

Darmody, Merike; Smyth, Emer; McCoy, Selina

**Working Paper**

## Acting up or opting out? Truancy in Irish secondary schools

ESRI Working Paper, No. 212

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin

*Suggested Citation:* Darmody, Merike; Smyth, Emer; McCoy, Selina (2007) : Acting up or opting out? Truancy in Irish secondary schools, ESRI Working Paper, No. 212, The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin

This Version is available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10419/67998>

**Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:**

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

**Terms of use:**

*Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.*

*You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.*

*If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.*



Working Paper No. 212

October 2007

## Acting Up or Opting Out? Truancy in Irish Secondary Schools

**Merike Darmody, Emer Smyth and Selina McCoy**

*Abstract.* This paper explores the way in which truancy levels are structured by individual social class and the social mix of the school within the Republic of Ireland. Drawing on a national survey of young people, truancy levels are found to be higher among working-class and Traveller students. Truancy is more prevalent in predominantly working-class schools, mainly because young people see them as less supportive and more disorderly environments. The empirical analyses are situated within the context of the concepts of individual and institutional habitus as well as resistance theory. Our findings suggest the institutional habitus of the school is a strong factor in influencing truancy levels among young people. While truancy operates as a form of student resistance to the school system, it serves to reproduce social class inequalities since it is associated with more negative educational and labour market outcomes in the longer term.

*Corresponding Author:* Merike.Darmody@esri.ie

ESRI working papers represent un-refereed work-in-progress by members who are solely responsible for the content and any views expressed therein. Any comments on these papers will be welcome and should be sent to the author(s) by email. Papers may be downloaded for personal use only.

# Acting Up or Opting Out? Truancy in Irish Secondary Schools

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, school absence has attracted much interest in international educational research as well as policy discourses (see Reid, 2005; Dalziel and Henthorne, 2005; Rothman, 2004; Morris and Rutt, 2004; Reid, 2003; Hobcraft, 2000; Burgess, *et al.*, 2001; Raffe, 1986; Brown, 1983; Billington, 1978). There is a general consensus among researchers that poor attendance has substantial costs for the individual and for wider society. On the individual level, persistent school absence is likely to lead to early school leaving and social as well as economic disadvantage later in life (Fergusson *et al.* 1995). On a societal level, persistent absence from school and subsequent early school leaving can be associated with becoming engaged in criminal activity (see Robins and Radcliffe, 1980) and levels of unemployment (Farrington, 1980). In other words, persistent absence from school is costly to the individual as well as to the state.

Truancy is an important component of school absence. However, as previous research indicates, the concept is difficult to define. Stoll (1990) refers to truancy as 'absence from school for no legitimate reason'. On the other hand, a report from OFSTED (2001) points out that 'truancy is not synonymous with unauthorised absence' as some unauthorised absences result from the school's refusal to authorise excessive absence for holidays during term time. Atkinson and co-authors (2000) point to differences in the extent of absence, from avoidance of single lessons to absences of several weeks. In addition, Kinder and co-authors (1996) note that 'post-registration truants' were not necessarily absent from school, but attended those lessons which interested them and avoided others. While the nature and extent of school absence and truanting differ, it is also important to note that truancy is caused by multiple, often interrelated, factors and consequently students who miss school without any valid reason do not constitute a homogenous group.

Over the years a strong corpus of literature on school absence and truancy has emerged internationally. However, research on truancy has rarely been located within the broader empirical research tradition on the relationship between social class and educational outcomes. Furthermore, insights on the role of the school in influencing

truancy levels have generally been small-scale and qualitative in nature, with difficulties in inferring the extent to which individual social class and the social mix of the school are related within the broader school-going population. In this paper, we explore the interplay between student characteristics, school context and student attitudes in shaping patterns of truancy among secondary students in the Republic of Ireland, a country in which very little research has been carried out on truancy and school absence. The following section of the paper locates our research within the context of previous international research on truancy while the theoretical perspective of the study is discussed in section three. Section four describes the data and methodology used in the study while section five presents detailed analyses of the factors shaping truancy and the relationship between truancy and subsequent educational and labour market outcomes.

## **2. Previous research on school absence**

Previous international research has identified a variety of causes of truancy. A number of the causes have been found to be school-related, including the nature of interaction with peers and teachers, bullying, the content and delivery of the curriculum and its relevance, discipline issues, boredom with school, and the academic ethos and expectational climate of the school (see Kinder *et al.*, 1996; Kinder and Wilkin, 1998; Brown, 1983; Smyth, *et al.*, 2004; Smyth, 1999). An OFSTED study in the United Kingdom (2001) found that, in some schools, poor attendance occurs disproportionately among students who are weak readers, indicating a clear link between academic difficulties and absence. Difficulty in ‘keeping up’ with school work and learning difficulties experienced by students are also highlighted in other studies as possible causes of absence (see Malcolm *et al.*, 2003).

In addition to institutional and academic factors, truanting behaviour is also seen to be caused by family circumstances and factors related to the child’s personality, including lack of self-esteem, social skills, confidence, and psychological problems (see Kinder *et al.*, 1996; Malcolm *et al.*, 2003). In addition, some studies have highlighted gender and age as important factors in understanding truanting behaviour among students. The Social Exclusion Unit (1998) in the United Kingdom and Wagner and co-authors (2000) in Germany found that boys are generally more likely than girls to become truants. The same studies indicate that truants also tend to

be older students. In fact, Wagner *et al.* (2000) report an almost continuous increase in poor attendance between the age 13 and 17. Over and above the factors detailed above, non-attendance can also be attributed to high levels of part-time work (McCoy and Smyth, 2004).

While a number of studies highlight the importance of students' social background in developing truanting behaviour, only a few provide comprehensive empirical evidence on this link. Perhaps the reason lies in the difficulty in collecting standard socio-economic measures as students may not know what jobs their parents or guardians have, or are unable to provide the relevant detail for precise social class coding (Boreham, 2000). Existing studies show that students from working-class groups are more likely to play truant, with young people from non-employed households especially likely to play truant. In addition, greater involvement in delinquency was significantly associated with being involved in truancy from school (Woodward and McVie, 2001). Elsewhere, research suggests that parental involvement is also a salient factor in explaining behavioural outcomes, such as truancy (see McNeal, 1999; Reid, 2006).

Previous research has highlighted a number of consequences of absence from school. Some studies (e.g. Learmonth, 1995) link truancy with the wider issue of pupil disaffection. Kinder, *et al.* (1995) note that many teachers saw truancy, disruption and exclusion as closely interrelated. Teachers believed that both truanting and disruptive pupils chose 'flight or fight' as parallel responses to schools from which they felt alienated. Previous research shows that, in general, school absence can be associated with early school leaving, academic underperformance and more restricted opportunities in terms of further education, training and the labour market (Malcolm *et al.*, 1993). Invariably, persistent absence from school, results in limited life-chances and quality of life for the young person involved (Farrington, 1980; Wagner *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, early school leaving and persistent absenteeism can also lead to antisocial behaviour (NIAO, 2004; Robins and Radcliffe, 1980; Malcolm *et al.*, 2003), and a possible association between truancy and crime has also been noted (DfES, 1999; DfEE and Home Office, 2001).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

A good deal of the research on school absence and truancy has been largely atheoretical and not clearly linked to understandings of the role of social class in shaping educational experiences and outcomes. In this paper, we locate our research on truancy within two theoretical strands: the role of individual and institutional habitus in shaping student outcomes; and resistance theory.

The concept of 'habitus', developed by Bourdieu, comprises a person's inbuilt (socially acquired) disposition to behave, and think in a certain way; to have certain outlooks and opinions on life and is shaped by the way a person is socialised from a young age within his/her family, as well as by the peers and by the education system (Scahill, 1993):

The habitus ... the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class.... (Bourdieu, 1990, p.91)

In other words, the class-related habitus can be distinctive, as the members of different social classes behave in a certain way. It can be argued that, for Bourdieu, habitus is the key to understanding the mechanisms that 'educational systems employ to reproduce existing social relations in students' (Webb *et al.*, 2002, p. 45). More affluent and privileged middle class students are more likely to experience congruity between the worlds of school and home compared to working class students (Reay, 1998b). Considering the reproductive character of educational institutions perpetuating - in most cases middle class - values and code of behaviour, the 'outsiders' find it harder to get used to the new environment and learn the 'rules of the game'. Feelings of not 'fitting in' can result in leaving school early.

A consideration of individual habitus can usefully be supplemented by the concept of 'institutional habitus', which focuses on the concrete ways in which social class becomes embedded into the school organisation and culture (McDonough, 1997; Reay *et al.*, 2001; Reay *et al.*, 2005). In a study of four US high schools, McDonough (1997) highlights the existence of specific habituses in different school contexts with social class operating through schools to shape student perceptions of appropriate college choices. Similarly, in the British context, Reay and co-authors' (2005) study indicates that the six educational institutions studied have identifiable institutional

habitués, which impact on student aspirations over and above the effect of individual family background.

Bourdieu's theoretical framework has been subject to criticism for being overly deterministic (see Jenkins, 2002). Resistance theory emerged as a critique of the more deterministic aspects of reproduction theory (see Morrow and Torres, 1995). This perspective explains educational failure among working-class children (see Apple, 1992) but conceptualises oppositional behaviour as politically based rather than deviant (see Fagan, 1995). Thus, rejection of school authority by working class children is seen as 'working class resistance' to what they recognise as the inherent inequalities in the educational system favouring middle-class aims and values. Truancy, petty drug use, poor relations with teachers, devaluing school compared to work, and exerting little effort in school work are considered concrete manifestations of such resistance (Davies, 1994). However, in resisting the aims and values of schooling, working class children 'fail themselves' by engaging in behaviour which gives them more control in the short term while having a negative effect on their post-school outcomes in the longer term (Fagan, 1995, Willis, 1977). Giroux and Cummins use resistance theory to explain the complex relationship of disempowered communities and their schools and explore the ways in which school environments, structures and practices may influence students. Apple (1995) refers to a hidden curriculum in schools that covertly teaches expected norms and dispositions which pervade the school. He notes that students 'become quite adept at 'working the system' ... creatively adapt their environments to their own gain (get out of class, smoke etc), generally try to make it through the day' (ibid. p. 96). Consequently it is likely that some students attempt to remove themselves, at least temporarily, from this environment by truanting.

In this study, we regard truancy as a form of counter-school behaviour on the part of students. As such, it reflects both individual social class, the social context of the school and the attitudes that result from the interaction between these two levels. On the basis of previous research, we derive the following hypotheses:

- Male students are more likely to truant, reflecting their more negative relations with teachers and lower educational aspirations.
- Working-class students are more likely to truant than their middle-class counterparts.

- Students attending schools with a high concentration of working-class students are more likely to truant, all else being equal, due to the ‘mismatch’ between home and school culture and lower teacher expectations.
- Students who experience school as a more negative experience are more likely to truant but, in so doing, are more likely to drop out of school, achieve lower grades and have greater difficulties in the immediate post-school period.

These hypotheses are tested using national survey data on school leavers in the Republic of Ireland; these data are discussed further in the following section.

#### **4. Data and Methodology**

The paper is based on analyses of a pooled dataset comprising School Leavers’ Survey data from 2004 and 2006. The School Leavers’ Survey is a regular nationally representative survey of young people who have left secondary school in the previous academic year; in the Republic of Ireland, secondary school covers students from approximately 12 to 18 years of age. The survey is based on a stratified, by educational level and programme, random sample, with an average response rate for the two surveys of 50 per cent.

The survey collects detailed information on the educational and labour market experiences of young people in the period since leaving school as well as collecting retrospective information on their school experiences and grades achieved. In addition, the survey collects a range of background information, including gender, social class, parental education and area of residence. Pooling data from two surveys provides a larger sample, yielding a total of 5,344 cases, and more precise estimates of the effects of the factors studied.

School leavers in the sample were asked the extent to which they had skipped lessons in their last year of school; for our purposes, ‘truancy’ is defined as skipping ‘a day here and there’, ‘several days at a time’ and ‘weeks at a time’. These students are contrasted against those who never skipped lessons or skipped ‘a lesson here and there’. In all, just over a fifth (21%) of the sample truanted by this definition. In the remainder of the paper, we use multivariate models to explore the individual and school factors shaping truancy levels and the relationship between truancy and subsequent educational and labour market outcomes.



## 5. Research Findings

### 5.1 *The factors shaping truancy levels*

Truancy patterns were explored in relation to variation by student background characteristics, school characteristics and student attitudes (which were seen as shaped by the interaction between individual students and their school context). A logistic regression model was used in order to control for a number of factors simultaneously; a positive coefficient indicates that a factor is associated with higher truancy levels while a negative coefficient indicates that a factor is associated with lower truancy chances. Male students were significantly more likely than female students to truant in their last year at school (Table 1). In order to explore social class differences, a six-category social class typology developed for Irish purposes by the Central Statistics Office was used; this is a hierarchical measure ranging from 'higher professional' to 'unskilled manual'. Because young people from farming backgrounds have a distinctive educational profile, 'farmer' is included as a separate group as are those from non-employed households and those who did not provide information on parental social class. The social class measure was based on a dominance approach (Erikson, 1984), whereby, if both parents were in employment, it was based on whichever parent had the highest social class. It is clear, that, in keeping with our hypotheses, truancy levels vary significantly by social class background. The lowest rates are found among those from professional or farming backgrounds while the highest rates are evident among unskilled manual groups, those from non-employed households and those who did not provide information on parental social class. It is likely that the 'missing information' group is mainly made up of young people whose parents are not in employment or who are not living with their parents. The scale of the between-class difference is quite substantial; young people from unskilled manual households are 2.2 times more likely to truant than those from higher professional backgrounds. It is possible, therefore, to view truancy as a form of resistance to school culture, reflecting a mismatch between the cultures of home and school.

[Table 1 about here]

The Traveller community form an indigenous minority within the Irish population, although there has been a long-standing debate as whether they should be considered as a cultural or an ethnic group (Equality Authority, 2006). For the purposes of the Equal Status Act, they are defined as:

the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

There are an estimated 22,369 members of the community in Ireland (CSO, 2007). Available data indicate that early school leaving is prevalent among young people from the Travelling community (Lodge and Lynch, 2004) and the vast majority of the adult Traveller population have had primary-level education only (CSO, 2007). These patterns have been seen as reflecting a mismatch between Traveller and school culture, with disregard for nomadic traditions viewed as discouraging Travellers from actively engaging with school (Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community, 1995). Our analyses indicate that young people from the Travelling community are 3.4 times more likely than those from the settled community to truant in their last year at school.

Three measures of school characteristics were used in our analyses: social mix of the school, school size and urban/rural location. Unfortunately, detailed measures on the social class mix of students are not available at the school level. In order to provide a proxy, the measures used distinguished between 'schools with disadvantaged status', 'fee-paying schools' and all other secondary schools. Since the 1990s, schools serving disadvantaged communities have been allocated additional funding to counter educational disadvantage; this allocation has been based on school principal reports of the extent of unemployment and welfare dependency among parents of the student body, with over a quarter of secondary schools being designated disadvantaged. Fee-paying schools make up 7 per cent of all secondary schools; students and their families pay fees but these do not cover the full economic costs since teacher salaries are paid by the State. For our purposes, disadvantaged status schools and fee-paying schools are taken to reflect schools with a high concentration of working-class and middle-class students respectively. School social mix is found to be predictive of truancy patterns; those attending disadvantaged schools are significantly more likely to truant while those attending fee-paying schools are less likely to truant. These effects operate over and above the effects of the individual student's social class, indicating the influence of the institutional habitus on truancy levels. Interestingly, some of the individual social class effects are at least partially mediated by school social mix; in other words, higher truancy rates among working-

class students are partly accounted for by the fact that they attend predominantly working-class schools. Further analyses were conducted to explore whether there was an interaction between individual and school social class. The results indicated that lower truancy rates are not found among those middle-class students who attend disadvantaged schools; in this case, it appears that the effects of the institutional habitus dominate over the individual habitus.

In addition to social mix of the school, school size is also found to have an influence. Students attending very small schools (that is, with fewer than 200 students) are less likely to truant than those attending larger schools. This pattern may reflect greater social cohesion in smaller schools or alternatively increased 'surveillance' so that it is less feasible for students to truant undetected. Students attending urban schools (that is, schools located in one of the five main cities in Ireland) have higher truancy levels than those attending rural schools, all else being equal. Again, this may relate to greater surveillance in rural schools and greater practical difficulties in skipping classes in more remote areas.

Previous research has indicated that having a part-time job at school is associated with early school leaving (McCoy and Smyth, 2004). Our findings indicate that it is also associated with truancy since those who worked while at school were 1.4 times more likely to truant. This cannot be regarded as a purely causal effect since students who are disengaged with school life can be more likely to seek an alternative outlet in part-time employment in the first place.

School leavers were asked to respond to a number of attitudinal statements regarding their school experiences. It would, of course, have been preferable to have information on attitudes while students were at school since reported views may be coloured by subsequent experiences. However, these attitudes do provide useful insights into variation across young people in their experiences of school. Two attitude scales were constructed on the basis of the statements included in the survey: 'supportive school climate' and 'disorderly school climate'. The 'supportive school climate' scale (with an alpha reliability value of 0.7) was based on the extent of agreement with the following statements: 'Discipline was fair', 'Teachers listened to my ideas and views', 'If I had a problem, there was always a teacher I could talk to', 'My school dealt well with bullying' and 'My school had a wide range of after-school activities'. The 'disorderly school climate' scale (with an alpha reliability value of 0.6) was based on the extent of agreement with the following statements: 'There were

too many troublemakers in my class’, ‘My friends took school seriously’ (disagree) and ‘Teachers could not keep order in class’. These attitudes, especially the extent to which the school environment was seen as disorderly, were found to vary across individual social class and school social mix (see Table 2).

[Table 2 about here]

Students who experienced their school climate as supportive were significantly less likely to truant while those who reported a more disorderly school climate were much more likely to truant. These effects were evident among all social classes and all types of school. The individual and school social class effects were partially mediated by the effect of student attitudes. In other words, higher truancy rates among working-class and Traveller students and those in working-class schools truanted in part reflected the fact that they experienced their school environment as more disruptive and less supportive.

### *5.2 Truancy and its consequences*

This section examines the extent to which truancy is associated with subsequent outcomes, namely, upper secondary completion, attaining higher grades at upper secondary level, going on to higher education, and the chances of being employed one year after leaving school. In doing so, we are not necessarily implying that it is a causal relationship; both truancy and school drop-out may reflect underlying disaffection and other factors. However, truancy must be seen as a potential signal of longer-term difficulties.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between truancy and young people’s educational and labour market outcomes based on a series of logistic regression models (analyses not shown here). The first set of columns shows the ‘raw’ difference, that is, the difference before controlling for any other factors, while the second set of columns shows the ‘net’ difference, after controlling for individual background, school characteristics and attitudinal factors. Young people who truant at school are less likely to complete upper secondary education; in fact, they are only a third as likely as other students. It is clear, therefore, that early school leaving is preceded by attendance difficulties and that withdrawal from school is the end result of a longer-term process. Even if they stay on in school, those who truant are less likely to achieve higher grades and go on to higher education. Furthermore, within the

labour market, those who truanted are less likely to have obtained employment one year after leaving school than other students.

[Figure 1 about here]

The difference between truants and non-truants in educational and labour market outcomes is only partly due to the differences between the two groups in their background, attitudinal and school characteristics. The second set of columns in Figure 1 shows significant differences remain between the two groups, even controlling for these factors. It is not intended to imply that the relationship between truancy and these outcomes is necessarily causal. For example, the lower grades found among truants may not merely be due to the time lost at school but also to lower levels of engagement in homework and study. However, while not necessarily a direct cause, truancy is an important signal of difficulties among young people and this group has more negative post-school outcomes in terms of access to higher education and employment. It appears, therefore, that, while operating as a form of resistance to school culture, truancy serves to reproduce social class inequalities in educational and labour market outcomes.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusions**

Research on truancy has rarely been placed in the context of the large body of theoretical and empirical work on the relationship between social class and educational outcomes. In this paper, we have argued that the notions of individual and institutional habitus are useful conceptual tools for understanding the processes shaping truancy patterns. At the same time, we view students as active agents in their engagement with school life and, from this perspective, truancy may serve as a form of resistance to school.

Our analyses indicate that students from professional backgrounds are significantly less likely to skip classes than their working-class counterparts. In addition, they experience school as a more supportive and less disorderly climate than working-class young people. The notion of habitus is helpful in understanding how middle-class families and their children find it easier to navigate within the formal educational system transmitting and reproducing middle-class values whereas

students from working-class backgrounds may feel as ‘fish out of water’, become disengaged, skip school and finally drop out of the system. This lack of congruence between the culture of home and school may be even more marked for students from Travelling backgrounds, who have the highest truancy rates of any of the social groups.

The institutional habitus of the school operates as a significant influence on truancy levels over and above the effects of individual habitus. Even controlling for their own social background, students attending working-class schools have higher truancy levels than those attending mixed or middle-class schools. Furthermore, truancy levels are lower where there are more supportive relations between teachers and students and less disruption of learning time through student misbehaviour. Reay and co-authors (2001) reported that ‘the varying amounts of cultural capital students possess (individual effects) at times takes precedence over the collective effects of institutional habitus’. However, we found that, in predominantly working-class schools, institutional habitus appears to partially dominate individual habitus since even middle-class students experience higher truancy rates.

Giroux (1983) argues that, in discourses about schooling, ‘there has been an overemphasis on how structural determinants promote economic and cultural inequality, and an underemphasis on how human agency accommodates, mediates, and resists the logic of capital and its dominating social practices’ (p. 282). A number of studies have used resistance theory to explain school-related processes. In his influential work, Willis (1977) describes boys’ rejection of the primacy of mental over manual labour within schoolwork and their consequent resistance to school rules and regulations. Fine’s (1982) study on drop-outs also revealed that students identifying injustice in their social lives and at school were more likely to criticise or challenge teachers.

From this perspective, student resistance can be seen as challenging the middle-class values and norms of the school system. Our findings indicate that truancy can be seen as a response to a setting that is perceived as unsupportive and even potentially hostile. Thus, young people were more likely to truant if they viewed the school’s discipline policy as unfair and found it difficult to communicate with teachers. Somewhat ironically, however, truancy also emerged as a response to other forms of student resistance in that it was more prevalent where misbehaviour was a common feature of school life.

Truancy is found to have a significant relationship with later life-chances. Those who truanted at school were more likely to drop out of school early, tended to underperform academically if they remained in school, were less likely to go on to higher education and less likely to obtain employment. It is clear, therefore, that while truancy represents a form of student resistance, it is not necessarily an effective strategy and serves instead to reproduce social class inequalities in educational and labour market outcomes.

## **REFERENCES**

APPLE, M. (1982) **Education and Power** (Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

ATKINSON, M., HALSEY K., WILKIN, A. AND KINDER, K. (2000) **Raising Attendance** (Slough, NFER).

BILLINGTON, B. (1978) Patterns of attendance and truancy: a study of attendance and truancy amongst first-year comprehensive school pupils, **Educational Review**, 30, 3, pp. 221-225.

BLAND, D. (2004) **A change of habitus: working-class students and educational success**. Paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference Centre for Social Change Research Queensland University of Technology 29 October 2004.

BOURDIEU, P. (1990) **In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology** (Cambridge, Polity Press).

BOREHAM, R. (2000) **Social And Educational Factors**. Available online at: <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/doh/sddyp/sddyp14.htm> Accessed 20 June 2004.

BROWN, D. (1983) Truants, families and schools: a critique of the literature on truancy, **Educational Review**, 35, pp. 225-235.

BURGESS, S., GARDINER, K., POPPER, C. (2001) **Why rising tides don't lift all boats?**, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, Paper No. 46, (London, London School of Economics).

Central Statistics Office (2007) **Census 2006, Volume 5: Ethnic of Cultural Background** (Dublin, Stationery Office).

DALZIEL, D. AND HENTHORNE, K. (2005) **Parents'/ Carers' Attitudes Towards School Attendance**, Research Brief No. RB618. (London, Department for Education and Skills).

DAVIES, S. (1994) Class dismissed? student opposition in Ontario, **The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology**, vol. 3, pp. 31-36.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS AND HOME OFFICE (2001) **Statistics of Education: Pupil Absence and Truancy from Schools in England, 2000/2001** (London, Department for Education and Skills).

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (1999) **Truancy in English Secondary Schools** (London: DfES Education Working Group).

**EQUALITY AUTHORITY** (2006) **Traveller Ethnicity** (Dublin, Equality Authority).

ERIKSON, R. (1984) Social class of men, women and families, **Sociology**, 18, 4, pp. 500-514.

FAGAN, G. H. (1995) **Culture, Politics and Irish School Dropouts. Constructing Political Identities** (London, Bergin and Garvey).

FARRINGTON, D. (1980) Truancy, delinquency, the home, and the school in L. Hersov and I. Berg (eds.), **Out of school: Modern perspectives in truancy and school refusal** (New York, John Wiley & Sons).



FINE, M. (1991) **Framing Dropouts: Notes on the Politics of an Urban Public High School** (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press).

FERGUSSON, D. M., LYSKEY, M. T. AND HORWOOD, L. J. (1995) Truancy in adolescence, **New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies**, 30, pp. 25-37.

GIROUX, H. A. (1983) Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education: a critical analysis, **Harvard Educational Review**, 53, 3, pp. 257-303.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND (1995) **Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community** (Dublin, Stationery Office).

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND (2000) **Equal Status Act** (Dublin, Stationery Office).

HOBBCRAFT, J. (2000) **Intergenerational and Life-Course Transmission of Social Exclusion**, CASE paper 15 (London, London School of Economics).

JENKINS, R. (2002) **Pierre Bourdieu** (London, Routledge).

KINDER, K., WAKEFIELD, A. AND WILKIN, A. (1996). **Talking Back: Pupil Views on Disaffection** (Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research).

KINDER, K., HARLAND J., WILKIN A. & WAKEFIELD, A. (1995) **Three to Remember: Strategies for Disaffected Pupils** (Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research).

KINDER, K. and WILKIN, A. (1998) **With All Respect: Reviewing Disaffection Strategies** (Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research).

LEARMONTH, J. (1995) **More Willingly to School? An Independent Evaluation of the DfEE's Truancy and Disaffected Pupils' (TDP) GEST Programme** (London: DfEE).

- LODGE, A. AND LYNCH, K. (eds.) (2004) **Diversity at School** (Dublin, IPA).
- MALCOLM, H., WILSON, V., DAVIDSON, J., AND KIRK, S. (2003) **Absence from School: A study of Its Causes and Effects in Seven LEA-s**, The SCRE Centre, Research Report No. 424, (Glasgow, University of Glasgow).
- MALCOLM, H., THORPE, G. & LOWDEN, K. (1996) **Understanding Truancy: Links Between Attendance, Truancy and Performance** (Edinburgh, Scottish Council for Research in Education).
- MCCOY, S. AND SMYTH, E. (2004) **At Work in School: Part-time Employment among Second-level Students** (Dublin, ESRI/Liffey Press).
- MCDONOUGH, P. (1997) **Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity** (New York: SUNY).
- MCNEAL JR., R. (1999) Parental involvement as social capital: differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out, **Social Forces**, 78, 1 pp. 117-144.
- MORRIS, M. AND RUTT, S. (2004) **Analysis of Pupil Attendance Data in Excellence in Cities (EiC) Areas: An Interim Report**. Research Report RR571, (Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research/ Department for Education and Skills).
- MORROW, R. A. AND TORRES, C. A. (1995) **Social Theory and Education. A Critique of Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction** (New York, State University of New York Press).
- NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE (2004) **Improving Pupil Attendance at School** (Belfast, The Stationery Office).
- OFSTED (2001) **Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools** (London, OFSTED).

RAFFE, D. (1986) Unemployment and school motivation: the case of truancy, **Educational Review**, 38, 1, pp. 11-19.

REAY, D. (1998a) Engendering social reproduction: mothers in the educational marketplace, **British Journal of Education**, 19, 2. pp. 195-209.

REAY, D. (1998b) Rethinking social class: qualitative perspectives on class and gender, **Sociology**, 32, 2, pp. 259-275.

REAY, D., BALL, S. AND DAVID, M. (2001) Making a difference?: institutional habituses and higher education choice’, **Sociological Research Online**, 5, U126-U142. Available online at: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/4/reay.html>., Accessed 12 September, 2003.

REAY, D., DAVID, M.E. AND BALL, S. (2005) **Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education** (Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books).  
Research Report No. 424.

REID, K. (2006) The views of education social workers on the management of truancy and other forms of non-attendance, **Research in Education**, 75, pp 40-57.

REID, K. (2005) The causes, views and traits of school absenteeism and truancy: an analytical review, **Research in Education**, 74, , pp 59-82.

REID, K. (1978) Strategic approaches to tackling school absenteeism and truancy: the traffic lights (TL) scheme, **Educational Review**, 55, 3 pp. 305-321.

ROBINS, L., N. AND RADCLIFFE, K. S. (1980) The long-term outcomes of truancy, in Hersov, L. and Berg, I. (eds.), **Out of School** (New York, John Wiley and Sons).

ROTHMAN, S. (2004) Staying longer and school and absenteeism: evidence from Australian Research and the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian youth", **International Education Journal**, 5, 1, pp. 113-123.

SCAHILL, J. H. (1993) **Meaning-Construction and Habitus**. Available online at: [http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93\\_docs/Scahill](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/Scahill). Accessed 20 March, 2003.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE (2002) **Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools: 1999/2000 to 2001/2002** (Edinburgh, Scottish Executive, Media and Communications Group).

SMYTH, E. (1999) **Do Schools Differ?** (Dublin, Oak Tree Press/ESRI).

SMYTH, E., MCCOY, S. AND DARMODY, M. (2004) **Moving Up: The Experiences of First-Year Students in Post-Primary Education** (Dublin, ESRI/The Liffey Press).

Stoll, P. (1990) Absent pupils who are officially present, **Education Today**, 40, 3, pp. 22-5.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT (1998) **Truancy and School Exclusion Report** (London, The Stationery Office).

WAGNER, E. F., SWENSEN, C. C., & HENGGELER, S. W. (2000) Practical and methodological challenges in validating community-based interventions. Children's Services, **Social Policy, Research, and Practice**, 3, pp. 211-231.

WAGNER, M. DUNKAKE, I. AND WEISS, B. (2004) **Truancy in Germany: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis**. Paper presented at a conference European Society or European Societies? Granada, Spain, 18-23 September. Available online at: <http://www.uni-koeln.de/wiso-fak/fisoz/Forschung/schulver/material/truancy.pdf> Accessed 20 March, 2004.

WEBB, J., SCHIRATO, T. & DANAHER, G., (2002) *Understanding Bourdieu*, Sage Publications, London

WILLIS, P. (1977) **Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs** (London, Saxon House).

WOODWARD, R. AND MCVIE, S. (2001) **Young People And School**, Available online at: [http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esyc/findings/summary2001\(2\).htm](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esyc/findings/summary2001(2).htm) Accessed 20 September, 2007.

Figure 1: Truancy and educational and labour market outcomes (odds ratios)

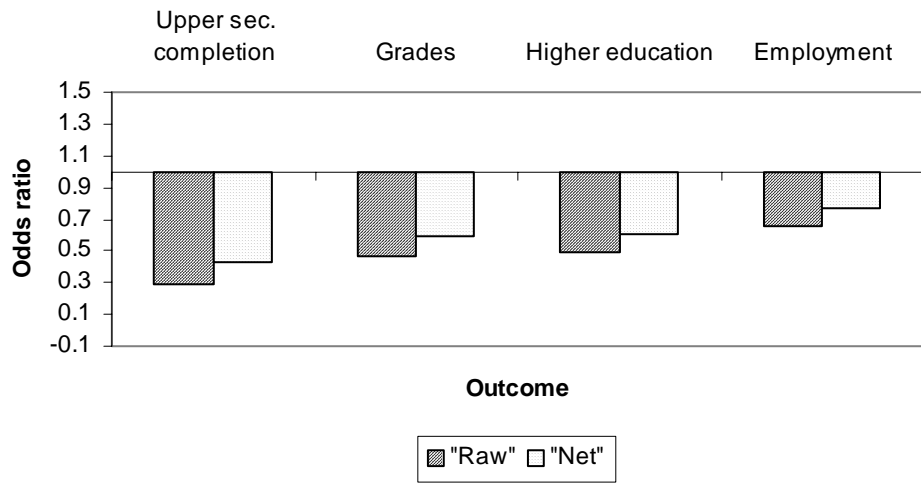


Table 1: Logistic regression model of truancy (one day here and there or more frequently)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	-1.788***	-2.451***	-2.166***
<i>Individual characteristics:</i>			
Male (Contrast: Female)	0.308***	0.298***	0.242**
<i>Social class:</i>			
Lower professional	-0.066	-0.064	-0.128
Non-manual	0.288*	0.237	0.210
Skilled manual	0.367*	0.279^	0.221
Semiskilled manual	0.375*	0.285	0.147
Unskilled manual	0.788***	0.656***	0.512**
Farmer	-0.141	-0.060	0.026
Non-employed	0.596***	0.492**	0.416**
Missing information	0.988***	0.793*	0.859*
(Contrast: Higher professional)			
Travelling community (Contrast: settled background)	1.216***	1.244***	0.992**
<i>School characteristics:</i>			
<i>Social mix:</i>			
Disadvantaged status		0.430***	0.349***
Fee-paying school (Contrast: non-fee-paying, non-disadvantaged)		-0.395^	-0.093
<i>School size:</i>			
200-399		0.504*	0.669**
400-599		0.575**	0.719**

600+ (Contrast: <200 students)		0.551**	0.770**
Urban (Contrast: Rural)		0.204**	0.165*
<i>Behaviour and attitudes:</i> Part-time job while at school (Contrast: No part-time job at school)			0.317***
Supportive school climate			-1.139***
Disorderly school climate			1.195***
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	0.032	0.046	0.128
N	5,017		

Note: \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<.05, ^ p<.10.



Table 2: Attitudes to school by individual and school social class (% agree)

	Individual social background			School social mix		
	Higher professional	Unskilled manual	Non-employed	Disadvantaged status	Fee-paying	Other schools
'Supportive school climate': Discipline was fair.	85.5	83.3	85.4	83.3	85.5	88.3
If I had a problem, there was always a teacher I could talk to.	87.0	85.4	78.6	79.8	94.1	84.3
Teachers listened to my ideas and views.	89.1	79.3	74.4	75.5	91.9	82.5
My school dealt well with bullying.	86.1	83.2	80.3	81.4	87.9	81.9
My school had a wide range of after-school activities.	70.3	69.8	65.0	67.4	95.7	68.4
'Disorderly school climate': There were too many troublemakers in my class.	20.4	39.4	28.0	31.3	15.1	23.8
My friends took school seriously. (disagree)	24.4	31.7	35.2	39.3	20.0	27.7
Teachers could not keep order in class.	21.5	31.3	29.6	33.1	18.4	24.9

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title/Author(s)</b> <b>ESRI Authors/Co-authors Italicised</b>
<b>2007</b>	211	Where do MNEs Expand Production: Location Choices of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Europe after 1992 <i>Frances P. Ruane, Xiaoheng Zhang</i>
	210	Holiday Destinations: Understanding the Travel Choices of Irish Tourists <i>Seán Lyons, Karen Mayor and Richard S.J. Tol</i>
	209	The Effectiveness of Competition Policy and the Price-Cost Margin: Evidence from Panel Data Patrick McCloughan, <i>Seán Lyons</i> and William Batt
	208	Tax Structure and Female Labour Market Participation: Evidence from Ireland <i>Tim Callan, A. Van Soest, J.R. Walsh</i>
	207	Distributional Effects of Public Education Transfers in Seven European Countries <i>Tim Callan, Tim Smeeding and Panos Tsakloglou</i>
	206	The Earnings of Immigrants in Ireland: Results from the 2005 EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions <i>Alan Barrett and Yvonne McCarthy</i>
	205	Convergence of Consumption Patterns During Macroeconomic Transition: A Model of Demand in Ireland and the OECD <i>Seán Lyons, Karen Mayor and Richard S.J. Tol</i>
	204	The Adoption of ICT: Firm-Level Evidence from Irish Manufacturing Industries <i>Stefanie Haller and Iulia Traistaru-Siedschlag</i>
	203	EU Enlargement and Migration: Assessing the Macroeconomic Impacts Ray Barrell, <i>John Fitz Gerald</i> and Rebecca Riley
	202	The Dynamics of Economic Vulnerability: A Comparative European Analysis <i>Christopher T. Whelan and Bertrand Maitre</i>

- 201 Validating the European Socio-economic Classification: Cross-Sectional and Dynamic Analysis of Income Poverty and Lifestyle Deprivation  
*Dorothy Watson, Christopher T. Whelan and Bertrand Maître*
- 200 The 'Europeanisation' of Reference Groups: A Reconsideration Using EU-SILC  
*Christopher T. Whelan and Bertrand Maître*
- 199 Are Ireland's Immigrants Integrating into its Labour Market?  
*Alan Barrett and David Duffy*
- 198 "Man Enough To Do It"? Girls and Non-Traditional Subjects in Lower Secondary Education  
*Emer Smyth and Merike Darmody*
- 197 Analysing the Effects of Tax-benefit Reforms on Income Distribution: A Decomposition Approach  
Olivier Bargain and *Tim Callan*
- 196 Heterogeneous Exporter Behaviour: Exploring the Evidence for Sunk-Costs and Hysteresis  
*Frances Ruane*
- 195 The Regional Dimension of Taxes and Public Expenditure in Ireland  
*Edgar Morgenroth*
- 194 Do Consultation Charges Deter General Practitioner Use Among Older People? A Natural Experiment  
*Richard Layte, Hannah McGee and Ann O'Hanlon*
- 193 An Analysis of the Impact of Age and Proximity of Death on Health Care Costs in Ireland  
*Richard Layte*
- 192 Measuring Hospital Case Mix: Evaluation of Alternative Approaches for the Irish Hospital System  
*Chris Aisbett, Miriam Wiley, Brian McCarthy, Aisling Mulligan*