vezes os mais fortes impõem elementos para outra cultura como no neocolonialismo. **Globalisation is happening. Because of capitalism there are Mc Donalds all over the world, Coca-Cola, the cars that are almost the same everywhere. For most of the time the strongest impose their cultural elements on other cultures like during Colonialism. Globalisation in certain ways is a kind of neo-colonialism** (Colégio São Francisco).

> Daniel- Porque isso é cultura global. O que é cultura global? É comprarmos os produtos dos países ricos. Quando o americano vai a sala de cinema para assistir filme brasileiro? Ou quando eles vão comprar um CD de Maracatu, de Frevo...não vão não. E isso não é porque nossa música e nosso filme não têm qualidade, mas porque eles não estão interessados nos nossos produtos. Cultura global é abrir nossas portas para botar o que é deles. Isso é que é cultura global na prática, eu acho. Isso não é cultura global, isso aí é ataque global. **Why is this global culture? What is global culture? It is for us to buy the products of the rich countries. When do Americans go to the cinema to watch Brazilian movies? Or when do they go to buy a CD of *Maracatu*, *Frevo*** (Popular music and dances of the state of Pernambuco, where the research took place) **... they do not buy. The reason that they will not do this is not because our music and our film don't have quality, but because they are not interested in our**

products. Global culture is to open our 'doors' to their products. This is global culture in the practice, I think. This is not global culture. This is actually global attack (Colégio São Francisco).

The majority of the Brazilians interviewed tend to identify globalisation as an unidirectional process, happening from first world economies to developing countries. Márcio recognises the signs of globalisation in the presence of' Mc Donalds all over the world, Coca-Cola, 'the cars that are almost the same everywhere'. Márcio and Daniel associate globalisation 'with a kind of neo-colonialism'. In this sense neither Márcio nor Daniel identify possibilities for the expansion of Brazilian exports and work mobility. I suggest that their views are based on the awareness of the commercial barriers maintained by European countries and the United States. Daniel resents the lack of knowledge that foreign people have about the cultural aspects of Brazil. In this context he implicitly highlights that, while Brazilians buy American CDs and watch American movies, Americans do not have an interest in interacting with Brazilian cultural elements. Most Brazilian interviewees perceive globalisation as being intimately entangled with inequality. In fact, during the interviews with the Brazilians I realised from the beginning how difficult it would be to discuss globalisation other than in terms of macro economic consequences.

By making the effort to 'appease' the strong feelings against globalisation, I tried different ways of phrasing the question during the interviews with different participants. My intention was to see how globalisation could possibly interact with the context of young people's aspirations. The answers I obtained did not refer to expansion of life-opportunities, but instead focused on the limited access to them.

Ana Maria- Don't you think that interactions across national states are important ?

Daniel- Eu penso que os países ricos estão se beneficiando com as trocas. Eu gosto de músicas inglesas e americanas. O problema é que se botar tudo deles para cá e nada pra lá não é justo. Lá fora ninguém sabe nem quem é o Brasil e aqui muita gente sabe até os nomes dos Estados americanos.**I think that the rich countries are benefiting from the exchanges. I like English and American music. The problem is that if they only export their products to us and do not allow us to export to them it is not fair. Abroad nobody knows anything about Brazil and here many people know even the names of the American States** (Colégio São Francisco).
**

Zeca- Vejo os Estados Unidos que querem ser a supremacia mundial, de querer mandar em tudo e agora estão querendo levar mais vantagens ainda com a ALCA

(Associação de Livre Comércio nas Américas). Por ser o maior importador, o maior PIB do mundo aí querem dar ordem. Os Estados Unidos com certeza vão mandar como fazem com o Mexico e tentam fazer com o Canadá. Se a Alca for para frente eles vão querer acabar com as nossas estatais, vão querer mandar os produtos deles para o nosso país. Eu acho que não vai ter um grande desenvolvimento, porque a relação com os Estados Unidos vai ser muito desigual, eles vão boicotar os nossos produtos. **I see the United States wanting to be the world super power. They want to give order and to determine everything around the World. Now, they want to take advantage with the NAFTA [means North America Free Trade Area]. Since they are the biggest importer in the world, the highest GDP, they want to set the rules. The US will try to do here what they did with Mexico and try to do with Canada. If the Nafta is put forward, they will try to end our national industries, to send their products to this country. I think it will not develop here, because our relation with the United States is very unequal, they will boycott our products** (Colégio Dom João).

It seems that the experiences of the young people interviewed in Brazil are so marked by submissive relations with the first world economies that it makes it very difficult for them to regard globalisation as multi-faceted issue. Following the privatisation of Brazilian national industries, bought by multinational companies, they have experienced downsizing that causes their parents to lose their jobs and be made redundant. Besides, as Zeca points out, he, along with other young people, has become aware that the Mexican economy grew through trade with the United States, yet by the end of the nineties was at crisis point. Because of all these factors, Brazilians, although sometimes expressing their desire to work for a while in first world economy to save money, do not expect this happening in reality. Their aspirations, in terms of ideals, are still very much focussed on their desires to make a life in Brazil, and to continue living near their families and friends.

3.3 Articulating Global cultures from English participants' experiences

Ana Maria- Are you saying you feel bothered by the impact of globalisation? Do you feel this impact into your life?

Chris- No. I don't think it bothers me. I think it's progress. It's the way it will happen, whether we like it or not. Because in Europe we are going through these changes - all the cultures are kind of merging into one. I feel I have to live with it. And, either way is progress. It is an advance on what we have been used to, so I think it should go that way (St Joseph's).

Chris sees globalisation happening in Europe, especially in terms of the access to consumer goods, similar ways of living, the presence of people from all over the world even in a city like Nottingham, the possibility of travelling easily around the world with lower costs. Many participants mention the development

of the low-cost airlines in Britain. Chris says that the process of globalisation should continue in the way it is happening in Europe. Chris perceives this merging process as positive throughout his interview, and as directly linked to his interests and life-plans. He has mentioned during his interview that the fact of identifying with other cultures and trends makes a person more respectful of differences. Living sometime abroad to 'experience a knowledge of what things are like and indulge his interests in things' is an aspect that Chris incorporated as part of his life-plans. Secondly, as Chris is planning to do something in relation to English literature or in the artistic field, it encourages him to be aware of the cultural aspect in other parts of the world.

Another interesting issue that appears among English young people interviewed while discussing the global cultural impact onto their lives was their emphasis on food: 'now we have so much interesting food, there are different dishes available in English cities', as said by Sue.

> Sue- Now, in England, we can taste food from all over the world. And, this I find very interesting (Nottingham College).
> **
> David- We don't need to go to Italy to have Italian food. It is available everywhere (Nottingham College).

Food has been something that was much commented on by English young people where articulating positive outcomes of globalisation that have a direct impact on their lives. I suggest that a past stereotype in relation to the lack of taste of English food, especially in comparison to other countries may be the reason why my participants focused on the wide range of food in contemporary England. Actually, young people do say that they like to try different sorts of food.

Differently from the Brazilians, English participants perceive the process of globalisation as multilateral. At the same time that English music and languages are disseminated all over the world, international food, music, and films are available in England. Additionally, English people have cheaper and easier access to foreign countries than do the Brazilians. As mentioned in the section on multiculturalism, in England, people from mixed origins and with a stronger

link to continental Europe tend to perceive the impact of the global culture in England as happening slower than in continental Europe.

> Lucy- I think a lot of European countries seem to have a lot of English music...Britain does not really have a lot... It's very American, English music. But there is more Latin music than in the past. I know in France there is a lot of English music. In England is different. We have more British and American. We haven't really embraced European pop (St Joseph's School).

Despite Lucy's strong affinity with Europe, which affects her perception in terms of how the process of globalisation is happening in different locations, she does recognise that the global cultural impact is starting to have an effect here: there is more Latin music than in the past'. Like Chris, Lucy understands global culture as a positive process. Her position becomes clear when she resents the fact that in England people 'haven't really embraced European pop'.

The active changes that are impacting on people's lives tend to be contextualised in England as a possibility of breaking with the 'traditional island culture', and tend to be perceived, by the young people interviewed, as a positive change. The opportunity of working abroad becomes clearly explicit especially in the narratives of English middle and upper middle classes.

> Ana Maria- How do you see the impact of globalisation on England, particularly on your life?
>
> Lucy- I think it definitely can affect job opportunities. People can go now more freely and work abroad, things like that. I think that it will break down a lot of prejudices as well (St Joseph's School).
>
> Joan-I think that globalisation does affect us, because there are a lot of people going and spending a year abroad, travelling, getting jobs due to globalisation. You have a lot of ideas shared especially on the Internet. It affects sport popularity; football is a world sport (St Joseph's School).

We can see how job opportunities among the English and Brazilian interviewees are interpreted differently. For English people work is not linked to downsizing, but to the real possibilities of mobility, articulated with the idea of free trade. In this regard, Joan sees globalisation as clearly linked to the tendency she is witnessing of 'people going and spending a year abroad, travelling, getting jobs'. The Internet also is emphasised from a different perspective in comparison to the Brazilian interviews. The latter tend to see it as a consumer product that the middle class can access, but not as an opportunity

to propagate Brazilian cultural elements, ideas, and so forth. For Joan, the Internet is a technology that leads to sharing. In this context, it is far from being a unilateral process, but an interactive channel.

The possibility of working abroad becomes so concrete to some groups of young people in England that they construct their future plans by illustrating their future lives abroad.

> Elisabeth- I want to be a fashion director. I want to work in New York. It is very much a case of having to build your way up. This is what I see myself doing (Magdalene School).

Differently from Elisabeth, my Brazilian interviewees construct their articulations of globalisation centred in the macro-economic level, instead of viewing it in terms of their personal lives. First of all the possibility of seeing themselves working in New York at director level, is much less envisaged by Brazilians, even from a middle class background. Elisabeth has such a strong confidence in the viability of her dream that she actually sees herself as building her life in New York. She is aware of the dedication and the effort she has to invest, but as Elisabeth perceives the channels for mobility, reinforced by globalisation, as open to her, there is a strong degree of confidence that this is a viable option.

The outcomes of globalisation are so attractive to English people that my interviewees did not mention any major concern with regard to the process of globalisation. Although in the section of multiculturalism, Joan and other participants emphasised that prejudices continue to affect English Society, she foresees globalisation as a possibility to 'break down a lot, like prejudices as well'.

Finally, one aspect that has surprised me was the absence of the topic of asylum seekers in relation to globalisation and their life-opportunities in England among my English interviewees. At the same time, they did not externalise any kind of prejudice against the phenomenon of migration into England. On the one hand English people could relate to the topic of globalisation in the context of their private lives and aspiration, something, which the Brazilians found

extremely difficult to do. On the other hand, English people in general did not build globalisation into their narratives as a heterogeneous process.

Conclusion

This Chapter has shown that there are major differences between Brazil and England, both in terms of national cultural formation and in terms of the expression of aspiration. The difference begins with the relative ease or difficulty with which national belonging is expressed in the two societies.

In Brazil, the interviewees tended to highlight their relationship and identity to the country in very clear narratives. A central aspect that has been celebrated in all sorts of different ways by the Brazilian participants of this research is its hybridity. This intermediate category has influenced the Brazilian culture in all sorts of different ways. It has mediated the influence of the past and the more modern aspects in Brazil's development; the reinforcement of the 'richness of miscegenation', not only in terms of racial mixture, but also of cultural borrowings from Africa, Europe and the native Indigenous Culture, within the context of Brazil's own individual character. An interesting issue that was focused on by the Brazilian research subjects was the intersections between Brazilian popular music and dance with its modern versions, for instance the national rock, the *manguebeat,* the hip hop, and so forth. Brazilians' hybridity has impacted in different spheres of social, political, and cultural production.

At the same time that Brazil's singular process of modernity, its hybrid peculiarity characterised by modern values and tradition, tends to strengthen the close relationships among nuclear and extended family, and friends, it also reinforces patriarchal relations, especially in the Northeast of Brazil. In general, Brazilian participants had difficulty in perceiving the celebration of miscegenation and the centrality of happiness as aspects that could disguise inequalities. As it is examined in detail in the following chapter, Brazilians do not have difficulties in identifying existing social gaps that mark people's lives. Throughout their narratives it becomes clear that they have difficulties in seeing that the official and popular celebration of the 'democratic and harmonic' racial and cultural 'democracy' can actually make social inequalities invisible. For instance, even when knowing that there is a strong relationship between being

poor and being black in Brazil, the research participants, even the working-class ones, did not question the 'myth of Brazilian racial democracy'.

Brazilian participants do not comment that Brazil's hybridity is likely to reinforce both the tactics of the young people interviewed in the sense of configuring positive definitions of risk, even while facing on a daily basis the impact of violence, poverty, and, the *jeitinho brasileiro*. The *jeitinho brasileiro* contributes to the national *'common sense'*, which is entangled with Brazilians' extroversion, their passion for parties, carnival, football, beach, outdoors meeting points, social relationships and the relationship with the national popular music, regional parties, food, and so forth. However, *jeitinho brasileiro* is not only associated with this, but also with the patriarchal relationships that structure the privileges of the already privileged. The easier ways to resolve matters was mentioned by one of the Brazilian interviewees when he emphasised that he did not see a problem in attempting to bribe the traffic police to avoid a fine. From the perspective of the *jeitinho brasileiro*, the Brazilian readiness to smile is propagated at the same time that the reinforcement of unequal power relations is reproduced without being noticed.

What has become evident in this chapter is that Brazilian young people across social class, gender and race, whilst very critical of globalisation, as they perceive it in the context of the dissemination of western power relations across the world, tended to associate Brazil's social problems with institutionalised politics and corrupt politicians. They do not tend to articulate that the use of personal privilege to solve problems only weakens the effectiveness of the law to deal fairly with all Brazilians, regardless of race, class, gender and all sorts of different categories of identity.

On the other hand, while the Brazilians' select their articulations of the nation from the perspective of happiness and celebration, the English interviewed, though making references to their pride in the nation, are unlikely to explain in more concrete ways what makes them feel proud of being English. However, by interacting with them I noticed that English pride should not only be explained in terms of its sports, world music, and so on; there is also a strong relationship with the work ethic.

The English work ethic is examined in the light of providing wide life-opportunities for those who are intelligent and hardworking. In this sense, the ideology of meritocracy tends to be closely associated with the allusion to the English ability 'to work themselves into the ground'. In this context, it is important to note that the majority of the English interviewed tended to perceive England as a privileged country that does not have major social problems. English young people, especially the middle and upper middle class, have shown their inability to identify social inequality within the country. Their praise of multiculturalism reinforces the idea that England is a multicultural society that integrates well with other cultures.

The people who tended to have a more critical perspective on English multiculturalism are the young women from working-class backgrounds. Living in a working-class community might reinforce their capacity to identify the contradictions of multiculturalism, as for instance: the propagation of anti-immigration discourses and the high numbers of asylum applications being turned down. On the other hand, the majority of the English interviewed recognised that in comparison with past generations, English contemporary young people are likely to interact more with mixed raced and ethnic populations.

Finally, as we could see in the context of the experience of the interviewees the configuration of the relationship between the local, the national and the global are understood very differently among the research subjects. The English, particularly from middle and upper class background understand global relations in the light of the widening of opportunities and chances of 'experiencing' different cultures across the world. The other participants, by feeling affected by the social contrasts that impact upon their spaces of location tend to see global intersection with the local and the national as an imposition of by economic dominant countries on the fragile ones. From this perspective, these interviewees are only able to identify the positive outcomes of globalisation through the context of their leisure sphere. Examples given, across social class, gender, and ethnicity, include: the pleasure of accessing the internet, meeting new people, listening to and downloading music from all over

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the world (this was also mentioned by middle and upper class Brazilians), access to different food, to different clubs and music (the English research participants).

Chapter 6: Aspiration and Injustice: Politics and Ethics

Aspiration incorporates processes of sedimentation and innovation that may or not reinforce political struggles and break with dominantly prescribed socio-economic goals. I recognise the terrain of multiple struggles, in which hegemonic forces, persuasive influences in Gramsci's sense of the term (1971), confront with one another. In this chapter, the 'organisation of consent' (hegemony) around social class 'interests' and economic location (Laclau, 1977) is not examined in a deterministic fashion. Yet, I recognise the significant presence of social class, at the same time that I observe the different struggles and involvements that are likely to attract the support of the research participants. These struggles can be against gender inequalities, racism, ethnic prejudices, environmental destruction and inequalities of rights among gays and lesbians (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Laclau and Mouffe have contributed to the debate of new movements, in other words, the influence of a confluence of struggles into the political space.

Questioning the straightforward relationship between young people and political apathy and individualism (Cohen, 1997; Buckingham, 2000; Abramo et al., 2000; Peralva and Sposito, 1997), I take into account the 'specificities' of the participants' 'space of experience' (Skeggs, 1997) in time, and the new ways of being political other than participation in 'organised' politics. This means that politics in this chapter is not only concerned with state policies and politics or the organisation of civil society, limited by the formal political system, because it also attempts to grasp the socially diffused nature of power, including feelings of 'powerlessness' (Buckingham, 2000). The relationship between the participants and the political is analysed in a much wider fashion, by examining how the concerns for disenfranchised others, the recognition of cultural pluralisms and differences, the desire for social justice, in other words, how concerns for a more equal and fairer society are included in the participants life-experiences (Buckingham, 2000) and in the articulation of their aspirations.

In the first part of this chapter young people's articulation of politics is focused through a more traditional definition of politics. The political 'domain' is limited to

perceptions about state politics and civil society in terms of family as an institution, law, education, cultural and religious institutions, participation in political parties and social movements (Zizek, 1994). As contextualised in the sense of institutionalised politics and civic spheres, politics is intrinsically linked to engagements that aim to change the ways societies are structured.

In the second section of this chapter the narratives of young people relate to politics in the context of concern for the well being of others. Politics is not considered in a narrow sense with regard to its traditional definition, linked to institutionalised practices, but as interacting with the research participants' accounts of feelings and ethical preoccupations and practices in favour of social justice and peoples' suffering. From this point of view, politics necessarily intersects with young people's daily experiences. Politics is then defined as 'the means by which human beings regulate, attempt to regulate and challenge with a view to changing unequal power relationships' (Buckingham, 2000:33).

The relationship between articulations of aspirations, as defined in chapter 2, and the research subjects' narratives in terms of the political, their practices, thoughts and feelings is not expected to be fixed (even if only partially) in the 'intelligible and instituted forms of a society' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 112). In this context, this chapter considers the understanding of how subjects experience the contradiction of their life 'positionings', the demands of imposed exigencies of daily life (Walkerdine et al., 2001) by taking account of the 'thickness' of the research subjects. Individuals' subjectivities (the practices of self-making) are mediated by interdependence between people, within and between groups and collectivities (Johnson et al, 2004: 259-64).

In the light of the narratives of the young people I interviewed, I discuss in the last section of this chapter how far the common sense that sustains perceptions of contemporaneous youth as politically apathetic applies. These ideas and beliefs are likely to be strengthened by comparison with the struggles of previous youth movements in the sixties across the world. However, those struggles did not happen during the lives of the participants, therefore, they should not be analysed without focusing on the current experiences of young people. Besides, as discussed in Chapter 2, contemporaneous images of youth

being influenced by the media industry and social theories on consumerism and individualisation (Lasch, 1979; Sennett, 1998; Bauman, 2003) have contributed to perceptions of young people as individualist and politically apathetic.

1. Relating to Institutionalised Politics

From the analyses of the interviews with both Brazilian and English participants I observed throughout their narratives, particularly when politics was introduced into our discussions, frustration and disappointment regarding institutionalised politics. Neither the presence of young people's participation nor their interest in politics, in terms of a narrower institutionalised context, are strongly emphasised in their articulations of aspirations. However, the narratives below should not be understood without considering the political experiences in which they were articulated.

> Juliet- Tony Blair has disappointed the majority of British people recently. The consequences of the 11th of September are affecting our lives directly, because our Government involved our country in an unjustifiable war (St. Joseph's School).
>
> **
>
> Mandy- Tony Blair has involved us in a war that does not concern us. Fair enough many British died. Many people from other countries also died. One thing is giving support another is participating in the war. I do not think it is fair to send our troops to the war. It is not fair to our country and our families (Nottingham College).

To understand the meaning of Juliet's and Mandy's fragments of configurations we have to focus on the political moment that marked their life, when the interviews were taking place. To talk about state policy or the evaluation of the British Government reminds Juliet of a very negative event, from her perspective, that is the involvement of Britain with the war against Afghanistan. For Juliet to talk about the Blair Government activates negative thoughts that 'the consequences of the 11th of September are affecting our lives directly'. She believes Blair involved Britain 'in an unjustifiable war', despite the fact that British people died in the Twin Towers.

In the same way that Juliet and Mandy's arguments can only be understood properly by focusing on what was happening in Britain and in the world during the time that our interviews took place, from October 2001 to January of 2002,

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we can only make sense of the narratives of the Brazilian participants if their contexts of living are discussed.

> Marcela- Política pra mim é sinônimo de interesse pessoal e não tem nada a ver com a busca de melhorar a situação do povo. Governo aqui nunca deu confiança. **Politics for me is synonymous with personal interest and has nothing to do with the commitment to improve the situation of the population. Governments have never offered trust** (Colégio São Francisco).
>
> **
>
> Ana Maria- what do you dislike about Brazil?
>
> Cristina- Os meninos de rua, drogas, ladrões nas favelas matando. A violência é horrível aqui no Brasil. Os políticos corruptos, as eleições também, porque a gente não sabe em quem votar. **Street children, drugs, and thieves in the shantytowns killing. The violence here in Brazil is horrible. The poliicians are corrupt, and the elections are problematic, because we don't know for whom to vote** (Dom João).
>
> **
>
> Manoel- Se no Brasil não houvesse corrupção política nem violência seria o melhor país do mundo. **If here in Brazil we did not have political corruption and violence it would be the best country in the world** (Dom João).

Brazilian men and women from all social classes distrust institutionalised politics. As I will be discussing at a later point in this chapter, Brazil's political history has been marked by 'corruption' 'personal interest' and 'the lack of commitment to improve the situation of the population'. Influenced by the recent political history of Brazil, Marcela, Cristina and Manoel do not trust politicians and are likely to show, as Cristina did in her fragment of narrative, a lack of interest in the election system. However, it is important to clarify that elections were mentioned several times throughout the narratives of the participants, because the research took place from September to December of 2002, a period of electoral campaigns. This period included the effective elections to almost all the main executive and legislative posts in politics of the country, including the Brazilian presidency. As it is illustrated throughout this chapter, this last election, particularly of the President in October of 2002, has marked a shift in terms of young people's involvement with politics and their interest in voting.

As the national issues that were happening in Britain and in Brazil, during the time which the interviews took place in both countries, were different, and since interests in politics should not be discussed by disregarding the 'specificities' of the local, the national and the global across time, I deal with the narratives of the English and the Brazilian participants by examining the particularity of their

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spatial locations. Their narratives shown in this chapter in relation to politics, in the wider meaning of the term (Buckingham, 2000), should not be generalised to other historical periods, differently from the time in which the research took place. There is no doubt that the narratives were influenced by the experiences the research participants were living at the time of their interviews.

1.1 The English Participants' Perspectives: Different Class Horizons

Looking at the narratives of English and Brazilian young people, it is important to focus on the relation between institutionalised politics and political involvement through the intersection of different temporalities: past, present, and future anticipations. I do not look at the participants' articulations for social justice, for social equality, for ecology for any form of political concern, by comparing them to past youth 'activisms' or political disengagements. This would be to overlook the specific temporalities of today's youth when it is not the same as those of sixties 'radicals'.

Despite the disappointment of both the English and the Brazilians in relation to current political situations in their countries, the complaints of the majority of the English participants reflected upon specific issues, especially, the support given by Tony Blair to the United States, with regard to participation in the war against Afghanistan. The Labour Party's different positions in relation to the events of the war were not articulated by the interviewees. Blair's actions regarding Britain's participation in the war are the dominant configurations in the young people's narratives. According to Johnson and Steinberg (2004), even though there are distinctions within the party and its social constituencies, Blairism is the hegemonic faction with in the New Labour. Mr Blair's intervention in Afghanistan has been a topic widely mentioned by my participants. It was opposed by all the English participants interviewed.

It is important to highlight here that none of the participants demonstrated indifference to what happened in the United States and the deaths that occurred during the war. Joe referred to the death of many innocents during the focus group discussion that took place in St. Joseph's School.

> Joe- we should destroy the terrorists, but not innocents (St Joseph's School).

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The English interviewees' articulation of politics has been very much centred on the events of the 11th of September. I tried to encourage Juliet during our one to one interview and Joe, along with the other male participants of the focus group, to talk further about the war, and in the interview encouraged Juliet to explain what she meant by 'an unjustifiable war'. However, the discussion did not lead to further engagements. None of the participants articulated the antecedents of the war or the reasons given by the United States' government to initiate the war in Afghanistan.

Ana Maria- Juliet, why do you think that is an unjustifiable war?

Juliet- Because as Britain is participating directly in this war against Afghanistan, it could mean that a world war can start soon (St. Joseph's).

Ana Maria- How do you see the relation between the war and the 11th of September?

Juliet- I think that the war is a direct consequence of the 11th of September. If the event of 11th of September has not happened the war probably wouldn't happen (St. Joseph's).

During the focus group discussion among the male participants from St Joseph's School, the war in Afghanistan appeared as the most important political issue of that time, so I tried to understand what were the young men's views on the event.

Joe- Afghanistan. If they decide to drop a nuclear bomb in London...(St. Joseph's).

Bill- We should destroy them right now (St. Joseph's).

Ana Maria- Destroy who?

Bill- Get rid of them (St. Joseph's).

Ana Maria-Do you think we should destroy people ...?

Joe- we should destroy the terrorists, but not the innocents (St. Joseph's).

Ana Maria- What is behind the Afghanistan war?

Bill- To get rid of the terrorists that are involved with the 11th of September (St. Joseph's).

As I already said about the narratives of the English participants concerning the issue of the war, they did not mention any previous antecedents linking the United States and the Afghanistan. Even though the English interviewed did not agree with the war, their narratives seemed to be influenced by Mr Blair's

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discourses at the time with regard to the need to fight 'against terror' and the 'terrorists'. From what we could examine from the fragments of articulations above, it is clear that these English participants' configurations are not very thoughtful, since they tend to propagate the war against terror almost as if it were the 'right thing to be done'.

Among the English participants Susie demonstrated a particularly inquisitive and critical approach to historical and current affairs and she expressed her views on the war. Maybe Susie's opinion is an exception as she shows interest in political issues involving women and third world countries. Besides, the fact that she lives in two very different environments may influence her views. As already explained throughout the thesis, Susie is a working-class young woman, who lives in a working-class multi-racial neighbourhood in Nottingham and attends a private school.

> Susie- At the moment, it isn't a war about getting the Taliban out of the Afghanistan, and it isn't to get the Northern Alliance into power, because as soon as the Northern Alliance takes control they are the bad guys. This war is about million of pounds of oil and America wants it basically (Magdalene School).

Susie focuses on the war by going beyond the argument on the terrorists: 'the civilised world against the uncivilised', words implied, by Mr Blair and Mr Bush during the event. Susie also depicted the war as not restricted in terms of Britain's involvement, but as a world issue, linked to global, political, and economic power relations. Even though Susie refers to the interest in getting the Taliban out of Afghanistan, because of interests in million of pounds of oil, she did not talk further about the 'legitimacy' of the war.

It was interesting to see that the English young people interviewed did not articulate what constitutes the definitions of 'civilisation' and 'non-civilisation'. I was keen to know whether the participants perceived these words as a universalised category or defined in contexts of unbalanced power relations. As I was in England during both events of the 11th of September and throughout the war against Afghanistan, I remembered the ways in which the conflict between 'the civilised' and the 'un-civilised' world was emphasised by the English media during the event. In this context, Mr Blair's policies and involvement with international communities, his 'trans-national mission',

particularly the mission to 'civilise the rest of the world' gets internalised, especially by the middle-class interviewees, as common sense. The research participants throughout the interviews did not tend to anticipate the potential economic, cultural, ethnic and political impacts of the war, by linking these aspects to their lives, except from the fear of a future world war mentioned by Juliet and of a bomb in London articulated by Fred.

> Fred- ... the war in Afghanistan. If they decide to drop a nuclear bomb in London of course I would fight. Because if I didn't nobody would be able even to have a family, a job or anything (St Joseph's School).

Fred configures a link of the event with everyday life by anticipating a future, which he believes is a possible outcome. He mentioned the possibility of Britain's national territories, especially London, being 'physically' attacked, and, in so doing he ended up articulating a fragment of narration, with a strong imaginary dimension. However, as we have seen before in this thesis, in Ricoeur's (1984; 1988) theory on narrative, in the stages of the hermeneutic cycle, life draws on fictions as much as fiction is influenced by life.

The relationship of the outcomes of the war to young people's lives and their present preoccupations was only drawn in terms of retaliation to a possible attack. I found extremely difficult to motivate the English young people interviewed, especially the middle-class ones, to link the issues involving institutionalised politics and their lives. The narratives of young people's aspirations, as linked to world politics, were not articulated. Besides, the relationship between the personal and the collective aspects did not tend to appear in their configurations with regard to institutionalised politics. This absence might have a link with the difficulties I had in chapter 5 of observing whether the English participants identify social, economic, and political inequalities within the country. I suggest that my interviewees also detach institutionalised politics, the activity of the Government, from their daily lives.

> Chris- I think that the world in general moves on its own pace. I am not really worried about anything, because I don't believe I have any power to stop it (St Joseph's School).

The elements included in Chris's articulation reveal his 'feeling of 'powerless'. It is possible that Chris expresses a certain lack of concern by saying that 'I am

not really worried about anything, because I don't believe I have any power to stop...' things from happening or promoting changes.

However, Joan links in her anticipation of her desired profession, her wish to do law to social issues and her aspiration for living in a society in which the law is applied.

> Joan- Politically, I am kind of left wing so it attracts me to do law, because you have social issues in what you deal with in your work. I believe in justice and in a healthy legal society ...' (St. Joseph's School).

Engaging with Joan I tried to motivate her to explain the meaning of a 'healthy society', and to focus the contemporary social issues that England was confronting at the moment. She has discussed (see Chapter 5), political issues in the light of the slow integration of England with the rest of Europe. From the context of Joan's experiences both from her professional interest and her perspective on England's integration with Europe, she relates her life and concerns with politics. In terms of institutionalised politics, she might attempt to work with legal issues.

Of all of the English middle and upper middle class interviewees Joan was the only one who tended to contextualise institutionalised politics from a closer relationship with her personal aspirations. I am not saying that belonging to a particular social class increases or determines the interest in politics. There are many other issues that together may impact upon configurations and re-figurations of the narratives. For example, nationality, which was discussed in the previous chapter, may have been a factor in the differences of narratives between the Brazilian and the English participants in relation to local, national and global issues.

The broader political context and recent political history of Britain is relevant to an understanding of these young people's responses. The Thatcher government propagated a political ideology by combining an emphasis on the nation and family with a radical neo-liberalism and 'anti-statism' (Hall, 1988; Jessop et.al, 1988). A legacy of Thatcherism is that some middle class families depend less on state provision, especially for education, transport and health. I

noticed that this is particularly applicable in the case of the young women from Magdalene School. This means they are unaware of the deterioration of public services in Britain. Since 1997, the Blair government has continued Thatcher's policy of de-emphasising the remaining significance of class in people's concrete life opportunities in Britain (Driver and Martell, 2001; Richards and Smith, 2002). In this context, Blair's government, even when representing left-wing politics, did not stress the continuing relevance of class in the country. In this sense, it became more difficult for privileged young people to be aware of inequalities and the decrease in the quality of public services in England.

It was easier to motivate the working-class[56] interviewees to discuss the relationship between politics and their current lives. In my opinion this may be explained by the fact that this group of young people are more affected by the government's failure to deliver public services, along with the fact that they are often aspirants to professional careers in the public services.

> Mandy- I don't like politics. This government does not pay attention to problems at home[57]. We faced the outbreak of foot mouth disease without having plans in place. The health system, particularly, in local working-class neighbourhoods is in a terrible condition. I feel Stapleford is abandoned. I don't see any government policy in helping the youth to get away from drugs. I hear a lot that in America there is support like counselling, but here we don't have that. We don't have sufficient local centres just help lines. It is quite disturbing no one is getting appropriate help (Nottingham College).

Mandy's account reveals her experience in her surroundings. She has described the involvement of young people with drugs as a social problem that has political consequences, because it affects many people, as she makes explicit by emphasising the example of her neighbourhood. According to her, the problem is not only of personal addiction, but also of gun problems, and the formation of gangs that steal from local stores that have contributed to increased crime rates. Mandy associates the problems she confronts in her local neighbourhood with the lack of effectiveness of Government policy. From

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56 As has been clarified in the chapter 1 and 3 what I am calling working-class in this thesis are the participants of working-class family backgrounds, who, however, are applying for university courses. This means that it is a specific segment of the so-called working-class in Britain.

57 It is interesting to perceive that while the middle class interviewees tend to encourage England's closer relationship to Europe, as highlighted in Joan's fragment of narrative, the working class participants feel, as exemplified by Mandy, that England should pay more attention to home issues.

Mandy's experience 'the health system, particularly, in local working-class neighbourhoods is in a terrible condition'. The problem of drugs and crimes seems to be really impacting on the area that Mandy lives in, because of a lack of opportunities. She describes the situation using striking language: 'it is quite disturbing no one is getting appropriate help'.

Mandy's perception of Tony Blair's performance as Prime Minister is of somebody that worries more about foreign affairs than about solving the problems of the poor local communities in England. For her this government stresses participation in international issues, and supporting the richest areas of England. Mandy sustains her argument by saying that at the same time that Stapleford lacks youth clubs and community centres, millions of pounds were spent on the millennium dome.

> Mandy- they don't tend to look at what is good for the country just what is good for London. It seems that there isn't a preoccupation with giving support to the new generation in this government. I have seen what happens with people that use drugs, that is why I feel so angry (Nottingham College).

Mandy's irritation is perfectly in line with what Robins (2001: 474) has identified as Britons' confused feelings about their national culture and value components, which constitute the individuality of English national identity. The city of London seems to be impacted by what Robins (2001: 486) calls a perceived conflict in Britain between the claims of solidarity and unity, on the one hand, and those of pluralism and diversity, on the other. Since London 'is the hub for all the global flows' (2001:487) it makes even more complex the establishment of British cultural coherence in a city where the processes of globalisation appears to be encroaching on the sense of England as 'a united country'.

In the context of Robins's viewpoint, Mandy's irritation with the amount of money spent in London can be contextualised. She puts together her fragments of articulation as propagating a certain feeling of resentment and hostility towards a city that seems to receive a disproportionate amount of national resources, and in addition, dramatically overshadows the economic and cultural life of the rest of the country (Robins, 2001: 487).

From Mandy's narrative it is possible to understand how policies concerning drugs and support for young people become incorporated into her aspirations, linked to her lack of satisfaction with the overshadowed position of local communities in the country in comparison to big cities, particularly, London. Here, the discussion of politics is verbalised by linking its impacts to both personal and collective lives. The failure to deliver assistance and hope makes Mandy feel very 'angry'. As her past and present experiences have been confronting drugs in different situations, including the school environment, she addresses very clearly how this social problem has a direct impact upon her life. She understands how the lack of support makes the situation worse and impinges negatively on people's lives. As a consequence, she does not picture her future as living on her own in Stapleford, due to the fear of gangs and thieves.

Susie shares with Mandy the ideas that the Government is spending money wrongly and neglecting disenfranchised groups in society. As Susie sees New Labour as defined by 'the old values regarding profits', she perceives the privatisation of the railways as a bad measure for the population. In this sense, Susie seems to observe that in spite of New Labour's commitment in 1997 to social progress, it does reproduce some of the characteristics of Thatcherism. None of the other participants interviewed, including Mandy, articulated interests in getting involved somehow with political parties or any other sorts of associations. Even so, Susie explained that the current Government does not focus on collective needs.

> Susie- they privatise the trains, but they cannot even run it as business that keeps prices down and the clients happy. It has gone bankrupt. And, the National Health Service, part of it has been privatised. The catering and cleaning at school have been privatised, and the prices of food have risen. It does give an example of what is going on with privatisation (Magdalene School).

Susie links the process of privatisation to her present experience. As she relates it in her illustration of what happened in her school, Susie sees it as a growing tendency that affects her life as a whole, in personal and collective terms. The fact is that Susie does not depict privatisation as an improvement, but as leading to expensive and bad services.

> Susie- In England, in comparison to the rest of Europe we are one of the worst for treating cancer, because we do not put much money into research and things. I mean that the capital here in this country gets spent on the wrong things. It's going a lot into privatisation, and paying out shareholders. For example, this fiasco in the rail companies, shareholders want as much money as possible. It's going to take out billion of taxpayers' money. There is where the problem is. I mean my grasp of politics is not actually very good, but... (Magdalene School)

Susie's articulations of politics are indeed very clearly expressed and accurate. She seems to be well informed. The problem of cancer, and the decline of the National Health Service in England in other treatments and diagnosis have appeared in the press with regularity. In addition there is also the lack of satisfaction of the population with the bad services provided by the private rail companies. Besides the privatisation policy, another issue that Susie evaluates as problematic in this Government and has a huge impact on the integration of people in the country is the attitude to refugees.

> Susie- I know that just this whole thing about refugees coming over, asylum seekers, there is a certain amount of prejudice in this country, propagated by the media. And, the government just comes with this idea that we can't afford to have all these people here, that we don't have enough space. There is a certain element that is true, but I mean it is kind of propaganda, the media associated with the government to alter the news like that. (Magdalene School).

The problems Mandy and Susie describe in institutionalised politics are also confronted in their daily lives and perceived as future threats if they remain unresolved. Susie foresees the problem of prejudice against foreign people, in her example, asylum seekers, as likely to rise. On the one hand, it has been mentioned in the previous chapter that young English people's relationships with people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds have improved recently in comparison to past generations. On the other hand, Susie observes that the Government association with the media is 'not implementing a policy towards multiculturalism'. As a consequence, Susie sees the creation of new ghettos, and the reinforcement of prejudices. For her Blair includes in his speeches a discourse of equal opportunities, but at the same time he implements anti-immigration policies.

From what we can observe the opinions about government policy are expressed in a more integrated way in young people's daily lives when their spaces of experiences are either directly affected or interact with the existing social, economic, and political contrasts. As the problem of drugs and youth

gangs impinges directly on Mandy's living surroundings it is easier for her to discuss the problem and relate it to a wider perspective of politics. As Susie lives close to ethnic minorities she perceives the propaganda in relation to asylum seekers as a growing potential problem. In fact people's perception of politics is influenced by their experiences of living. Although Mandy and Susie expressed their opinions of the government by strengthening the link with their lives, their engagement in terms of participation in institutionalised politics did not appear in their narratives. As becomes clear by looking at the other interviewees' narratives, the majority of the English interviewed are not involved with institutionalised politics as direct participants, nor do they tend to associate current or recent affairs in detail, as for example the background history of the war in Afghanistan, and the existing social inequalities in Britain. It may be a case of a certain disappointment with Blair's influence as Prime Minister, as emphasised by Susie and Mandy, or of a sense of powerless, as previously expressed by Chris.

1.2 Accounts of the Brazilians: Despair and Hope

As the initial fragments of narrative of the Brazilians with regard to their common and generalised feelings to politics have been presented in an earlier section of this chapter, I re-write some of their fragments in this chapter once again, without the narration in Portuguese, and by focusing only on the most significant parts.

> Marcela- **Politics for me is synonymous with personal interest and has nothing to do with the commitment to improve the situation of the population** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Ana Maria- what do you dislike about Brazil?
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> Cristina- **Street children, drugs, thieves killing in the shantytowns....The politicians are corrupters, and the elections are problematic, because we don't know for whom to vote** (Dom João).
> **
>
> Manoel- **If here in Brazil we did not have political corruption and violence it would be the best country in the world** (Dom João).

From those articulated fragments of the participants we see that they portray a strong dissociation from what they regard as the political. Their perspectives on

politics are marked by disappointments and almost by the desire to be as distant as possible from 'the political sphere'. This disillusionment with institutionalised politics is present equally among the working and middle class Brazilians interviewed. Marcela in her account describes politics as 'synonymous with personal interest'. The personal here is not reflected as a possibility for creating an innovative and creative individuality, as propagated in the consumer culture, but as lacking 'the commitment to improve the situation of the population'. Marcela in a generalised tone seems to say that since Brazilian governments were unlikely to act in the interests of the population, they have never made themselves trustworthy.

Revealing distrust and 'anger', Cristina articulates the saddest problems of Brazil by listing them as linked with politics. There is an immediate association of the presence of 'street children, drugs, thieves killing in the shantytowns' with the corruption of politicians. The lack of credibility in elections and the coalitions of opposed political parties is an aspect of Brazilians' 'common sense' that has become disillusioned by repetitive cases of corruption throughout Brazil's recent history of democracy. Democracy has only been restored in the country with the creation of a new constitution in 1988, and the implementation of the popular election in 1990. With the popular election system, every Brazilian above 18 years old is expected to vote[58].

Young people's discontent with Brazilian politics is so strong that Manoel focuses on the problems faced by the country in terms of incompetent governments. For them, if Brazil were not affected by political corruption, their satisfaction with the country would be complete.

In the process of growing up, the Brazilians interviewed witnessed the crises and scandals involving the return of the civil government after the dictatorship (Peralva and Sposito, 1997). The first President directly elected, Fernando Collor de Melo, was impeached in 1992 due to his links with several cases of corruption. Since 1992, the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) has gained strength and discovered several cases of corruption implicating

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58 The vote in Brazil for those above eighteen years old is compulsory and for young people from sixteen years of age is optional.

governors, senators, state deputies, and federal deputies. Investigations involving public personalities and the judicial system are still often discussed by the media. For these reasons politics and the representation of political personalities in Brazil are deeply entangled with disillusionment. By focusing on the Brazilian context, Abramo et al., 2000 highlight that people tend to get more involved with collective aspects when they interact with the concept of citizenship rather than that of politics. In agreement with them I found that politics tends to be described in partial and pessimistic ways, illustrating Brazilians' disappointments with the political system.

> Carolina- Política me lembra da inabilidade de minimizar o sofrimento das pessoas, questão de comida, falta de habitação, desemprego, pobreza total. **Politics reminds me of the inability to minimise people's suffering, the problem of hunger, housing, unemployment, and total poverty** (Colégio São Francisco).

Carolina's narrative confirms the direct association of politics with the lack of involvement in minimising 'people's suffering'. Another aspect that becomes clear in Carolina's narrative is her awareness of the most significant problems that impact on Brazil. Brazilian participants of all social backgrounds have shown that they are more familiar with the problems that impinge on their country than the English interviewees are with English Issues. I suggest that this awareness might have to do with the higher contrasts and social inequalities among the poor, the middle class and the rich in Brazil, as already discussed in Chapter 3. My analytical findings have demonstrated that the ways social contrasts involve daily life actually intensify people's acquaintance with social problems and criticisms. As the Brazilians interviewed suffer the direct impact of violence in their daily lives, they tend to regard it as the major social problem. In the Brazilian Academy, Non-Governmental Organisations and International Organisations the relationship between poverty and violence has been questioned in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research recently. These studies have demonstrated that it is not poverty itself that has a direct effect on the increase of violence, so much as its relationship with inequality (Abramo et. al, 2000; Waiselfiz et. al, 2004). However, even if the majority of the young people interviewed still see poverty as a major cause of violence, a few participants, particularly from working-class backgrounds, perceived the relationship between inequality and violence.

Paulo- Se por acaso tivesse uma igualdade social no Brasil, eu acho que o Brasil estaria bem melhor, nosso país seria menos violento. **If there were social equality in Brazil I think that Brazil would be much better. It would be less violent** (Colégio Dom João).

Living in an environment marked by difficulties of surviving makes Paulo aware of how it is hard to accept that the majority of the Brazilians have to struggle to make a living while a minority has very comfortable standards. At the same time, even though there is a difference in the ways middle and working-class interviewees highlight the problem of social inequality, all the Brazilian participants across social classes stress the long history of unchangeable problems, which continue to confront Brazil. This continuity of social problems is interpreted by these young people as 'a proof' of the lack of commitment of Brazilian politicians. In addition my interviewees see the lack of commitment to resolve or diminish Brazilian social problems as having a direct impact upon their present and future lives.

Cristina- Como acreditar em políticos que não investem em Educação. A situação de colégios públicos é vergonhosa. Aqui no nosso país existem pessoas no interior que ao invés de estudar estão trabalhando. Apesar de serem trabalhadores, eles crescem ignorantes. O nosso problema com educação pública é histórica. **How to believe in politicians that do not invest in education? The situation of the state schools is shameful. Here in our country there are young people from rural areas that instead of studying are working. They have to work due to their family's lack of financial conditions, so they grow up illiterate. The problem of our country in relation to state education is historical** (Dom João).

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Antonio- Emprego no Brasil é um desespero. E sem educação a situação fica mais problemática ainda. **Employment in Brazil is desperate. Without education the situation gets even more problematic** (Dom João).

Cristina links the lack of enough investment in education with the incompetence of the Brazilian politicians. She even highlights the difficulties of trusting in politics while confronting the bad quality of education in Brazilian state schools. Going further, Cristina emphasises the cases of young people from rural background who 'instead of studying are working'. She is aware of the fact that manual workers without education are likely to have a very low standard of living in Brazil. She does not understand the reasons why the low quality of state education, which impacts on the lives of the majority of the population, is still so deficient. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the working-class students interviewed have related their difficulties of engaging with more

competitive professions due to the low quality of education of their school in comparison to private ones.

The bad quality of Brazilian public education has a direct effect on these two lives. Antonio, while characterising the problem of education, expresses himself by using a very emotional language. He actually feels 'despairing'. Previously, Antonio has acknowledged that the conclusion of his secondary education it is not enough to open up either a place in university or a job. Having a good education is seen, particularly by the working-class young people interviewed, as already highlighted in Chapter 3, as the key for improving their lives. Even so the middle-class participants also were likely to perceive education as a strategic sphere for political manipulation. In this sense my participants from both genders and social class divisions articulate the lack of investment in education as a way of maintaining inequalities in the country.

> Antonio- Os políticos não vão se esforçar para que o povo tenha mais estudo, para que o povo não fique esperto e continue votando neles, mesmo sendo ladrões. **The politicians will not make the effort to offer better education to the population. Our politicians don't want to see people becoming wiser, so they can keep voting for them, even if they are dishonest** (Dom João).
> **

> Neide- Assim, porque quem faz a democracia é os próprios políticos e os brasileiros. No caso para a gente ter um bom país temos que ter uma boa educação para saber em quem vai votar, para poder ter um país melhor. Enquanto a educação continuar assim, vai ficar assim até morrer. Assim, o Brasil não vai para frente de jeito nenhum. **It is like this, the politicians themselves and the Brazilians construct democracy. To have a good country we need to have a good education to know for whom to vote, and choose a better country. As the education continues like this, Brazil does not have any chance to develop** (Dom João).
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> Daniel- A maioria das pessoas, por exemplo, a moça que trabalha lá em casa, ela votou em Lula. Ela disse assim primeiro eu votei em Lula, mas agora enjoei e vou votar em Serra. Eu vejo que não é pouca gente que vota assim... é muita gente, sabe? **The majority of the people, for example, the woman, who works in my house, voted for Lula. She said like this: 'firstly I voted for Lula, but now I will vote for Serra'. From what I see there are not only a few people who vote like that, there are many people, do you know?** (Colégio São Francisco).

There is such a strong sense of scepticism with regard to institutional changes implemented by politicians that the young Brazilians I interviewed seemed to deny any possibility for innovation in the political sphere. As education remains a central problem, it becomes an explanation even for Brazilian political matters. With this I am not attempting to deny the relevance of education in the process of the development of a country and the implementation of participative ways of

governing. Neide expresses this by saying that 'we need to have a good education to know for whom to vote, and choose a better country'.

Indeed, there is a relationship between formal education and skills such as argumentative analysis, and the capacity for writing and reading critically. The strong association of education with political consciousness has had a great impact on Brazilian society, particularly through the influence of Paulo Freire's work. Freire was actually from Recife and launched literacy programs among the peasants in and around the city in the early 1960s (Crotty, 1998). He used to stress in his practice, as an academic and an educationalist, the importance of articulating education and critical thought. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) disseminated the idea that reflection without action was empty verbalism. His dedication to improve the education of the Brazilian society has guided many professionals and students, in private and state institutions and in the academic areas of education and philosophy. Freire has influenced the work of many Brazilians intellectuals, as for example, Weber, S. (1976). As already mentioned in Chapter 2 she discussed the work of Chombart de Lauwe (1964), who examined the foundations of aspiration in the light of social transformation, and reflected upon the ways education was present in the life-projects of the Brazilian working class.

At the same time my interviewees tend to neglect the fact that wisdom is not necessarily related to access to formal education. Antonio associates the lack of education with the inability to vote responsibly. Although people who have had an education may have more interest in keeping up-to-date with current affairs, there is not such a deterministic relationship between formal education and astuteness. The argument on the relationship between education, intelligence, and discernment has been manipulated by upper classes throughout the world by reinforcing the sense of inferiority of the working class. The fact is that Brazilians from all social classes, by witnessing several cases of corruption, have become more attentive about not being made fools of, and some of them have lost interest in voting. In agreement with Daniel I argue that there are many people that are still not taking the practice of voting consistently. Even though the lack of consistency in voting is not necessarily to do with social

class status, there are some people, especially those in the greatest need, who exchange their votes for favours.

As highlighted before by the interviewees, the lack of enthusiasm among all social classes in relation to the election system has concrete causes. In addition to cases of corruption, in 1994, political parties, which historically had opposing ideological positions, joined together through coalition politics. The 'fusion' of these parties has intensified the disappointment of the population while choosing their candidates. The common feeling was that the candidate did not matter, since all of them were equally dishonest. The ideological aspects that characterised the sense of 'right' wing and 'left' have disappeared in Brazilian contemporary politics.

> Daniel- Eu sou completamente decepcionado com o processo Eleitoral. Todos os partidos brasileiros são iguais. É tudo farinha do mesmo saco. Hoje um candidato pode ser do PT, amanhã pode ser do PFL. Não há nenhuma diferença no modo de fazer campanha entre os candidatos. E assim as propagandas são baseadas nos pontos ruins dos outros candidatos. Eles perdem tempo de mostrar o que vão fazer, são todos iguais. **I have a strong feeling of disappointment towards the Electoral process. The parties are all the same. We don't have differences among parties anymore. One candidate can belong today to PT (the Party of the Workers) and tomorrow to PFL (Party of the Forward Liberalism). There is no difference in the campaign process among all the candidates. The campaigns are based on the negative aspects of the others. Instead of focusing on what each of them has to offer. All the candidates are the same** (Colégio São Francisco).

One very interesting aspect that appeared in the interviews with the Brazilians was the difference between the emphasis on the remaining consequences of the population's disappointment, and the electoral process that was taking place in Brazil in October/November of 2002, just as I was carrying out the research in the country. Although Daniel stressed the lack of ideological distinctions among the Brazilians political parties, the election of 2002 has indeed promoted changes, including among my interviewees.

Even with the pessimistic approaches in relation to institutionalised politics, a preoccupation with voting responsibly has been articulated in the interviews with the Brazilians. This attitude of young people in fact represents a change (Maciel, 1998; Matheus, 2002) in comparison to past elections. As the research among young people was occurring in the period of a major election in the country, including the posts for president, governor, senator, federal deputy, and state deputy, I could observe how young people's engagement with that

particular election process was different from what I had seen in 1998 (Maciel, 1998).

It is relevant to focus on the particular nature of the recent election campaign, which certainly has impacted on my participants' attitudes in relation to voting. Here, I argue that political engagement should not be discussed in abstract generalisations, as happens with some social theorists' work on individualisation, which includes the emptiness of the social and collective spheres (Lasch, 1979; Sennett, 1998). In this regard, it is fundamental to retain Ricoeur's fusion of memory (past), attention (present) and anticipations (future). For example, my Brazilian participants had past experiences marked by disappointments with the sphere of institutionalised politics, but yet the election of 2002 contributed to new configurations of hope.

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, known as Lula, our current President, and one of the major candidates in the last election, has been candidate for president since 1990. The distinctive characteristic of Lula is that he is from an extremely poor and arid rural area in Pernambuco. His family had to migrate to the southeast of Brazil to survive. Having to help his family financially from a very early age, Lula did not have the opportunity to receive a formal education. He became known at first as the leader of a trade union of the city of Sao Paulo. After several years as candidate, without standing a concrete chance of winning, Lula has managed to become the most popular candidate in the last campaign. The last campaign is characterised by many enthusiastic demonstrations by the population throughout the country.

The positive energy and hope manifested in the 2002 campaign influenced my interviewees. Being in Brazil during that time made me actually see what was going on in the country. For a long time I have not seen hope of change being propagated in such concrete ways. The more optimistic fragments of narratives are not related to a rise in trust generally, but to the hope brought about by Lula's concrete chances of becoming President of Brazil.

> Paulo- Eu nunca acreditei em política, mas tenho esperança com Lula. O Brasil está vivendo uma situação chata por causa da violência, do FMI, mas o futuro está nas mãos da gente, dos jovens. Eu acho, o seguinte, eu esse ano vou votar. Nós jovens

temos que ter cautela na hora de votar para escolher os políticos. Nós é que vamos fazer o Brasil daqui para frente. **I never believed in politics, but I have hope in Lula. Brazil is going through bad times because of the violence, the IMF (the International Monetary Fund), but the future is in the hands of the young people. This year I will vote. We young people have to be careful to choose the right politicians. We are going to build Brazil from now on** (Colégio Dom João).

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Carolina- Não gosto do governo que está aí é preciso tentar mudanças mesmo que digam que Lula é analfabeto, mas veja o caso de Fernando Henrique Cardoso. É um homem culto, fala não sei quantas línguas e acabou com o país. Eu fui para a passeata de Lula, fui comemorar a vitória no Marco Zero. Todo mundo tava no clima de festa mesmo, alegria, vitória. **I don't like the current government. It is necessary to try changes even if they say that Lula is illiterate, but see the case of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. He is a cultured man, speaks loads of languages and left the country in a terrible crisis. I went to see Lula when he came here to Recife and I went to Marco Zero** [a place in the centre of Recife] **to celebrate the victory. Everybody was in a party mood of happiness, and victory** (Colégio São Francisco).

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Luciana- Eu acho que Lula vai melhorar esse aspecto da fome e amenizar a pobreza. Ele já foi pobre um dia e sabe o que é passar fome, ficar sem nenhum dinheiro. Ele não vai deixar que os interesses internacionais e as regras impostas sobre a nossa economia vão em oposição à distribuição de renda mais igualitária. **I think that Lula will improve the problem of hunger and minimise poverty. He has been poor in the past and knows the pain of being hungry, without any money. Lula will not allow international exigencies imposed on our economy to go against the benefit of a fairer distribution of income** (Colégio São Francisco).

The narratives of the young people interviewed in fact illustrate a hopeful Brazil in the light of Lula's victory. Young people from all social classes celebrate as if they are witnessing a fairer Brazil, at least in terms of social equality. The narrative of Luciana expresses a common feeling among the majority of the Brazilian young people interviewed 'he has been poor in the past and knows the pain of being hungry, without any money'. The terrible crisis mentioned by Paulo and the association with bad times can be contextualised from the perspective of negotiations with the IMF that has set some strict regulations upon the Brazilian economy. The majority of the interviewees shared similar views that Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the previous President, was more concerned with the economy of the country, regardless of the consequences to the population. Luciana highlights the same problem when she states 'Lula will not allow international exigencies imposed on our economy to go against the benefit of a fairer distribution of income'.

An important aspect to be emphasised is that the change observed in the fragments of my interviewees, whenever Lula is seen as a candidate with a real chance of winning, can be explained by the participants' articulations, portraying a new democratic movement impacting on Brazil. The fact that a man without a

formal education, as mentioned by Carolina, and from a poor background, became the President of a country marked by great inequalities, made the young people believe in their participation in the process of change. This active participation of the young people I interviewed, in comparison to past election processes, is a new happening in the country. This is enthusiastically highlighted by Paulo: 'we young people have to be careful in the moment of voting to choose the politicians. We are going to build Brazil from now on'. With this I want to stress that the active participation of the young Brazilians in institutionalised politics is far from secure. The continuation of the credibility brought about by Lula's election will depend on the process of change implemented under his Government.

2. Expanding the Domain of the Political

The fragments of narratives of my interviewees are not only analysed in the context of institutionalised politics or the more traditional concept of it, but also from wider dimensions of the field of politics, as I defined in the introduction of this chapter.

The politics of daily living has been successfully theorised, in my view, in De Certeau's (1988) *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Feminist theorists and researchers in the area of Cultural Studies have also emphasised the relevance of considering agency even in the more restricted universe of people's 'situatedness in the world', from contexts of young people's different cultural practices (Haraway, 1988; 1991; Butler, 1993; 1997; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Cohen, 1997). In the field of sociology there are also studies that have questioned the rigid separation found in the work of Lasch's (1979) *The Culture of Narcissism* between the private and public spheres with regard to ethical activisms and the ways intimacy and love are related to categories of identity (Illouz, 1997; Jamieson, 1998).

Having stressed the significance of working with a more dynamic intersection of collective politics with the ethical practices of everyday life, the ways my interviewees articulate their anticipations of the future with reference to other

people and to ethical considerations of justice are discussed in the following sections.

2.1 The Experiences of the Brazilian Participants: Inequality and Social Responsibility

As examined in the previous section, as the Brazilians have clear awareness of the serious problems that impact upon the country, their articulations of aspirations include feelings of sadness, powerlessness, hope, different kinds of involvement, and even perspectives of rationalisation of poverty, which tend to obscure young people's position as subjects. All the interviewees, independent of social class, made clear that social problems affect their lives somehow.

> Josilene- Eu sou muito ligada ao Brasil. Eu me preocupo muito com a situação do país, então quando se fala nele minha vida é incluída. **I am very connected to Brazil. I get very worried with the situation of the country. Whenever Brazil is involved my life is included** (Colégio Dom João).
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> **

> Daniel- A desigualdade social me afeta muito. Às vezes eu penso que queria ser uma pessoa que lutasse muito, mas não sei o que fazer. As pessoas dormem na rua, cheiram cola, morrem nas favelas, pessoas são assassinadas por besteira. E eu me sinto mal por estar aqui vendo isso. **Social inequality affects me very much. Sometimes I think that I want to be a person who struggles very much, but I don't know what to do. People live on the streets, smell glue, die in shantytowns, and are murdered for banal reasons. I feel very bad for being here seeing all this** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> **

> Luciana- É como estava dizendo para minha mãe eu queria ver todo mundo feliz. Todo mundo feliz seria uma maravilha, começando por saúde. Se todo mundo tivesse acesso a um servico de saúde, já estaria uma parte encaminhada. Se pudesse andar com segurança, se todo mundo pudesse ler e escrever seria maravilhoso. Eu já estaria realizada. **I was saying to my mother that I wanted to see everybody happy. Everybody happy would be a wonderful thing, starting with health. If everybody got access to a good health service, something would start to get better. If people could walk in the streets with security and if everybody could learn to read and to write it would be wonderful. I would be satisfied** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> **

> Júnior- É difícil você chegar assim... você vendo nas ruas a miséria, o povo passando fome. Você ver na televisão no Sertão o povo tudo passando fome. As vacas tudo magras, mortas no chão. É difícil você ver essas coisas. Você quer alguém que tente consertar isso, tente ajudar de alguma forma. Alguém que visse também as pessoas daqui, não fique somente visando à economia. Quando eu posso ajudar alguém, eu ajudo. Às vezes eu volto pra casa no ônibus e chega uma pessoa pedindo dinheiro pra comprar um remédio. Você tendo o dinheiro 3, 5 reais, o que eu tiver no bolso eu dou. **It is difficult to be like this. You see the streets and the misery, people starving. On television you see people starving in the 'Sertao'** (the driest region of the Northeast of Brazil, constantly affected by drought). **Cows without enough weight dying on the dried land. It is difficult to see these things. You want somebody with the capacity to change things, try to help in certain ways. Somebody to see the people from here, it would not be only paying attention to the economy.**

Whenever I can I help. Sometimes when I am coming back to my home by bus somebody asks for money to buy medicine. If I have the money three, five reais [the Brazilian current currency]**, whatever I have in my pocket I give it** (Colégio São Francisco).

Josilene alongside the majority of my interviewees did include the problems of Brazil in her concerns and preoccupations with her current and future lives. As Josilene says: 'whenever Brazil is involved my life is included'. Daniel depicted his life as being affected by social inequality. He imagines being 'a person who struggles very much', but at the same time he doesn't know what to do, how to change things. He acknowledges in a detailed description the misery surrounding his life, and his feeling of sadness for being there, seeing all that misery. This strong sense of being affected by the suffering of others is what I call the politics of ethics or feelings. From my own experience, as a middle-class Brazilian, I can actually feel the same frustration, impotence, and even a sense of guilt for not being able to do more to diminish Brazil's social inequality.

Luciana, almost in a naïve[59] way, expresses this politics of feelings by describing a conversation she had with her mother: ' I was saying to my mother that I wanted to see everybody happy. Everybody happy would be a wonderful thing, starting with health'. It is interesting that Luciana links happiness, an aspect so much associated with the interviewees' perceptions of Brazil's as a nation, to access to health, a service that is provided for her by private and good quality companies. In this regard I want to clarify that what bothers Luciana is not only restricted to what affects her personal life, as for example the possibility of walking in the streets in safety, but also her dreams expand to the space of others, for example the fact of seeing everybody learning how to read and to write.

Júnior illustrates the politics of feelings by reinforcing how 'disturbing', (a word mentioned by all of my Brazilian participants), it is to walk in the streets and observe 'the misery, people starving'. At the same time this politics of feelings are powerfully expressed by the majority of my Brazilian interviewees, they are

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59 Naïve expresses here a dream that is only partially based on reality. The desire to implement changes is related to Luciana's dream of seeing everybody happy. However, her articulation of hope is configured in such a ' utopian' way that it becomes disarticulated from potential practices.

left far from becoming the actors, the subjects of the envisaged process of change. It is possible to observe how the images of cows dying in the dried and arid land impact upon Júnior. This concern with human development appears almost in opposition to the economy in the configuration and refiguration of my participants. This relates to the ways the previous Brazilian Government is seen as centralising, for example, the economy of Brazil at the expense of the well being of the majority of the population. In the process of configuring his aspirations Júnior to a certain extent goes beyond the politics of feelings when he mentions his openness to charity: ' whenever I can I help'.

Whenever Brazilians interviewed are practically involved in minimising suffering caused by poverty and other social problems, they are more likely to offer some help individually, as is the case of Júnior or by participating in collections of clothes, food, and raising money carried out by federal institutions or private ones, for example the schools. In the Colégio São Francisco these kinds of campaigns often happen and tend to involve students from all age groups.

> Carolina- Miséria e fome são problemas que me sensibilizam imensamente. Fazemos frequentemente aqui no colégio campanhas de roupas, comidas, essas coisas assim. Já fiz campanhas para arrumar fundo. **Misery and hunger are problems that make me extremely sensitive. Here at school we often have campaigns for clothes, food, and so on. I have also made campaign to raise funds** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> <div align="center">**</div>
>
> Carla- Penso que se todo mundo participasse ativamente dessas campanhas já ajudaria muito. **I think that if everybody actively participated in these campaigns it would help a lot** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> <div align="center">**</div>
>
> Alexandre- A miséria tem uma relação com a minha vida porque ela me preocupa e está relacionada a todos os problemas, como por exemplo, falta de educação, distribuição de riqueza, violência, tá tudo relacionado com a miséria. Eu me vejo reduzindo a miséria votando, escolhendo bem os candidatos e doando cestas básicas. Se todo mundo ajudasse, penso que a situação melhoraria bastante. **Misery has a relation to my life because it worries me. It relates to all the problems, for example lack of education, wealth distribution, violence, everything is related to misery. I see myself reducing misery by voting, choosing the candidates well and giving 'cestas basicas'** (basic baskets)[60]. **If everybody helped, the situation would improve a lot** (Colégio São Francisco).

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60 The direct translation of cesta básica to English is basic basket. In Brazil 'basic basket' is well known as the basic food products a person and family need to survive. The basket containing the basics can be bought in the majority of supermarkets. The products found in the basket are beans, sugar, salt, rice, cuscus, etc.

Charitable support has appeared as the most common way that my participants, particularly from the middle class, found to help to minimise poverty in practical terms. The existing campaigns that happen in the *Colégio São Francisco*, supported by middle class participants and including ex-students, are mentioned with enthusiasm by the majority of the students such as of Carolina. At the same time my participants tend to express implicitly that the practice of charity is not enough. This can be seen whenever the interviewees state that charity should be widely spread among the population. In this sense, both Carla and Alexandre expressed that 'if everybody participated in the campaigns, the situation would improve a lot'.

In a similar vein some young people have pointed out the negative outcomes of practicing charity in specific situations.

> Daniel- Eu quero fazer alguma coisa para melhorar a situação. Fico pensando... caridade, muitas caridades são lavagem de dinheiro, aí já não pode confiar tanto. **I want to do something to improve the situation. Then I start thinking of charity... many cases of charity get involved with corruption, debt. For this reason we cannot trust that much** (Colégio São Francisco).
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> Alexandre- O problema é que existe uma campanha para não dar esmola. Pra gente não dar esmola, porque eles vão comprar cola, não sei o que... ou então os pais deles estão bebendo, entao é pra gente não dá, entendeu? Então, o que a gente pode fazer? Não pode fazer nada. **The problem is that there is a campaign not to help beggars financially. Don't give money, because they can buy glue, and other things...their parents can drink, then, we are advised not to give, do you understand? Then, what can we do? We cannot do anything** (Colégio São Francisco).

On the one hand the Brazilian interviewees are aware of the limits of charity. This is not to emphasise that charity should be abolished, but to look closely at the institutions involved. For example, the charity campaign organised by these young people's school is safe as the coordinators of the school and the students are directly involved with the 'community' or 'institution' to be supported. They are the ones who contact the communities and distribute the collections. On the other hand, whenever the young people interviewed questioned the limits of giving charity, they seem to be influenced by a rational discourse of passivity or a strong feeling of impotence.

> Daniel- Político por exemplo você entra no meio e já muda, entra na roubalheira. Pessoalmente, fico pensando em alguma forma para resolver essas coisas, mas não consigo. As pessoas que têm condições de fazer mudanças, têm o poder de manter o país assim. **Politicians for example. When people get into politics they become**

corrupt and get involved in robbery. Personally, I think of some way to solve these things, but I cannot. People who have conditions to implement change, they also have the power to maintain the country like it is (Colégio São Francisco).
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Alexandre- Essa desigualdade social você fica com pena, entendeu? Olhando uma pessoa ali no chão, tirando casca de feijão para vender, eu vejo que podia ser minha avó. Enquanto que minha avó está sempre num carro importado com motorista. Então isso choca em todos os sentidos, mas a gente não pode fazer nada, né? Quem sou eu para fazer alguma coisa que os nossos governantes estão no poder e não fazem porcaria nenhuma... eu não posso fazer nada. Eu e muita gente nos sentimos impotentes em fazer qualquer coisa em relacao a essas injustiças. **This social inequality makes you feel sorry, do you understand? Seeing a person right in the street on the floor, packing the beans to sell. It could be my grandma, but my grandma is in an imported car with a driver. This shocks all of the senses, but we cannot do anything, right? Who I am to do something if our government is here and it does not do anything. A lot of people and I feel impotent in terms of doing anything about these things** (Colégio São Francisco).

These fragments of narrative of Daniel and Alexandre portray the same sorts of components of disillusion that have been presented in the first section of this chapter, whenever politics was focused independently of the election of 2002. By questioning the viability of the practice of charity Daniel and Alexandre relate the practice of action to politicians' sphere of activity and in certain ways reproduce passive modes of articulation. They position themselves away from the practice of the political and narrow the field of politics: ' people who have conditions to implement change, they also have the power to maintain the country like this'. While Alexandre describes the 'ordinary' scene that he confronts in Recife, he emphasises the fact of how the situation ' shocks all of the senses'. At the same time he searches for my approval of his impotency to mobilise changes, and then again he tries to convince himself and me that if the government does not do anything there is nothing that we can do. In fact the attitude of centralising collective changes in the narrowed sphere of politics and reproducing narratives of impotence is still very common among the Brazilians interviewed.

One aspect that has become clearer to me among most of the Brazilians is that the feelings of impotence are not generated by lack of commitment to participate in processes of change, but by an unawareness of the available alternatives.

Ana Maria- Have you ever participated in any kind of social organisation, voluntary work, NGOs or social movements?

Daniel- Nunca apareceu um grupo assim para me explicar o que eles estão fazendo. Só aparecem pedindo dinheiro, pedindo ajuda, nunca apareceu ninguém perguntando

se eu quero entrar nisso e tal. Eu também nunca procurei, porque não sei exatamente onde procurar. Se aparecesse algo assim, eu participaria. **No group like this has ever appeared to explain what they are doing. People only appear asking for money, but I have never been aware of anything like this. I could enter one of these institutions and participate if I knew they needed me. I also have never looked for it, because I don't know exactly where I am supposed to look. If something appeared for sure I would participate in it** (Colégio São Francisco).

Among my interviewees, from England and Brazil, across all the differences in 'space of experience' I noticed a silence regarding social organisations, the voluntary sector and NGOs. The majority of my participants found it difficult to translate their social criticisms into collective action. However, as Daniel highlighted, the lack of interaction with the more collective social sphere does not have to do with lack of interest, political apathy or individualism, as claimed by some theorists of contemporary society, for example, Lasch (1979), Sennett (1998), and Bauman (2003). Daniel said that he is aware of places in need of to help financially, but as he is still dependent on his parents' support, he feels unable to provide this sort of help. He emphasises that he has come across a number of institutions that ask for financial contributions, but he has never been offered a place that needs his participation or is open to any sort of direct engagement. Daniel highlighted that if he knew of any place looking for volunteers, he would offer his support.

On the one hand the young people have difficulties in perceiving or even in engaging with concrete forms of collective processes of transformation. On the other hand, social organisations, including NGOs and other sectors, seem not to be moving towards publicising the need for voluntary support among young people. From this perspective, it seems that young people are only subjects of attention when they are seen as victims, as perpetrators of violence, or as in need of help (Abramo et al., 2000; Peralva and Sposito, 1997). They are unlikely to be perceived by the local, national and even global 'common sense' as creative and potential actors of social change. From this context, particularly the middle-class young Brazilians interviewed are often excluded from practices for social transformation and daily commitment with projects of 'citizenship'. This may explain the fact that throughout the research I have only met one middle-class participant that has engaged collectively with social practices. By being the leader of the student association of his school, Luís has widened his field of activity in the more collective sphere.

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Luís- Eu participo do grêmio do colégio, que organiza festas, além de liderar o programa da nosso rádio. Existem também as comemorações de datas especiais (dia dos namorados, dia das crianças, etc). A gente organiza campanhas de doações contra as drogas. No próximo ano, a gente vai fazer uma parceria com grupos dos jovens que já participaram do grupo religioso daqui do colégio sobre drogas. Eu também participo do grupo de teatro que faz apresentações de nossas peças na ACC (Associação de crianças com câncer). **I participate in the student society of the school. The student association is actively involved in organising parties for the students, setting the agenda of the school radio, besides the organisation of special days, as for example, Valentine Day, Children Day, etc. We are also responsible for encouraging the students to participate in the campaigns for donations, and to campaign against drugs. For example next year we will make an alliance with other young people who used to participate in the religious debate of the school. We will organise a campaign against the use of drugs. Besides this, I participate in the theatre group that tends to make presentations of our plays in the space of ACC** (Association of Children with Cancer) (Colégio São Francisco).

The collective participation of my interviewees tends to happen when they get directly involved with activities in their immediate environment. It tends to happen spontaneously for specific actions with an immediate effect. Luís became aware when he decided to participate in the student society of his school, which ended up expanding several opportunities for engagement. Besides the organisation of the school events, the student society has responsibility for promoting campaigns for donations and, anti-drugs policies, in addition to its involvement with other groups. It becomes clear how association with one specific group leads to new associations. It is not by chance that Luís has said throughout his interview that many people who participate in the student society are also members of the Drama group of the school.

With regard to artistic groups, one aspect needs to be stressed. At least half of the Brazilians interviewed were directly involved in cultural productions, either with music bands or as members of Drama groups. These young people, even though they do not call themselves political activists, are concerned in passing on messages that make sense to them and their country. As Luís exemplified with his practice of presenting plays to children with cancer, Daniel and Eduardo both from *Colégio São Francisco* and Antonio from *Colégio Dom João* have focused on how engaging in the artistic field, either in the form of music bands or the participation in plays, is a way to share entertainment and criticism with broader groups of society. In agreement with Abramo et al (2000), I argue that by broadening the artistic field and sharing with disenfranchised people in society, some young people in a pragmatic fashion are finding ways to connect

their interests, personal preoccupations, and aspirations to wider groups of society. In Brazil, Abramo et al (2000) have exemplified the existence of groups of young people from middle-class backgrounds who go to shantytowns to share common problems, and/or interests with young people from a more disenfranchised 'space of experience'. Also, they mentioned the case of Brazilians who engage with 'hip hop' style and compose music illustrating the problems impacting on their space of location.

From working-class backgrounds there were two Brazilian interviewees from Dom João School directly involved in social practices: Manoel and Francisca. As already highlighted in this thesis, Manoel is directly involved with the problems of his local community through his link with the local Catholic Church. As he is a Catechist in the Church he relates to the problems faced by young people and is very keen to contribute in practical terms to the development of society. He wants to be a psychologist and is also facing the doubt as to whether or not he wants to be a priest. However his greatest concern is to get directly involved with the problems people face. Even if he decides to be a priest his practices will continue to be directly connected with people, by 'interacting with the poverty in the streets, trying to get help and make people live with more human conditions of existence'. As Manoel is already involved with activities that take place in a poor community, his personal aspiration is clearly linked with the attempt to improve other people's opportunities in life.

> Manoel- Minha vida tem um sentido de se integrar aos outros. Eu gosto de trabalhar na comunidade, junto com jovens, discutindo alternativas de vivência. Partilhar as experiências e as angústias. **My life has a meaning of integrating with others. I like to work in the community, alongside young people, discussing alternative ways of living, sharing experiences and anxieties** (Colégio Dom João).

Manoel's life is already involved with the problems faced in his community and with the daily practices of feeling himself an agent of change. Knowing how to contribute by participating in lively discussions of 'alternative ways of living and sharing experiences and anxieties', in a disenfranchised community, reduces the sense of impotence felt by other interviewees. Middle and upper class Brazilians, probably, have little face-to-face contact with people in the street, disenfranchised and poor communities. This physical distance from the streets

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tends to be intensified because of the tough reality of violence that impacts on the lives of the population who lives in Recife.

Francisca is a working-class young woman who incorporates in her everyday activities her practice in a poor local neighbourhood of Recife. She is associated with a group that attends the Vincent de Paul Society weekly.

> Francisca- Na sociedade de São Vicente de Paulo a gente dá assistência aos pobres, às pessoas idosas. Essas pessoas dependem muito do nosso trabalho, da nossa coleta de alimentos, das roupas que nós recolhemos. Tudo isso para mim é tão gratificante que serve como lição de vida. **In the Vicent de Paul Society we assist poor people, aged people. These people depend on our work, on our collection of food, clothes and other resources. All this for me is so gratifying that it works as a lesson for life** (Colégio Dom João).

From the examples of Francisca and Manoel we observe how they get passionate about their social practices. Francisca emphasises her involvement with the Vincent de Paul Society 'is so gratifying that it works as a lesson for life', in other words, as something that she is not going to forget easily and marks her life deeply. In her conversation she shared with me how often we give importance to non-significant matters, and how she has learned through her work to take things less for granted in her life. It is relevant to say that Francisca is also religious, since there may be a link between opportunities to get involved in social work and participation in local churches. Local churches in Brazil, particularly in more disenfranchised communities, still play an important role in integrating local people.

Another aspect that has come through the interview with Francisca is how practical participation in the political arena encourages her desire to participate in other political issues. The period of the election, during which the research took place, opened up discussions about global markets, as for example, Brazil's integration in the ALCA (The Association of Free Trade of Americas).

> Francisca- Eu e outro menino daqui da escola estávamos pensando em mover um movimento contra a Alca, que só vem trazendo vantagens para quem vem de fora para dentro. **A male student of this school and I were thinking of joining a movement against the Brazilian participation in the Alca, because it only brings advantages to people who come from outside Brazil, and not the other way around** (Colégio Dom João).

Francisca   states the disillusion of the majority of the Brazilian participants with global trade, in this case the ALCA, as I discussed in the previous chapter. The

important aspect to be addressed here is the fact of recognising that participation in social practices may open up to more direct engagement with the more institutionalised field of the political.

Having already pointed out the level of unawareness of collective organisations, among the young people interviewed, it is central to highlight here the attitudes of some of the young women in articulating the wider sphere of the political, the ethical, from the perspective of their private lives onto their professional careers.

> Carla- Se eu pudesse ajudar alguma coisa no meu lado profissional na área de saúde, eu faria, mas não iria atrás de uma organização. Eu não sou muito boa nisso, não conseguiria isso. Não sou boa de organizar, de fazer projetos para ajudar pessoas, insistir, fazer com que elas tenham vontade de fazer. Eu não sou muito boa nisso. Se eu fosse, eu seria advogada. **If I could help with something through my professional life in the area of health I would help, but I would not go looking for an organisation. I am not very good at this. I could not manage this. I am not very good at organising things, making projects to help people, to insist, and encourage them to do things. I am not very good at this sort of thing. If I were, I would be a lawyer** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
>
> Marcela- De repente eu acho tão inútil você não fazer nada para ajudar as pessoas. Ser fisioterapêutica é uma maneira de está ajudando alguém. **I think it is so worthless if you don't do anything to help others. Being a physiotherapist is a way to help people** (Colégio São Francisco).
> **
>
> Neide- Queria ser uma atriz e ter dinheiro para construir um asilo e tirar os velhinhos da rua e uma creche, para as crianças abandonadas. **I would like to be an actress to earn money in order to build a home for old people and a nursery for abandoned children** (Colégio Dom João).

From the fragments of narrative we notice that Marcela and Neide try to find a way to help people from their own means. For Marcela life is '…worthless if you don't do anything to help others'. The way she foresees herself helping is by 'being a physiotherapist'. Neide as a working-class young woman entertains the thought of being an actress for her self-realisation, but also as means to help others. As she associated the life of a famous actress with having enough money to spend, becoming an actress is a way to fulfil her dream of building 'a home for old people and, a nursery for abandoned children'. Carla's fragment of narrative seems to suggest that the more individualised ways of helping people by charity tend to continue independently of a more acquired awareness of collective organisations, movements, and so on. Charity even if it does not tend to target directly the existence of social problem is still an important measure to be carried out. It is very simplistic to perceive Carla as a selfish young woman,

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as social theorists like Sennet (1998) see people not connected with the more collective sphere. Carla seems not to be keen to participate in a more collective process of socio-political change, because of her lack of organisational skills. It might be that her lack of trust in herself due to her shyness and self-confidence, aspects that she and I talked about many times during her interview, prevent Carla from engaging in groups, and organisations that she is unfamiliar with. Even if Carla had the appropriate skills to get involved with these kinds of activities, she could still confirm that her way to contribute to a better society would be through her professional activities. With this I am attempting to say that it is necessary to be open to understanding the many ways contemporary young people are finding to integrate personal and collective projects, including imagining socially conscious/ professional careers.

2.2 The English Participants' Experiences: Privilege and the Invisibility of Differences

Before engaging directly with the English participants I interviewed in relation to their participation in the sphere of the political from a broader perspective, it is important to highlight how much the concept of the free agent has impacted on the attitudes of the group of young people interviewed. Both Thatcherism and New Labour have implemented trends disseminated by neo-liberal policy makers along with neo-liberalism's dominant prescribed goals in relation to personal achievements and individual subjectivities (Rose, 1999). From this context there are two aspects to emphasise: The first is the need expressed by some of the young people to feel free from commitments in order to live the opportunities which life offers. The other aspect is the lack of identification with poverty and low standards of living in England.

> Chris- I don't know what it is, but I never tend to join up or officially, kind of join particular groups or any kind of organisation or this kind of thing. I am more independent. I sort of like I don't know what it is, I like to shift in and out of different areas. I don't like to be stuck to any particular group (St Joseph's School).

By engaging with Chris I could realise that his lack of interest in committing himself to a group did not have anything to do with apartness from others, individualistic attitudes and practices, but it was related to the sort of encouragement internalised by him that ratifies his practice of independence. In Chapter 4 I have accentuated the importance of reaching independence from parents and other adults, particularly among the middle and upper class English

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interviewees. As I discussed this sort of independence, especially among the English from this social background, means a person has been successful in achieving something. Chris tends to link independence with the ability of 'shifting in and out different areas'. As we saw in Chapter 4, the characteristics of independence and autonomy become essential to someone like Chris, who is reflecting on his future hope of making a living, by restricting constraints and limitations. From Chris's perspective, the opportunity of working abroad, of moving around, is highly valued.

Again the meanings behind freedom and the apparently multiple possibilities of choosing are aspects that tended to inhibit middle-class English young people's interest in committing themselves, either to family life or any kind of activity that makes them feel constrained.

> Chris- At the moment I do want to be independent, do my own things. I want to go to different places. I do things more or less on my own, something, and I don't want to be held down (St Joseph's School).

In this sense we can observe how cultural encouragements such as the shaping of a psychologically independent subject, examined by Walkerdine et al. (2001) and Rose (1999) relate to English young people's practices, particularly the middle-class ones. In the family chapter, I have demonstrated that the psychologically independent subject is shaped by the principle that enshrined the bourgeois agent, their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1986) in favour of 'free will'. This identification with a strong and dominant ego is likely to result in an active disengagement from the collective sphere of the political. It is in the context of reinforcing a sense of a strong and dominat ego that Chris rejects any association with whatever makes him 'feel held down'.

Interestingly, at this juncture of the thesis we are able to point in a very clear fashion to how the strong meanings behind the practice of independence in England have appeared somehow in almost all the chapters of the thesis. In this particular section the practice of independence has limited participation in collective association and investments. Besides the focus on independence, I suggest that a lack of identification with the social problems in the country may contribute to the English interviewees adopting ways of living that are more individualised.

Ana Maria- Are you saying that the fact of being English helps a person to have more opportunities in life?

Mary- I suppose so. An English person would have more chances to get a job than a person from a poor or a developing country (Magdalene School).

Ana Maria- Even an English beggar?

Mary- I never thought about this. But yeah there are beggars in the centre of Nottingham who can be English!

This statement of Mary, a middle-class young woman, was made at a point in the interview when she was describing England as a privileged country. She was emphasising how English people were lucky to have access to good education, a public health system, and the English culture that was associated with processes of learning, getting a profession, and so on. Mary does not only tend to see England as a privileged country in comparison to others, but she also does not articulate spontaneously the social, political and economic differences within the country. In this context we can understand that she associates beggars with 'others'.

This fragment of narrative appears to me illustrative of what Hall (1988) examined in his evaluation of 'Thacherism', highlighted in the context of New Labour, and of what Rose (1999) considered when discussing neo-liberalism. These perspectives entrenched in the 'common sense' of the English national culture tended to reinforce, 'discursively', the disappearance of inequalities and to make talking about them more difficult. Social divisions are seen by the English interviewees, particularly those from middle and upper class backgrounds, as almost non-existent in the country, or very far away from them.

Lucy-The class system is torn to pieces now. I think that people here in England have more or less good quality of services (St Joseph's School).
**
Ana Maria- And, how about social problems in the world... do you think about them or it is something hard to think as 'there is nothing we can do'?

Fred- Stuff like Africa, we feel sorry for them. We would give them food (St Joseph's School).

Joe-You do something for charity, but you will not be thinking about it. If I have free time then I'll see what I can do (St. Joseph's School).

Bill-If you think about people starving you are not going to say that you don't care, that it is not relevant to me. You think about it, you feel sorry for them. If you have a bit of money you can help (St. Joseph's School).

> Joe-You can give the money, but you are not going to start to help on your own (St. Joseph's).

These articulations clarify how the middle-class young people I interviewed in England have difficulties in seeing from a broader perspective the problems that impinge on their country. This idea of 'a classless society' (Kingston, 2000) tends to be sometimes illustrated in the fragments of narratives of the middle or and upper middle-class interviewed, as highlighted by Lucy when she says that 'class system is torn to pieces now. I think that people here in England have more or less a good quality of services'. By distancing the problem of inequality far from their contexts of living, these young people manage to rationalise the problems of hunger and poverty that impact on other parts of the world. In this regard I am not saying that they become indifferent to problems throughout the world, as Bill, a working-class black 'English' [61] young man, expressed during the focus group discussion that took place in St. Joseph's School: '... you feel sorry for them. If you have a bit of money you can help'. There are also the more rational fragments of narrative that strengthen the idea that 'you will not be thinking about it', as addressed by Joe. From his perspective charity appears as the most comfortable practice, as he says that 'if I have free time then I'll see what I can do'. Charity makes the young people I interviewed in both countries feel good about themselves, because they are doing something, helping in some sort of way, at the same time it diminishes concerns and preoccupation. As tremendous suffering impacts on many people across the world, some of the interviewees found difficult to see themselves as active participants in processes of changes, as Joe said 'You can give the money, but you are not going to start to help on your own'.

Another approach that I have found especially among the working class I interviewed is the feeling of impotence that reinforces the idea that there are no ways to solve such serious problems.

> Mandy- I really never thought of changing anything in my town. I know that in the surrounding areas of Stapleford there are gun problems, high crime rates, people associated with drugs. I support my cousins in school there (Nottingham College).

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61 The word 'English' appears in inverted commas, because as we saw in Chapter 3 Bill did not recognised himself as being English.

Mandy is aware of the problems that impact upon her living surroundings, but feels unable to solve them. She finds one immediate way of doing something, by supporting her cousins in school and encouraging them to keep away from drugs. However, she does not articulate any collective social solutions.

Susie, with her mixed working and middle class experiences, has focused on her envisaged practices of agency.

> Susie- On a practical level there are vocational courses that do art therapy for people under stress, for women under stress, because of a trauma they had. Therefore, to help them to work in art therapy, and making them realise what they can do…this could fulfil me a lot (Magdalene School).

Susie perceives herself as helping people through the context of her professional activity. Engaging with interacting people and supporting them to face hard times, she shows a strong feeling of empathy with human suffering. This is described when she points out that this activity could fulfil her a lot.

Teresa described herself as being from mixed cultural backgrounds, being of Polish and Italian parentage. She also expresses how people are included in her life.

> Teresa- Even if I don't manage to be a designer I'd still like to do the charity thing. I want to share my happiness with other people. Otherwise, it is too selfish. I would like to donate money, support a charity for children, support orphans, adopt children, get in touch with people that are less fortunate than us (St Joseph's School).

Teresa stresses the need to 'share happiness with other people… otherwise, it is too selfish'. With this regard she highlights how her feeling of happiness and the realisation of her professional plan of being a successful designer relate to the necessity to support ' people less fortunate than us'. By attempting to support a charity with children or orphans and even by adopting children Teresa articulates in a clear way her feeling of 'duty' for helping people. It is clear that these two young women in different ways understand their choices of career in terms of making a social contribution.

Some of the English interviewed, particularly from middle and upper middle class backgrounds, also mentioned their participation in discussions presented by Amnesty International and in environmental issues.

> Ana Maria- Are you involved with NGOs, or any kind of political organisation?
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> Joe- they do lots of things in school. There are people that are doing something anyway. I participate in meetings of Amnesty International. I pay attention, but I don't really do anything. (St Joseph's School)
> **
>
> Barbara- In school we discuss quite a lot about environmental issues. The school does its best to keep us up to date with current affairs (Magdalene School).

Even though Joe and Barbara participate respectively in Amnesty International and in meetings to discuss environmental matters, their participation seems to be viewed by themselves more in terms of keeping up-to-date with current events and affairs than as active practices. Joe highlights this split when he emphasises 'I pay attention, but I don't really do anything'. Barbara actually reinforced my perception throughout the interviews with the young women, from Magdalene School, that the central preoccupation of this part of their lives was with educational attainment. She focuses on how 'the school does its best to keep us up to date with current affairs'. Approximately half of my middle-class English participants, independent of gender, had participated or were participating either in organisations that provided environmental debates or in Amnesty International. Their schools seemed to encourage their participation in these organisations. Also, some of the parents of the young women of Magdalene School participated in discussions and groups in relation to environmental problems. However, I tended to feel that some of the middle and upper middle class English interviewees were not involved with these organisations with strong subjective commitments. They were likely to highlight that attending debates in these organisations was encouraged by the schools, not only to keep the students aware of current affairs and debates, but also by stressing how this would 'look good' in the students' curriculum vitae.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there are major differences between the ways the Brazilian and English interviewees perceive poverty and social inequalities in their countries, and how they link these with social problems in their articulations of aspiration.

Analysis of the interviews with the participants in both countries confirms one aspect that has been only relatively recently emphasised in the literature of youth studies. For instance, this PhD thesis sought to engage with authors such as Matheus (2002) and Cohen (1997) to question with them the generalised common sense that has been associated with the 'representation' of contemporary young people across the world.

Matheus, already mentioned in Chapter 2, by carrying out recent research with working-class Brazilians who live in shantytowns in São Paulo came to the same conclusion as I did in this PhD thesis: the Brazilians I interviewed cannot be considered politically apathetic. First of all the ways they live are very different now from the daily lives of those who inhabited Brazil during the second half of the sixties and seventies, which was the period of the Brazilian dictatorship. As I have already emphasised throughout this thesis, it is completely inadequate to compare today's young people with the youth who participated in collective political movements in the sixties and the seventies, without taking account of the specific context of their lives.

In this research the Brazilians interviewed have contextualised social transformation as very entangled with their configurations of aspiration. They have shown that in spite of the immense social problems that affect the country, they hope they will be able to realise their life-ideals, which include the desire to participate in the formation of a country that is fairer to its citizens regardless of class, race, and gender. Even having memories of corrupt politics, of the impeachment of the first president for corruption, (after having been directly elected by democratic and popular participative means after the dictatorship), and of all sorts of scandals that impinged on the Brazilian national political arena, the Brazilians interviewed still expressed the importance of voting

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conscientiously. I could clearly note that the young participants of this research showed much more enthusiasm in participating in political campaigns, and in choosing their candidates responsively, than was apparent throughout the nineties. This is in marked contrast to a previous research I carried out with middle-class young people from Recife in 1998 (Maciel, 1998). As I examined in this chapter the real possibility of Lula being elected president, (as actually happened), brought hope in the belief that if everybody got together to vote according to their conscience, Brazil could become a better country not only for the already privileged, but for every Brazilian.

From the English perspective, Cohen (1997) states that

> It is increasingly claimed that what appears at first sight to be political apathy in fact represents a profound cultural revolution. Young people are rejecting the alienated forms of organised politics in favour of a new style of personal politics influenced by feminism, environmentalism and the peace movement (1997: 181)

Although I have found throughout this research that Brazilian participants across class and gender were more likely to be personally affected by the problematic nature of social inequality and poverty than were the English research participants[62], the latter did not show lack of sensitivity with regard to human suffering.

I suggest that what is happening, though different in intensity and ways of expression in Brazil and England, is that the research participants have shown throughout their aspirations that they believe that personal action and practice can contribute to a positive transformation of a local neighbourhood, a community, the school, and so forth. This is to say that even by concentrating on specific sites and not reaching a wider scope, the young people interviewed believe they are contributing in one way or another to the well being of society.

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62 We cannot neglect the fact that Brazil is indeed more impacted by socio-economic issues than England. The space inhabited by the young people interviewed, especially those from poor communities, has proved to influence the ways they get involved more directly in collective social programs than the more privileged youth research subjects from both countries.

It is in the context of young people' space of experience that both the Brazilian and English young women configured their aspirations in relation to their desire to engage with caring professions, in order to help other people who are suffering.

Both Brazilian and English working-class people, in comparison with the middle and upper middle classes from their countries have shown a closer interaction with the social problems that affect their surroundings. The working-class English, especially the working-class young women appeared better informed about the impact of drugs, the violence caused by drunk teenagers, the severe policies against, in particular, immigration of ethnic minorities and refugees to the UK. In a similar vein, those working-class Brazilian young people, who live in poorer areas of Recife tended to participate more directly in organised collective social programs than the participants who live in middle and upper class areas. Again, the location that a person lives in is one identity category that, as others, tends to influence the life-experience of people and their anticipations of aspirations.

To understand the practice of today's young people in terms of their relationship to politics, we should not neglect the historical context in which they are inserted, not only in terms of local politics, but also of the national and global. As we have seen in the previous chapter, young Brazilians tend to perceive globalisation in different ways, and their understanding of local, national and global intersections probably has a link with what they have experienced in terms of international policies and impositions, particularly in the case of the International Monetary Fund's constraints on Brazil. Differences between the views of English and Brazilian participants might be explained in terms of different party political systems, and the policies of their respective elected leaderships.

 The English I interviewed do not seem to be enthusiastic about Mr Blair's policies, for example, the participation of Britain in the Afghanistan war[63] and

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63 By living in England during the war against Iraq I could perceive through the anti-war demonstrations that a great number of English young people were not only against the participation of Britain in the Iraq conflict, but also against the declaration of war against Iraq by

the practices of privatisation implemented by the British Prime Minister. In contrast, the Brazilians, during the period in which the interviews took place, were living in a special time of social hope. As already emphasised throughout the chapter, the victory of Lula for the Presidency of Brazil was widely and intensively celebrated throughout the nation. During the interviews, that were conducted after the victory of Lula, the interviewees tended to narrate his victory with enthusiasm by referring to the collective celebrations that happened all over the country, including those in Recife's historical city centre.

Finally, this chapter, along with the previous empirical ones, has shown that the categories of identities, across time, in the context of Ricoeur's fusion of temporality, through memory, through experience and action, and through expectation, impact upon the life-experiences and anticipations of the young people interviewed. Furthermore, Massey's intersection of the local, the national and the global, in other words, the relationships of the locality, nationality, and the global relations to the country, is also likely to influence the way young people configure and refigure politics and get involved with it.

In this chapter there is strong evidence to support my suggestion that the English participants, particularly those not of mixed ethnicity or race, and those not from working-class backgrounds, (in other words, the white middle and upper middle-class English interviewed) tended to highlight less than other subjects a preoccupation with social inequality, human suffering or wider aspects of politics and ethics. As I have already pointed out in the previous empirical chapters, the social theorists who are likely to generalise their notions of individualisation, for example Lasch (1979), Sennett (1998), and Bauman (2003) seemed to support their theories by taking the rationalised views of the middle and upper classes, privileged people from Western developed countries. However, I believe that these abstract approaches of contemporary theories on individualisation of today' societies cannot explain the aspirations of the middle and upper middle class young people I interviewed in both countries. I have shown that young people's lives should not be simply categorised as

the United States. However, I could not evaluate the impact of the Iraq war through the articulations of the English participants, because the war against Iraq took place after I had finished the interviews in England.

individualistic. They are much more complex than that. At the same time, of all the young people interviewed, it was the English middle and upper middle class young people, from both genders, whose expressions of aspiration most closely coincided with those postulated by the contemporary social theorists I have discussed in Chapter 2.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the patterns of aspiration of several groups of young people differentiated, particularly, by class, nation and gender. The research participants, while showing individual differences within the group, nonetheless present distinctive paths of aspiration. These are relative to their categories of identity and their spatial embeddings. The specific configurations of these groups are consistent with their settings, but not wholly determined by them.

Having pointed out the intersections of differences and similarities among research participants, even those young people from the same group, I describe and explain in this conclusion the main patterns, characterising the most predominant groups of this particular research. I understood the patterns of those groups by comparing and contrasting their articulations of aspirations to one another.

In this first part of the conclusion I decided to start by describing the English middle and upper middle class young women and men, because as we could see throughout all the empirical chapters of this thesis, they were the ones who most corresponded to the generalising and abstract accounts, produced in the social theories of life-style and individualisation.

Looking at the above group led me logically to focus next on middle and upper class young people in Brazil. Even though the middle and upper class Brazilians interviewed have access to reasonable financial conditions, high quality education and wider leisure activities, their narratives are still very differentiated from the models of anticipatory aspirations across short and long-term plans, articulated by the most privileged English group. I want to stress that in spite of the relevance of social class belonging, which I have identified in all the empirical chapters, it is not adequate to understand the aspirations of young people by focussing on one unique specific category of identity whilst neglecting others. To put it differently, aspiration as I have consistently argued throughout this thesis, is a concept that should not be understood from isolated axes of

identity, spaces and notions of time. Aspiration depends upon the intersection of categories of identity, upon the relationship between the local, the national and the global, the fusion of temporalities.

Yet, after making clear that the descriptions of the group patterns cannot be understood in the light of single belonging, I continue the first part of this conclusion by concentrating on common aspects that characterised the articulations of the English working-class interviewed. I have chosen to place the description of their common patterns between the upper and middle class Brazilians and the working class Brazilians, because I have found several similarities across these three groups of young people. The English working-class young people represent the group, which best exemplified the common elements across all the other groups identified in the process of research. This group seemed to occupy an intermediary position. On the one hand it shares elements of the national aspects with the middle and upper middle class English. On the other hand, when future lives are envisaged, typical insecurities are identified in short and long-term plans. This feature is shared by all the Brazilians interviewed in spite of their social class and other different categories of identity. Insecurity is a key feature of Brazilian and working-class English articulations of aspiration.

I decided to examine the main patterns of the working-class Brazilians at the end of the first part of this conclusion. In contrast to the middle and upper middle class English young people, this group of Brazilian interviewees shows patterns of aspiration that have the least consistency with theories of individualisation, as critically examined throughout this study. For the majority of working-class Brazilians, 'free-will' to choose a life according to their desires can only happen in fantasy. Of course, all aspirations draw on fantasies as Ricoeur highlights in his concept of narration life intersects with fiction, as much as fiction intersects with life. What I want to stress here is that the reality of daily suffering of working-class Brazilian participants reminds them, even when they are talking about life-ideals, of the limited opportunities and resources they are likely to access in their present lives.

After describing and explaining the main patterns identified, including interconnecting them with the contemporary social theories analysed in the Chapter 2 of this thesis, I shall sum up briefly, in the second part of this conclusion, certain key issues and themes that were common and/or differentiated across other categories of identities, besides social class. For instance, the relationship between the national and the global was understood by some as cultural homogenisation and close control in relation to the nation, and by others as possibilities to widen opportunities across the world.

In the third part of this conclusion I shall focus on central theoretical issues that can be related to the articulations of my participants' aspiration. By emphasising from the beginning of this thesis the relevance of considering the social embeddedness of aspiration, I have argued against the theories of disembedding, characterised by the individualisation thesis, especially in terms of intimacy, and wider social and more collective relationships. In this part of the conclusion, then, I reinforce my critique of representations, widespread across different societies, of young people as de-politicised.

Part I- Key Patterns Among the Research Subjects

As I have mentioned in several parts of this thesis, the middle and upper middle-class English participants of this research were the ones most likely to show clear articulations in relation to their short-term plans and also their long-term aspirations. They tended to articulate very ambitious aspirations, for example: the hope of getting at least three to four A grades in their A-level examinations; the plan to study in traditional and highly recognised universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford; the desire to have comfortable material conditions and privileged life-styles. These characteristics were shared by both young women and young men interviewed. They envisage their future lives in terms of not only financial means, but also of enjoyable life-styles. Their descriptions of enjoyable life not only have to do with financial security, exemplified by having beautiful and big houses, with desired English gardens and big cars, but also the possibility of being mobile, and of travelling to 'exotic countries' and experiencing totally different ways of living in comparison to their lives 'at home'. This group also tended to perceive England as a multicultural

country full of opportunities for those who are hardworking. We can identify here some convergences between their aspirations and theoretical accounts of life-style, particularly in terms of freedom to aspire to privileged material lives. Besides, these young people's lives are marked by strong rationalisation and the pursuit of independence.

However, at the same time, the limits of individualisation theory can be identified, especially, when we take into account the fact that both young men and women have stressed the importance of family and friends to their lives. Besides, even if they did not find it easy to configure their aspirations in the context of participation with the more institutionalised and collective aspects of the political, they were not indifferent to the suffering of other human beings.

Furthermore, although the middle and upper class English women have rationalised their relationships with their mothers, since independence is a central aspect for them, they have also shown the importance of mothers (or of both parents) in their lives. These young women do not tend to desire to be their parents' close friends; nevertheless, they have highlighted their wish to be bonded with their parents as daughters. This example shows that intimate close relationships should not be interpreted for the whole of contemporary societies on the same universal model. Another misleading generalisation, developed by the theorists of individualisation, as pointed out in Chapter 2, can be highlighted by focusing on the ambiguous aspirations configured by this group of English young women in relation to their difficulties in balancing career and family formation. These young women, by prioritising career success, have decided throughout their anticipations of future lives to delay family formation, though not without contradictory feelings. As these women seemed to be well informed about continuing dominant male power in the labour market, especially in managerial posts and high prestige careers, they have highlighted the need to dedicate their time in the short-term to the achievement of career success and their recognition as competent professionals. In so doing, the young women, by accepting their lack of ability to reconcile in a more dynamic and balanced way the various aspects of living, may feel frustrated at a later time in their lives. This shows that even the most privileged groups, the upper and middle class young women from a western developed country, feel unable to choose a life

according to more emotional kinds of fulfilment. Finally, it is central to mention here that the work ethic has appeared among the English participants as an element that composes the national identity and explains in certain ways the pride of being English.

The second group of young people, the Brazilians from middle and upper middle class backgrounds, although tending to mention privileged careers, for instance medicine and law, prioritised their identification with the area of study. This group conforms little to the characteristics envisaged by the social theorists of life-style. Regarding their professional future in Brazil as insecure and uncertain, they are choosing to engage with careers they envisage themselves as feeling fulfilled in. Belief in 'happiness' is a national aspect that has an impact upon all the Brazilian research participants. This has a close connection with the ways Brazilians tend to define risk, and to confront it. Risk ends up being associated with a 'tactic' that makes people deal with fears in life and struggle to realise their aspirations. Besides, risk is also contextualised as a 'tactic' to live fully what life offers on a daily basis. This aspect has influenced many other issues that characterise this group, for instance: their emphasis on family ties and their lack of interest in living abroad for the rest of their lives. However, the majority of them have anticipated studying from six months to a year abroad, in order to learn a foreign language, especially English, and reinforce their parents' trust and their own sense of security in their capacity of living far away from their parents' caring and protection, at least for a short period of time. Besides, they do not tend to place much trust in the positive outcomes, which the process of globalisation may bring. Regarding their engagement with politics, even though they have a strong awareness of social inequalities that impinge upon Brazil, and tend to be much affected by the suffering of the disenfranchised Brazilians, they are unlikely to be aware of the more collective ways of engaging with social projects. Their political practices were highlighted in terms of more personal kinds of support, for instance, the support to others, which they might be able to give in their daily lives as professionals, and their responsibility to vote conscientiously.

There were not significant differences between the middle and upper class Brazilian young women and young men. The distinctions among them are with

regard to the common issues of gender that tended to impact upon the aspirations of young women across the two countries: young women are the ones who are most likely to talk openly about emotional issues with parents, (especially their mothers) and friends. The middle and upper middle class English women I interviewed do not tend to do this. The middle and upper middle class English young men are even less likely to talk about their emotions than the young women from their social group. The other aspect that tends to differ between the middle and upper middle class Brazilians is in relation to the caring professions. Again, young women in both countries are more likely to choose caring professions than young men.

In relation to the third social group, the working-class young men and women from English working-class backgrounds, the main issue is regarding their future careers, starting from access to university. Although they are doing A-levels at present, they are unable to anticipate whether they are going to be accepted by any university. In this sense, completely differently from the middle and upper class English participants, they are unlikely to talk about their university choices. Regarding the attachment to their family home, this group of working-class English participants is very similar to the Brazilians. They feel very strongly connected to home, and find it difficult to choose a university away from home. Geographic closeness to their family is very important to them. Overall, this group tends to describe pride in being English in similar ways to the middle and upper middle class participants from their country. They tend to relate 'Englishness' to the work ethic. However, with regard to multicultural issues this group of young people is much more critical, since they tend to identify inequalities among the English minorities in terms of race, ethnicity, national culture identity, and class.

Throughout the male and female working-class English, young women were the ones who showed more awareness with regard to the problems affecting their communities. They tended to be more critical in relation to social problems that in their opinion are not tackled by the British Government. In common with the middle and upper class Brazilian young women, English working-class young women also were more likely to share their emotional feelings with their parents, (in particular their mothers), and friends, than both the English young

men and the middle and upper class English young women. The similarity that has appeared among the English young women across social class was with regard to the importance of friendship. They are indeed very connected with their friends, who are the ones who tend to support them when these young women 'feel low'.

As the working-class young women articulated deeper knowledge with regard to the problems that affect their local communities, they were also the ones who were likely to be better informed about local politics than young men. The working-class English young men along with the English young women recognised inequalities within England, something that was not configured by the middle and upper middle class English participants. Even so, the working-class English men tended to be more influenced than working-class young women, by the ideology of meritocracy: the idea that those who struggle to succeed in England are generally able to do so when they are hardworking. They were the ones who tended to focus on the hard policies confronted by immigrants and refugees in the UK. Even so neither the English working-class young women nor the young men were likely to anticipate their participation in the more institutionalised political sphere. In general, with just one exception, the English interviewees across the multiple categories of identity have shown difficulties in articulating more critical views in terms of the Afghanistan war, an event that was in progress during our interviews.

Finally, the Brazilian working-class young participants were the ones who perceived careers as offering the possibility of completely changing their lives. However, they were very uncertain as to whether they would ever be able to start a university course and, even if they did so, to finish it. In their anticipations they have shown that they depend upon finding a job, after finishing their secondary education, to enable them to pay for private courses and prepare for the *vestibular.* For this to happen they have to find a job that allows them to help their family financially and carry on with their education, if any money remains.

From this context of limited possibilities it is possible to understand the reasons why careers are perceived as ideals, that may offer concrete possibilities to improve not only the research subjects' own lives, but also their family

standards of living. Here, by reflecting upon the central characteristics of both life-style and individualisation theories, we can confirm that these theories do not grasp the type of working-class, third world experience represented by the Brazilian participants. First of all, they are not able to choose the life they want according to their wishes. When describing their anticipations in relation to career, they tend to configure two parallel plans, one more realistic, and the other, more idealistic. Being aware of the difficulties they have to confront in order to improve their standards of living, they articulated a path whereby they could envisage the possibility of realising their plans from the contexts of their specific positioning, their 'situatedness in the world', rather than from their more idealised hopes. Many working-class interviewees configured their dreams in the context of becoming medical doctors, not only because of social prestige, but also because of the opportunity to help others in an area as essential and also as precarious as the Brazilian public health service. For instance, being aware of the highly competitive entry to medicine, hard to achieve even for middle and upper class Brazilian young people, the working-class tended to choose less competitive courses in order to allow themselves more realistic chances of entering into universities. There were not so many differences among Brazilians from the middle and upper classes and the working class in views of the family. Brazilian participants tend to value the opportunity to be close to their family. Even though the English working-class participants also emphasised their need for family support, the difference between the English and the Brazilians across social class is in their relationships not only to the nuclear family, but also to the extended family. In addition, while middle and upper middle class Brazilians are unlikely to live with the extended family in the same house, a great part of working-class interviewees' life is spent in their grandparents' home or even with an extended family dynamic. In terms of national 'common sense', however, the fragments of narratives across most of the Brazilian interviewees were very similar: they tended to identify with Brazil's happiness as a nation and tried to refigure it in the context of their personal lives. The conception associated with risk is the same as for other groups of Brazilians and stands in comparison to happiness. The lack of trust in international and national organisations made them find it difficult to configure with hope their anticipations in relation to the context of globalisation as expanding opportunities across Brazil and the world in general. The major

difference across the more collective notions of identity between the Brazilian young people from different social classes was in terms of the working-class participants' more direct practical entanglement with more collective practices associated with the political sphere. The transition from a more disillusioned approach in terms of institutionalised politics to a more participative one, at least in terms of voting conscientiously, influenced the majority of the Brazilians interviewed. I believe that this transition was influenced by Lula's high chances of becoming President.

Again, there were more significant differences between the young women and the young men with regard with the sphere of intimacy. For instance, Brazilian working-class young females tended to configure early romances as possibilities of adding pleasure to their 'monotonous routine'. In their present daily lives they are keen to have serious relationships, at a very early age, as a means not to postpone pleasant moments in life. As Brazilian working-class women tended to dream about marrying, having stable relationships, and building up a family with children as soon as possible, by starting their intimate sexual relationships they ended up becoming pregnant at a very early age. Marriage and having children are not perceived by those young females as negative 'consequences', as they are likely to acknowledge that their lives are very uncertain, and, because of this, they do not want to wait for things to happen. They refigured their aspirations as short-term anticipations that could provide more pleasure to their daily routine. In contrast the working-class young men were very resistant to earlier serious relationships. They illustrated in their articulations that if this happened their dreams of consolidating a career would be almost impossible to realise. The other distinctive issues across gender in the working-class Brazilian backgrounds had more to do with differences I have already shown in the examples of Brazilian middle and upper middle class young women and the working-class English girls: The working-class Brazilians along with these young women tended to be more open to speaking their minds in relation to emotional matters, and also to engaging with caring professions in comparison to the young men interviewed.

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Part II- Different Perspectives: Brazilian and English Young People's refigurations of the local, the national and the global

Having already examined the perceptions of Brazilian and English young people in Chapter 5, with regard to the intersection of the local, the national and the global, I aim at making once again clear, in this section of the conclusion, that, while I was describing the main patterns, characterising the research subjects, the differences and commonalities of their narratives can only be explained in relation to the interconnection of their multiple categories of identities, in addition to class.

The different ways, in which Brazilian and English young people regardless of categories of belongings, tend to understand and anticipate the future in terms of local, national and global relationships are interesting. Although, particularly the working-class young women were likely to be more critical with regard to the differences found in terms of social inequality in England and across the world, they were still cultivating the positive outcomes of having mixed cultural backgrounds, the possibilities of travelling, knowing the world, and so forth.

Some Brazilians said that if, free trade existed with common laws and the same sorts of opportunities and subsidies across countries, globalisation could indeed become a way to pressurise countries to improve the precarious situation of the disenfranchised others (their citizens). However, the majority of the Brazilians did not configure globalisation as a mutual process, but as a means to benefit the already rich and developed western countries.

I argue that, as suggested by Ricoeur's treatment of time, we cannot understand the critical attitude of young Brazilians towards globalisation and, also the more positive accounts of the English interviewees, by only taking into account English and Brazilian recent historical events. It is important to think of the experiences of these countries' intersections between the local, the national and the global, by considering Ricoeur's fusion of temporality, and especially the importance of the past in the present. For instance, Brazil's past as an ex-colony of Portugal may explain the more consolidated notions of the Brazilian's

interviewees about 'Brazilianness' in comparison to the English research participants. Also, English history, marked by its imperialism, may also make English national identity more difficult to be narrated, since England never had to define its identity to consolidate its independence.

The historical impositions that have impacted on Brazil from its past as a colony up to the present control of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) of the Brazilians' economy are aspects that intensify Brazilians' distrust in terms of 'globalised', international relationships. The Brazilian interviewees' articulations of their perceptions of global impacts are often characterised by a unilateral perspective. In other words, they understand globalisation as likely to empower the already powerful developed world[64]. The Brazilian's interviewees configured globalisation in terms of forces that have limited Brazilian's sovereignty, benefiting not only Portugal, but also other European elites[65], and more recently the United States[66]. It is in this context that the post-colonial theorists contributions should be addressed. The third world has not become disenfranchised socially, politically and economically through natural processes. It has actually been exploited by imperialist nations, which causes much more doubt with regard to global politics.

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[64] By alluding to Brazilians' views on globalisation I am not actually defending their positions. I am only stressing that the unequal relations of power within Brazil and global dominant forces on the country, such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund), which imposes rules on the Brazilian Economy, instead of leaving the Brazilian leadership to democratically decide upon national issues, must be taken into account. These aspects, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6, probably explain young Brazilians' disillusion and frustrations with regard to global politics.

[65] By being aware of Brazil's Colonial History we can see that the wealth of Brazil, its valued wood, named *pau-brasil*, gold, the profit gained throughout the production of sugar were not concentrated in Portugal. England played an important role, with its military powerful force, in defending the Portuguese Royal Family in their transference to Brazil during the Napoleonic wars, Portugal ended up too dependant on England's impositions against it. England ended up keeping the profits produced in Brazil, as a Colony of Portugal, and controlling the traffic of African Black Slavers into Brazil. In addition, the French have invaded the state of *Maranhão* in Brazil and the Dutch, the state of Pernambuco, also throughout the Brazilian colonial period.

[66] As the Brazilian's interviewees have highlighted many times throughout their articulations, one cannot deny the United States' attempts to control several countries of South American. This can actually be illustrated by seeing the numerous boycotts imposed by the United States on South America from the second half of the twentieth century onwards.

Alternatively, it is much easier from the perspective of the English interviewees to observe the more positive outcomes that globalisation may bring. England is still playing a hegemonic role in the world, though not to the same extent as in the past. In addition, England with its alliance with the European Union and the United States tends to impose rules on the more disenfranchised countries. It is in this context of opportunities, that English participants are likely to understand globalisation: its provision of wider opportunities for travelling around the world; the establishment of restaurants from all over the world in England; the access to music and films produced in other countries, and so forth.

Finally, the impact of globalisation should not be examined only in terms of domination and subordination, as new blocs constituted by under-developed and developed countries are being constructed to defend their interests as well. The Brazilians interviewed had difficulties in perceiving this outcome, influenced by the negotiations across countries from all over the world.

Part III- Configuring Aspirations

As I have emphasised throughout this thesis aspiration is entangled in relationships. This means that it cannot be refigured before the process of composition (prefiguration and configuration) takes place. By making sense of the young people's narratives we can realise the intensity in which the mediation of time and their categories of identities have impacted on the perceptions, experiences and anticipations of their future lives. Aspiration is strongly influenced by the distribution of resources not only with regard to material conditions, but also cultural, social and emotional experiences. It is from this basis that narratives on expectations and hopes can be put together and refigured. My aim in this final part of the conclusion is to illustrate the elements that have appeared in the research-subjects' narratives as counter-examples of what is often currently perceived as the outcomes of the so-called late modernity.

In attempting to connect my research findings with the consequences that are debated in contemporary social theories, the methodological difference between

my approach to aspiration and the grand theories of modernity and late-modernity needs to be stressed. While aspiration has been shaped in a continuous relationship with the lived contexts of the participants from two concrete locations, the social theories of individualisation and reflexive modernity operate in an abstract level, providing universalising interpretations of states of affairs of contemporary societies. In contrast, aspiration even when it was articulated from more personalised spheres of live, retained its local belongings and aspects of national culture. Bearing in mind the theoretically oriented empirical perspective of aspiration and the speculative theoretical accounts of the theories mentioned above I attempt to conclude this thesis by showing the complexity and differentiated routes entangled in processes of articulating aspiration. Aspirations as eminently 'articulatory' should not be perceived as straightforward outcomes of rational cognitive decision-making or macro-social conditions.

Sennett's (1998) speculation about the lack of investment in long-term careers, when they become unpredictable and insecure in the contemporary age of globalisation and flexibilisation of work, is perceived in different ways by the participants of this research. Interestingly, the participants of the two countries, as far as my examples go, by framing their narrations from highly diverse contexts, articulated different perspectives from Sennett's speculation. Career remains a central element that composes my research subjects' plans. If we were to generalise, unwisely no doubt, from these findings, career remains a key form for young people's aspirations.

More importantly, however, orientations towards careers differ in many ways. We need intermediate categories – beyond career and non-career – to express such differences. The influence of national cultural experiences is particularly important. The experiences of the Brazilian participants have been historically marked by the lack of security and unpredictability in almost all spheres of life. They have been brought up in a risky environment in which their life-practices were impacted by continuous changes, instability of the labour market, political and economic crisis and other sorts of ruptures. Even though the Brazilian participants focused on career as not necessarily guaranteeing employment, particularly those from middle and upper class background, they stressed the

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necessity of having a profession. At the same time, this group of Brazilians incorporate in their articulation the need to be aware of continuous investment in the professional field and important areas of knowledge. In the case of the working-class Brazilians, even though they recognise the insecurity of the Brazilian labour market, there is a belief that professional people have more resources to confront periods of unemployment. In addition, for them, a career is not only a private achievement, but it is a means to be respected as human beings and to support their family members.

From the perspective of the working-class Brazilians, Sennett's equation between flexibilisation of career and the fragility of long-term relationships can be also questioned. The articulation of aspiration of my Brazilian working-class participants has shown that their primordial task in obtaining a career is to take their family out of poverty. In the case of the English research subjects, we have seen that the ideology of meritocracy had a strong impact upon these participants' narratives. In other words, they tended to equate career success to luck, hardworking and persistence. In this respect, they actually opposed to Sennett's view on the restriction of the labour market. However, in the case of the English working-class participants even if they tended to relate career to personal effort, their daily experiences, as for instance, their need to work full-time show their disadvantage in comparison to the middle-class young people in pursuing a direct route to university. Although my working-class participants were not from the bottom end of the English society, often the young people interviewed by researchers of transitional studies, some disadvantages dealt by them were similar, e.g. their low educational attainment while at school. Instead of making individuals responsible for their deprived situations, this field of study has highlighted the structured constraints of British society, by clarifying that there are choices that are not available (or restrictly available) to certain groups of young people. Neither the working-class English participants nor the middle and middle-upper class shared Sennet's view on the flexibilisation of work. For the working-class English participants a career was not as deeply associated with material resources as in the case of the working-class Brazilians, but was nonetheless a means of respectability and of having a more enjoyable and pleasant life. The middle and upper middle-class English young people

acknowledged the expansion of career opportunities with the emerging possibilities of living and working abroad.

With respect to people's kinds of personal relationships in contemporary society, a theme widely discussed as outcomes of the process of individualisation, I have observed that my research participants tended to value their personal, emotional links, both friendship relations and family links, even if sometimes they are difficult to express. From the accounts of my participants I have not found support to Bauman's' liquid love', as an analogy to bonds that are easily untied, or Giddens' pure relationship, a relationship consolidated through the satisfactions and rewards of the relation itself, and not built up by confronting the difficulties and burdens of daily life. Again, my research suggests differentiated patterns from which relationships are expressed and lived. The English participants do not feel comfortable in building up intimate relationships of personal disclosure with their parents, particularly those from middle and upper class backgrounds, a pattern associated with the ways in which adulthood is lived in England. Again this finding is in line with the basis on which the ideology of meritocracy is shaped. The stress on the rationalisation of emotions is a way to make subjects independent and responsible for their own lives. For the English participants to position themselves independently from the networks of home is a means of assuring their adult status. In certain ways the self-centred element of independence, articulated by the English middle and upper-middle class participants, is a cultural aspect that reinforces the value of personal effort and their possibilities of equating reality and desire. It is in this vein that some of the middle and upper-middle class English young women postpone their desires for meeting up the 'men of their lives' and building a family of their own after having established themselves in their professional field. Even if the contexts in which independence is constructed among this social group may seem excessively rationalised in comparison to other cultural backgrounds, it does not close possibilities of enduring bonds. Family bonds are still important and cultivated. Intimate sexual relationships are envisaged in a future moment, when these young people can deal with the responsibility of bringing up a family. Working-class English interviewed along with the Brazilians tended to integrate their present experiences into their future plans in a more continuous fashion. We can observe through their narratives that there

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is less of a sense of delayed gratification in comparison to the middle and middle-upper English interviewed. For instance, while thinking of his career an English young man from working-class background articulated his university choice by considering the distance to his girlfriend's hometown. This attempt to reconcile his career prospects with his current intimate relationship is visible here. Besides, the majority of the English working-class interviewees anticipated their future lives as having a family of their own as soon as they could meet the financial means. They also revealed their desire to continue living near their family of origin. They emphasised the importance of not breaking from the known environment of their local neighbourhood. The Brazilian participants also envisaged a future in which they did not need to move away from their home city and they could always feel close to their roots. Through the narratives of the Brazilians we are able to understand the centrality of the family of origin in their daily life dynamic. Strong emotional links with their family of origin are clearly expressed by the participants, though the forms in which the interactions take place differ according to the specific routines and personalities of the interviewees and their family members. For the Brazilians, family is considered as a source of mutual support, motivation, and integration. Being so attached to the family is not surprising in that family formation is articulated as one of the most fundamental aspect of my Brazilian participants' life plans. However, the predictability of family formation is articulated in terms of a long-term future, because of difficulties in visualising the time they are likely to have financial means to support a family. In contrast, these difficulties of planning ahead made some of the working-class young women choose early parenthood.

From my interviewees' narratives we can conclude how affective bonds remain a central aspect of life, even though they are experienced differently across culture, gender, and so on. The most common feature across the research participants was with regard to friendships. All of the participants have mentioned the relevance of their friends in their lives and complained about the lack of time to see them more often. In addition, many interviewees have revealed their desire to maintain close interactions with their school friends after finishing school.

The contemporary common sense in relation to young people as politically apathetic needs to be contextualised in terms of a broader analysis of contemporary societies, in order to situate the influence of disembedding theoretical frameworks upon the different dimensions of life nowadays. Many writers (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, Sennett, 1998 and Lasch 1979) have theorised about the destruction of the foundations of social existence and people's inability to feel themselves as part of a public, collective history or community. Well, as already examined throughout the thesis, the Brazilians overemphasised their family embeddedness and their need to be constantly cultivating their roots, by feeling part of mutually binding groups. With regard to the more collective political actions one has to remember that they are planned (or disarticulated) depending upon very specific historical moments and political conditions. In other words, collective political actions should not be generalized, disregarding space and time. Political conditions encourage different engagements as I have already demonstrated in the context of the election of Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva's, Brazil's current president. Young Brazilians not only got together, but also participated actively in the election process. Alternatively, it makes sense that in the current context, in which the British Labour Party is constantly focusing on exclusions as personal failures, people in Britain are not being motivated to engage with the more collective dimensions of life. The impact of the ideology of meritocracy among my British interviewees is an example of this phenomenon. I have identified throughout the configurations and refigurations of the research participants that especially the most privileged young people tended to be less aware of collective social projects, though they are more proactive in charitable donations. The participants who were less informed about social inequalities affecting people in their locations and around the world were those who appeared to be less appreciative of what they themselves enjoy. Consequently, their aspirations were articulated much more around their personal projects, however, not indifferent to the suffering of other people.

This work on aspiration attempted to break with theoretical tendencies that propagate universalising truths, by showing the ways in which people's future expectations are figured by dynamic located experiences and relationships. Aspiration actually is shaped by the mediation of structural and cultural

identities. It opens up to the understanding of social inequalities and the differentiated power relations that affect people's life, without framing people's lives with a context of repetitive cycles of exclusion, as often happens with some studies in the field of youth transition. Even in the most deprived areas of society, human suffering is likely to join people together and produce some sort of narrative of hope. In this light it is extremely important that new research on youth develops analytical frameworks to deal with structural constraints, cultural practices, and tactics of coping in interactive ways.

In contrast with theories of life-style and 'post-subcultures' that focus on choices and gatherings disarticulated from communalities and belongings, the articulation of my research subjects' aspirations have suggested that their future anticipations are deeply mediated by their sense of locality. Choices are still reflecting the ties of primordial links of identification.

The understanding of aspiration in this research has clarified the ways in which future expectations are still actively constructed through articulations of belongings, manifested via social and cultural practices, which refer to the lives of others across time. My research subjects have illustrated, even if unconsciously, their embeddedness, particularly, in gender relations, in social class and in national cultures. At the same time, the ways in which they articulated their aspirations offered hope that it is possible to break with structural determinations. My research participants, while thinking about their future, looked to their present, and were able to configure distinctive tactics to cope with constraints and strengthen their narratives of dreams and hope.

Finally, this thesis has shown that, similarly to Ricoeur's pre-narrative moment, aspiration constitutes the very fabric of life. All my research participants, in spite of their networks of support, have configured aspirations as hopeful future anticipations. Aspiration, therefore, enables them to reinforce the rewarding moments in life and cope more strategically with the difficult ones.

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APPENDIX

Interview Schedule for individual and Focus Groups sessions in England and Brazil[67]

1. Background Information about the Interviewees (the place where they live, family members, occupation of parents, marital status of parents)

What is your name?
How old are you?
Do you have brothers/sisters? How many? Are they boys or girls?
Who do you live with? (To see if they live with their parents, other relatives or if their parents are separated)
What does your father/mother do for a living?

2. Daily Routine, Leisure/ Work/ School activities

What is your daily routine? What do you normally do on average day?
Of the things, which you have mentioned, what is it that you most enjoy doing?
And what are the things you don't enjoy? And why?
What do you normally do in your free time?
What do you do at the weekend? And, how about during the holidays?
Do you feel that there's something missing from your daily routine? Is there something which you don't do but which you would like to do in your every day life?

3. Personal Relationships

Who do you normally spend most time with on a daily basis? What do you think about spending most of your time with these people? (To explore their attitudes towards their family, relatives and friends).
Who are the people you most enjoy being with in your free time? What is your relationship with these people?
Why do you enjoy spending time with these people? (To explore how they relate and identify with others)

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67 As already emphasised in the Chapter 1 of this thesis this is only a schedule of the interview and the focus group discussions. The ways in which the questions were presented for the group have been slightly different. Also, the order of the questions and the ways they were asked in many interviews were changed, due to the individuality and the ways my interviewees were likely to express themselves and interact with me.

4. School/College Experiences

Do you like the school/college where you are studying? What do you most like about it? And what do you least like about it? Would you have chosen to study here again or not?

How would you describe this moment of your life at school? How do you feel about being in your last year of school? (To explore their enthusiasm, fears, doubts, insecurities).

What are you most going to miss when you finish school? And what are the things, which you are not going to miss?

5. Immediate Plans on Finishing School

Do you already have an idea of what you intend to do when you finish school? Do you feel satisfied with your choice? In what sense do you feel satisfied? (To explore the relationship between satisfactions, gratification, pleasure, financial well being, and possible conflicts between choices and ideals). What are your motives for choosing this particular option? (Identify influence of parents, friends, career prestige, financial earning, gender inequalities, racial, ethnic different opportunities, etc)

What would you most like to do on finishing school? (To check whether the option already mentioned, was the result of a lack of options, or influences)

6. Plans for the Next Two Years

How do you see your life in the next two years?

Let's say that you manage to achieve what you intend to in the next two years, what else would be lacking?

Do you think you are near, far or very far from achieving what you hope to achieve in the next two years?

7. Long-term Plans/Life Goals/Life-Ideals

Up until now we have been talking about, more or less, the near future. Do you have some idea of what you want to be doing in the next 5-6 years? And how would you describe your ideal life in 5-6 years time?

What are the easiest aspects to achieve? And what are the most difficult?

If you could close your eyes and start imagining scenes, achievements, dreams, everything that would make you happy and smile now how would you describe your life-ideal? Please, try to forget about your daily routine, the challenges, and the pressures for a moment, and concentrate on fantasies and dreams...

In your opinion, what are the difficulties or obstacles, which you need to tackle so that you achieve the ideal life, which you have just described, within 5-6 years time?

8. Nationality /Globalisation/Aspirations

Do you enjoy living in this city, state (county for the English interviewees)? What are the positive aspects? And, how about the negative ones?

If you were able to choose a place to live, where would you choose?

What is it you most like about Brazil/England?

What do you least like about Brazil/England?

What comes to mind when you think of Brazilian/English Culture? And of being Brazilian/English? Do you feel English (Brazilian)? What makes you say to yourself I am English (Brazilian)? Is just the fact that you have been born in England (Brazil)? If you could put an empty paper in front of you, and then start to write everything that comes into your mind when you hear saying the world English, (Brazilian), Brazil (England), Brazilian Culture (English Culture)?

In the event of you being able to live in another country, where would you live?

If you decided to live abroad, what would be the aspects that you would most miss from your country, and culture?

What would be the aspects that you would not miss at all?

Would you think about living for the rest of your life in another country or just a period of time? For how long would you think about living abroad? What are the aspects that attract you to live abroad? What are the aspects that prevent you from living abroad?
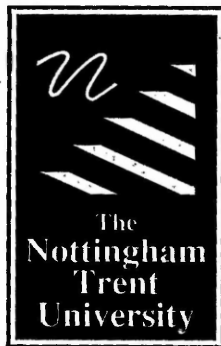
Do you think your country and your culture are related to other countries and cultures from the rest of the world? Are they related, connected to one another or completed separated, different? Do you think Brazilians are completely different from English people? (The question was also asked the other way around).

What are the aspects of your culture and country that you are able to find in other places? Is there anything that is mostly (uniquely) Brazilian or mostly (uniquely) English?

9. Conclusion

Just before we finish our conversation, I would like you give me a phrase, which has special meaning for you, is actually significant for your life, or your personality, the ways you are, when I say each one of the following words....

- Dreams
- Fears
- Risk
- Problems
- Frustrations