



ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE

SOCIOLOGY

Exploring socialisation, culture and identity

PRE-RELEASE STIMULUS MATERIAL

To be opened on receipt

G671/SM

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- This copy must **not** be taken into the examination room.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- This document consists of **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

**Jackson, C (2006) Lads and Ladettes in School:
Gender and a Fear of Failure: Open University Press**

Lads and Ladettes in School is a study by Jackson of young people aged 13–14 years old and the extent to which they behave in a lad or ladette manner. Jackson takes as her starting point for this research her concern that a significant number of boys in the contemporary UK appear to be behaving in a laddish way or are being labelled as laddish by the media. Jackson argues this is associated with the idea that it is ‘uncool’ to work and is possibly preventing some young boys from reaching their potential in school. Laddism is a set of values which are both anti-school and anti-education. Jackson argues there is some hearsay and anecdotal evidence that suggests girls are now behaving in a similar way. She wanted to establish the extent to which lad and ladette culture might be occurring in secondary schools.

One of Jackson’s aims was to try to understand the patterns of behaviour and attitudes that are associated with lads and ladettes. She also wanted to find out what motives they had for adopting such behaviour. She argues that without understanding the motives the young people had, it is difficult to challenge their underachievement and their general disruption to the school environment.

She also set out to investigate whether ladette culture is similar to, or different from, lad culture. Do ladettes, for example, also think it is uncool to work; are they also anti-school and anti-education? And, if they are, does it impede the girls who behave in this way in terms of their achievement?

Jackson used mixed methods to gain quantitative data which would produce evidence of any patterns or trends in relation to the behaviour of the young people and qualitative data which would provide an in-depth insight into their views. She carried out a series of questionnaires followed by semi-structured interviews.

There were two parts to this research. The research took place in six schools, two of which were single sex. The intake of the six schools was mixed in terms of social class, ethnicity, and academic achievement. Self-completion questionnaires were administered to all the boys and girls in year 9. These questionnaires were administered covering a range of themes including pupils’ aspirations and attitudes to behaviour and lad culture. From the 779 questionnaire responses, 75 girls and 78 boys were selected to be interviewed. These semi-structured interviews covered a range of topics including school based pressures, lads and ladettes and friends. The interviewees were selected to ensure there was a mix of pupils in terms of lad and ladette culture, general behaviour and academic levels.

Jackson followed ethical guidelines and, therefore, gained consent from the parents of the pupils as well as the pupils themselves. The pupils were told what the research was about and, with the exception of one boy, they all agreed that the interview should be tape recorded. Jackson, who is a young, white British woman, conducted all the interviews herself.

In her research, Jackson found that a view expressed by one pupil, Sandy, was one held by many of the interviewees.

CJ ‘If it was ‘cool’ to work hard in school and you got status from working hard, would you work hard?’

Sandy (female pupil) ‘Yes I would, I would if it was [cool]. But because at the moment it’s not, I just don’t [work hard]. I don’t try and I don’t intend to’.

Jackson also found that some girls and boys became part of a lad/ladette culture because of a fear of academic failure. It was a defensive mechanism and would provide them with a reason for their failure. She found it was a desire to be socially accepted that also fuelled ‘laddish’ behaviour in girls as well as boys. They wanted to ‘fit in’, to be seen as conforming to hegemonic masculinities and not normative femininities.

In addition to the research on the pupils, Jackson interviewed 17 female teachers and 13 male teachers from the sample schools. They reflected a range of subjects, teaching experience and levels within the schools. These interviews tended to last between half an hour to an hour, whereas those with the pupils tended to be approximately half an hour. The teachers also received a list of topics for discussion prior to the interview. The interviews were audio taped and later transcribed.

One of the female teachers commented;

'I think if you talked about laddish girls about 20 years ago they would be the ones that were tomboys. If you talk about laddish girls now, they are the ones who experiment [sexually] and who, if you like, are shameless.'



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Text Extract Source: C Jackson, *Lads and Ladettes in School*, Open University Press, 2006

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