

Culture, Resistance and Struggle **Stuart Hall**

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Table of contents

01

Themes and
Arguments

02

Examples
Provided

03

Strengths,
Weaknesses,
and
Comparisons



01

Hall's Themes and Arguments

Overall Argument

1. Hall places an emphasis on **negotiation**,
 - a. Over overthrowing the dominant group
2. Focuses on **cultural & ideological resistance**
3. Language of rights is crucial to bourgeois ideology, but it is not exclusive
4. **Franchise** becomes a site of a potential struggle for working classes to organize around
5. **Resistance is a process** - continual practice of working on the cultural domain and working to open cultural possibilities

Cultures of Resistance


1. Cultures of survival are needed for resistance, opposition, negotiation, upheaval and counter-hegemonic foundations
2. Emergent forms are based off of residual forms
3. The forms may not look like they have potential, but they will often allow them to discover a **language** with which alternative possibilities are available
4. Cultures have **positive** & **negative** aspects

The Importance of Class

1. Question of a primacy of class as not all problems can be reduced to this
 - a. Suspension of capitalism does **not guarantee the liberation of all**
2. Looking at their class position and formations is important
 - a. However, they should not be reduced to their class

Negotiation over Overthrowing

1. **Negotiation** is a movement of struggle & resistance,
 - a. Even if the other group is not overthrown, there can still be **concessions** won
2. When a group enters into cultural negotiation with the dominant group it needs to have **persistence, organization, & self-reflectivity**



02

Examples Provided

British Youth Movements

1. **The Mods, Rockers, & Skinheads**
2. These groups are resisting the middle class - “dominant class”
3. Resistance **cannot** be reduced to class alone

Rock Against Racism

1. **Reaction** to racist and fascist ideologies being tied to cultures of young people
2. Encouraged rock groups to take a position against racism
3. Relates to concept of **cultural negotiation**

The Rastafarians

1. Religion and culture in Jamaica
2. Cultural movements emerge from residual forms
3. Create an identity - a “**culture of survival**”

Black Youth in Britain

1. Emerging culture and movement
2. Different generation immigrants have different identities
3. Develop a sense of **identity & pride** in order to resist
4. *Resistance is an ongoing process*



03

Strengths, Weaknesses and Comparisons

Strengths

1. Strong real-life examples provided
2. **Presents a way forward**, demonstrated by the story of Black youth in Britain
3. Demonstrates how framework has been successful

Weaknesses

1. **Anglo focused** - question of does it work against non-Anglo dominant groups
2. Focus on what they should have, but does not provide a guide of how to achieve these things

Comparison to Fugitive Democracy

Sheldon S. Wolin

1. **The political is a rare and episodic thing, emerging in periods of resistance**
 - a. The political could emerge during periods of overthrowing the dominant power structure or negotiating with them
2. **Politics is institutionalized leading to a narrowing of the political**
 - a. Dominant culture institutionalized its own systems

Conclusion

Question 1: Hall discusses the interplay between class and cultural movement. He argues that while class does often play a role, there are other sights of oppression which cultural movements can emerge from. Do you think class always plays a role? Or is it possible for cultural movements to exist without being determined by class?

Question 2: Two examples, Rock against racism and Rastafarianism, were engineered cultural movements that did not organically emerge. How would this impact the movements, and does it make them more or less effective or legitimate? What possibilities do these engineered cultural movements present for future resistance?

Question 3: Hall discusses the importance of cultural negotiation over the belief that overthrowing the system is always necessary. When would negotiation over overthrowing be preferable? What circumstances would negotiation not be reasonable for? Can you think of any examples of when one or the other has worked in the past?

Question 4: While each cultural movement discussed achieved things, Hall argues that cultural movements or cultures of survival can also uphold negative beliefs and practices. Can you see how this may have occurred in the examples provided? Are there other examples in recent history where this occurred?

Question 5: Out of power, resistance and hope, which do you believe Hall believes is most important, or focuses on the most? What does he define this as? How does this differ from your definition, or the definitions of other theorists in the course so far?