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# A COMMON CULTURE FOR ALL

Arts work with young people after Willis

PAUL RUBINSTEIN

## 1. Introduction

This article is a response to Paul Willis' report for the Gulbenkian Foundation, Common Culture. The report, subtitled 'An Enquiry into the Cultural Activities of Young People' is part survey, part analysis, and part polemic, and has made a significant impact in the arts world. With chapters on drinking and fighting, grounded aesthetics, and a determination to engage with existing culture as opposed to art, it is one of the very few texts to have seriously considered the nature of young people's culture, and the relationship of that culture to the local and national state.

This response is very much from a practitioner point of view. Willis' report is designed for action, but its somewhat obscure style has met with criticism from a defensive arts profession too little grounded in any kind of theory or even debate. The aim of this piece is to examine where Willis' thesis fits into contemporary arts practice, what impact his analysis may have within the burgeoning arts profession, and to point to some new directions in the relationship between young people, their culture, and the arts.

Willis' study begins with some pointed questions;

*Not exclusively, 'how can we bring the arts to youth?'*

*but 'in what ways are the young already in some sense the artists of their own lives?'*

*Not exclusively, 'why is their culture not like ours?'*

*but 'what are their cultures like?'*

*Not 'how can we inspire the young with Art?'*

*but 'how are the young already culturally energised in ways which we can reinforce?' (Willis 1990a, p9)*

And a promising starting point;

*Our starting point, our first refusal, is in the recognition that for the majority of the young, the institutionalised and increasingly standardised arts have absolutely no place in their lives. Many have a negative view: the arts are seen as remote*

*and institutional, the preserve of art galleries, museums and concert halls that are 'not for the likes of us'. More damaging, however is the fact that the formal existence of arts..... seems to deny everything else an artistic or cultural content. In other words, because Art is in the art gallery it can't be anywhere else. It does not belong to the lives of 'normal' people. (Willis 1990a, p9)*

He then goes on to describe the failure of traditional arts institutions to engage with young people. The history of policy and practice towards the arts in this country is relevant here, and certain critical moments need to be outlined.

Before doing so, however, we must question the relevance of bothering with the arts and their associate institutions at all. For, if we accept Willis' argument, that young people have been wholly failed by the arts establishment, why mention it at all? Well, mainly because our topic, broadly, is cultural well being, and the bodies and agencies charged with this well being in Britain are quangos such as the Arts Council, Regional Arts bodies, local authorities, and assorted others. It is their job to develop and support culture of relevance and value to society as a whole, and, as such, we must focus on their activity and operations.

## 2. Three Ideologies of Arts Administration

The history of arts administration in Britain can be divided into three ideologies. The first, and still dominant, is the Keynesian, Reithian tradition of legitimising certain cultural forms of 'inherent' value by supporting them from the public purse. This view originated in the post war years when certain art forms, focussing on producers and means of production alone, were felt to be part of our national life. We were getting our health service, our Broadcasting Corporation, our new Council housing estates, and in the era of public provision, of the State's responsibility for the social and personal health of the individual, the arts fitted perfectly. Based on Leavis-like canons of good taste and quality, the Arts Council



was established in the post war period to preserve certain forms of cultural expression and specified institutions. The Arts Council attempted to shield the arts from the judgement of opportunist politicians (the 'arms length' principle), and to enable artists to produce great art. Any notion of who these arts were for, was based, as with the BBC, on the principles of quality and universality (everyone, everywhere, should have access to art of quality), and on the odd trip round factories by orchestras designed to improve the public mind. This reaction by the State to this particular area of the social services was, it must be remembered, taking place against the background of an emergent youth culture, the birth of rock music, and the breakdown of the post war inter-generational consensus. The Arts Council and its clients also represent one of the first instances of British public policy where the whole tax base subsidised the cultural pursuits of a privileged, educated, rich minority in society.

This policy of subsidising certain arts producers, these notions of 'quality', and the educative role of the state remain prevalent today, so much so that the current Government places the arts at one with the Heritage. The largest share of public funds spent on the arts is in the area of theatre, classical music, art galleries, and dance and opera houses. Indeed the dominant debates in the arts hierarchy remain on topics such as how to achieve enough resources to sustain these forms (private sponsorship, National lottery, etc).

This view of the relationship between the arts and the state was challenged in the late sixties by the **community arts movement** - all photo labs, arts centres and murals. The community artists took a bottom-up view of cultural development, where process was more important than product, where empowering oppressed and alienated groups (including young people) was the starting point, and where means and nature of artistic production, after Walter Benjamin, were central. This movement was greeted with alarm, disdain, and shock by officialdom, before becoming absorbed into the various systems. The Arts Council invented a Combined Arts Department (to cope with this inter-disciplinary form of production) and before anyone really knew it, the citadels had not been stormed but bolstered with a new credibility. This process has been well analysed by Owen Kelly (1984) in his book **Community, Art, and the State**, and although Kelly's view is informed, it still neglects to place the development of community arts (and, in its wake, Youth Arts) in a proper context. Youth Culture, dominated by new, highly commercial

industries, was exploding whilst the community arts movement, with a prime focus on attracting the support and approval (and the money) of the arts establishment, beavered away at the margins.

The Youth Arts movement very much followed in the same mould as the Community Arts model, with an emphasis on broadening the definition of art forms eligible for receipt of public subsidy, and a breaking down of barriers by the traditional arts sector. Consider the following aims for the Youth Arts movement;

*That every young person should have easy access to a properly funded youth arts project where their experience and skills are valued.*

*That every young person should be able to see performing work from a wide variety of art forms in their youth centre, residential centre, or wherever appropriate.*

*That every young person should feel that their local theatre/gallery/art centre is accessible, and reflects their experience and interest at the same time as stretching and challenging them.*

*That young people (with proper support) should be encouraged to participate in the development and organisation of youth arts at every level.*

*That every worker in this field should have access to appropriate training.*

*That resources should be used effectively and if necessary, radically, to achieve these aims. (Feldberg 1991 p15-16).*

This was written in 1991 by Rachel Feldberg, a drama worker with Red Ladder Theatre Company, a group aiming to take drama into youth clubs and perform work on subjects relevant to young people (on topics such as drugs, homelessness, and racism). Note the radical content in a conventional form (theatre), with the expected follow ups and workshops to increase the 'access'. This kind of work encapsulates the ideology of youth arts work, is dominated by talk of 'projects' and access, and, later in the same paper, of links with the youth service. This argument, about the right of recognition and access is very much centred in the world of the subsidised arts, offering young people the marvels which the usual array of media and institutions offer. If only all young people saw Theatre in Education, attended the local arts centre, and took part in some local arts project in the youth club, we would be on the right track. All this is, of course, a long way from the contemporary youth culture of the 1990s.



The last of our ruling ideologies centres upon the late lamented Greater London Council and other progressive local authorities abolished in the mid-eighties. Their position, most clearly articulated in Worpole and Mulgan's 'Saturday Night or Sunday Morning', was to move away from an agenda dominated by traditional forms and institutions, and to develop a strategy towards what they defined as the cultural industries. This term, now highly influential in cultural thinking, was used to describe the industries which dominate our cultural life, young and old alike.

*Who is doing most to shape British culture in the late 1980s? Next shops, W. H. Smith, News International, Benetton, Channel 4, Saatchi and Saatchi, the Notting Hill Carnival and Virago, or the Wigmore Hall, Arts Council, National Theatre, Tate Gallery and Royal Opera House? Most people know the answer, and live it every day in the clothes they wear, the newspapers they read, the music they listen to and the television they watch. The emergence (and disappearance) of new pursuits, technologies, techniques and styles - whether windsurfing, jogging, aerobics, Zen, compact discs, angling, wine-making, CB Radio, rambling, hip-hop, home computing, photography, or keeping diaries - represents changes that bear little relation to traditional notions of art and culture, and the subsidised institutions that embody them. (Mulgan and Worpole 1986 p9).*

'Popular pleasures' they go on, 'have been provided and defined within the Market Place.' This may be self-evidently the case, but the question of what action is then possible by policy makers is complicated. The GLC's approach was to extend the boundaries of subsidisable art (its hugely popular free music concerts, for example), and to develop strategies for actually intervening in the commercial cultural sector. They began to place an emphasis on distribution and retailing, on infrastructure and marketing. The following sums up their approach:

*We believe that there are such new sources once one gets away from a preoccupation with the 'subsidy mentality' and looks toward other kinds of arts and cultural development in terms of job creation and industrial development. The phrase 'the cultural industries' is not just a fashionable catchword. The forms of culture which the majority of people now use and through which they understand the world - radio, television, video, cable, satellite, records and tapes, books and magazines - are produced by industrial processes no different from any others. To buy a*

*Style Council or Kiri Te Kanawa record, a new book by Fay Weldon or Alice Walker, to watch a Victoria Wood programme or a Channel 4 film on television, involves standing at the end of a massive line of producers and printers, tape operators, scriptwriters and sleeve designers, printers, engineers, camera crews, promoters, record pressers, distributors, lawyers, accountants, musicians and editors, not to mention the people who designed and made the hardware on which the music, film or book was recorded, the entire computer industry. Copyright earnings (the work of writers, composers, graphic artists and illustrators) account for a larger proportion of the GNP (2.6%) than the motor industry or food manufacturing. At least half a million people are employed in some form of cultural production, distribution or infrastructure, and it is one of the few growth sectors of the economy. (Mulgan and Worpole 1986 p 14)*

Such an approach clearly has radical implications for public agencies, and renders somewhat marginal the efforts of bodies such as the Arts Council. The cultural industries approach has enormous appeal, though inevitably its success when pursued purely at local level has been limited. Design, fashion, music, broadcasting and publishing are international industrial concerns, and the effort of individual local authorities to intervene in this sector to the public good is frustratingly limited.

Since the demise of the GLC, the terrain upon which the arts has sat has drifted. For a while, the arts became a fashion, particularly in local government. The arts could radically change the image of your town (of Glasgow, with its year of culture), could attract inward investment, become a tourism magnet, improve the environment, even help your transport system to operate more smoothly. The arts as a solution to a wide variety of social and economic issues has become a major trend within the public sector.

### **3. Enter Paul Willis**

This then, is the background to the Willis report, and to a broader discussion of the development of an appropriate response to the cultures of young people today. Willis' work follows on naturally from the proponents of a cultural industries-led approach. He quickly deals with the efforts of the traditional subsidised arts world to relate to young people:

*As a recent Cultural Trends publication points out, the audiences for the traditional performing arts have shown remarkable consistency over sev-*

eral decades right up to the present, we might call them the 3-M audience - middle class, middle aged and minority. The 1986 General Household Survey suggests that only 5% of the population regularly attends the theatre/ballet/opera and 4% museums/art galleries. Only 2% of the working class attends any of these. These figures have not varied over the last ten years of the General Household Survey. The work conducted in 1983 for the Youth Review suggests that the most popular of the traditional arts venues, the theatre attracts (excluding students) something under 2% of young people (up to 23 years of age) with zero attendance for the young unemployed. (Willis 1990a p9-10)

However, his is a more subtle approach than that of Mulgan/Worpole, best summarised in the following:

*It is evident that most of the common cultural experience of young people takes place through provided commercial forms ..... the cultural industries provide products (songs, clothes, films, programmes) in order to appeal in any and every possible way, and thereby to sell, rather than to improve or educate ..... Stunningly different text and songs, wildly heterogeneous appearances and images jostle each other in the market place..... The usual conclusion drawn from these evident truths, namely that young people are manipulated and dominated by commercial culture is simplistic and unwarranted. Rather, the cultural industries should be understood as providing the symbolic resources - within and out of which youth experience, identity and expression are creatively fashioned.*

*It is .... the market ..... which they are taking over, transforming, and turning into real youth art. (Willis 1990a p11-12).*

So, whilst the commercial industries dominate the culture of young people, this commodification can actually be a positive, rather than an exploitative factor. This emphasis on the active role of the young consumer, of using the product as a starting point towards new meanings and identifications, is a radical departure. As Willis goes on to state, any notion of simple 'consumer sovereignty' is irrelevant - the materials of popular culture may be banal and contrived, but their use can be highly creative. We have moved away from the nineteenth century version of original creativity, to a new, post industrial definition.

Willis then goes on to outline a new 'grounded' aesthetic, those artefacts which give a new meaning to the normal conditions of everyday life - pop songs,

scenes in a soap opera, a look in a fashion magazine. He discusses the way in which young people re-create and interpret such artefacts to achieve significance and an aesthetic that is useful to them rather than something of rare and abstract value. He also places great emphasis on the informality of common culture, as opposed to the institutionalised, formal aspects of traditional forms.

**Common Culture** moves on to discuss the way young people relate to particular media such as music, television, fashion, pub culture, and there is some extraordinary research and documentation which helps to sustain his argument about the creative consumer.

Willis is clearly aware of the arguments about the mass media homogenising cultural output, and making passive, rather than activating, its viewers, but wholly rejects this view in favour of the 'active, creative and symbolically productive relationship to what they see on TV'. He is vague on the cultural value of responses to screen based technology, and home decoration, but details in a fascinating way the creative and interpretive response young people have to these often written off and derided media.

After chapters on style and fashion, drinking and fighting, Willis looks to the implication for service providers of this analysis, and predictably, advocates a turning upside down of established forms.

*The fixation on unitary forms, contents and performances and on their internal aesthetics is a nineteenth century construct and constricts if not strangles the modern possibilities of common culture. We need twenty first century ways of understanding cultural processes very different from static, minority and elite notions of 'culture' as the making, performance or appreciation of special or unique artistic things.*

*These new cultural processes are simply not recognised in public debate, still less in policy and practice. Subsidy is still directed, for instance, at making live performance seats cheaper for a minority of the usually already well off. It might be directed at making cultural commodities (recordings, videos, reproduction equipment) cheaper for the repeated, creative consumptions of youth and other low income groups whose relative poverty often bars or limits access to the necessary and elementary resources of common culture (Willis 1990a p53).*

There is more talk of creating spaces where informal culture can take place, about a redefinition of creativity and production, and even an advocacy of a new direction for the youth service. He concludes with a poorly thought through idea about Cultural Exchanges, enabling young people to get involved in developing a market amongst themselves for the use of cultural hardware and to overcome the restrictions of young peoples low incomes in enabling them to participate actively in this informal, grounded, cultural life. It appears to be a way of society developing a system of exchange beyond money, whilst at the same time learning the lessons of the history of the public library movement.

#### **4. The Challenge of Common Culture.**

Despite this rather bizarre ending, there is little doubt that Willis and his team's analysis is broadly accurate. His exciting notion that creativity is not just about original production but interpretation and use of everyday artefacts is at once liberating and radical. It does, however, pose a significant challenge to the original community arts ideal of using art forms to enable young people to be empowered in some way. In Britain at present arts work with young people is dominated by youth dance groups, youth theatres, bands and banner making projects. To say that interpreting a soap opera scene, decorating your bedroom, or drinking in bars shows an equal degree of creativity and empowerment is a real challenge.

And is it really true? Is it really the case that, more or less, left alone by the public sector, young people and their purchases can get on with creating a whole new kind of culture? Well, without wanting to dodge the question, it might be useful to broaden the context. Those involved in making the arts more accessible are currently facing a major dilemma, placed into sharp focus by Willis' argument. If people cannot afford, or cannot get to, City based arts and entertainment provision (the theory has always run), let's take it to them. This idea of Arts for All has paralleled the community development movement, encouraging local people to develop responsibility for their own communities. The central focus for local arts work and community development activity has mostly been the organised group - in the Community Centre, school or village hall. Yet in these days of satellites and videos, of designer drugs, joy riding and multiplexes, what appeal, particularly for young people, is there in a trip to the community centre, or participation in some local project? Moreover the very idea of getting involved, the whole basis of old style organised youth and community arts initiatives, is

taking a battering. Social trends, even in rural areas, point to the domestication of life, to the retreat from the public, to the culture of home entertainment and activity. We are clearly seeing a break up of formalised involvement in group activity and moving towards the informal cultures which Willis speaks of:

*Is it time now to speak also of 'post institutionalism'? - that is, the recognition that institutions may be increasingly irrelevant to current needs, or indeed may do more unintentioned damage than intentioned good, and that new policy initiatives need to find quite new, much more indirect, less structured, more democratic, means for their execution. If existing institutions do not work, ie do not attract, then they should not be artificially propped up or multiplied no matter how high-minded they may be. Everything that can be reasonably left to the individual or small group should be. Cultural provision should be supplied through a multiplicity of providers (Willis 1990a p56).*

Such trends, nurtured by the multi-nationals and the new consumerism make the community arts ideals of the 60s and 70s very hard to sustain. Indeed the very notion of community empowerment is beginning to look an old fashioned idea. We live in a society increasingly dominated by global imagery and technological change - the idea of joining in some group activity in which the expression of individualism is encouraged - in drama, dancing, or singing - is becoming almost unsustainable. However if we take Willis' argument, that informal creativity is based not on production but consumption, that fashion, drinking, reacting to the television and electronic media and operating home computers all have enormously positive creative aspects, we are rescued from despair. The community arts ideal that everyone is an artist takes on a new and rather transformed meaning.

Such an analysis fundamentally challenges the basis of most agencies work with young people. Some of us have been trying for years to bring together the youth service and the arts world, to show that each have something to gain from the other. To be told then, rightly, that most youth clubs are places where many young people would be embarrassed to enter, and, that the very notion of organised artistic activity, often involving a nineteenth century art form, is by and large a pointless exercise, is somewhat disconcerting.

So, if Willis is right, and the very idea of encouraging young people to have access to organised art forms is



wholly inappropriate, what role exists for the public sector in this field with the arts worker, the youth worker, the policy maker?

There seem to be a number of signposts pointing the way to a new attitude to young people's cultures and needs. Firstly, we should not forget the pressing needs of numerically minority communities. Whilst it is true that unemployed young people exist in the same informal cultures as those in employment, their basic social need is more demanding. Equally, young people who are lesbian, gay, homeless or young people with disabilities have immediate needs that require social alleviation. As alienated groups, they may not want to paint murals, but they offer a genuine challenge to service providers which many are already grappling with. Here then, we see a justification for the public sector.

Then, there is the enormous popularity of certain organised culture forms - pop music gigs, raves, festivals, and going to the cinema retain mass appeal. The popularity of such events raises a number of issues. Could we play a role in extending consumer choice by subsidising certain forms of production, much as the advocates of the cultural industries approach would have us do? One of the great shames of the subsidised arts sector, however, is the way in which certain forms and artefacts have been appropriated by older, richer people. Young people might go and see a film by Mamet, Mike Leigh, or other supposedly 'art' films in a multiplex, but never in some trendy, arty, middle class avant garde cinema, where the atmosphere is more like a polytechnic lecture than a place for entertainment, and where style, comfort and customer care are somehow less important than the quality of the 'art'.

*One finding insistently presents itself through all our work: the absolute centrality of the cultural media and commodities produced for the market. We have to conclude that, in general, the public sector can't do better than the commercial sector in supplying attractive and usable symbolic resources (Willis 1990a p54).*

So should we be working with the private sector, who seem to be in tune with young people's interests and concerns, despite the relationship of exploiter and exploited, or should we be establishing an alternative pattern of provision? Well, this leaves a significant point unanswered. This form of social and economic intervention to broaden choice still implies a State definition of quality. The Arts Council, or more likely Channel 4, might invest in a Merchant/Ivory film

for cinema release, but they would go nowhere near a Spielberg movie. Nor should they. We must accept the need for a definition of when and where the public sector should intervene in the broader interest, particularly of young people. If public intervention and regulation are important, rather than creating alternative provision, then let us say so and debate the boundaries of such intervention - no such debate, I hardly need add, is taking place.

Looking at the popularity of mass entertainment forms raises other issues. If we accept Willis' notions of creative and informal consumption, should we be working to create a 'level playing field' for all young people - should we be finding resources to ensure that young people can afford to go to the Prince gig, or to go out on a Saturday night? Such cultural relativity, where everything becomes aesthetically valuable, offers genuine problems for the public sector. Responses such as subsidising individuals to engage with popular culture, if we disregard means testing as a serious possibility, are enormously risky and controversial, and surely they simply allow public sector money to go more smoothly into the hands of the private business concern. Enabling young people to have access to the culture and identity they want is a difficult process, but one that must be engaged with. Such an engagement would, at last, have to accept that ballet is not inherently worthy, that raves are territory in which the public sector can play an enabling role, and that creativity, as Willis has outlined, goes well beyond performing in a group, or sitting in an audience. Again, this debate around consumer purchasing power and the 'freedom to choose' is simply not happening, out with the 'Late Show' navel gazing about the relative merits of Keats and Bob Dylan.

Lastly, we should not forget the minority of young people for whom active involvement with a classical form or institution is important, educative, and uplifting.

*The high arts in particular need to be more available - in their practical conditions of material, social and psychological access - to informality and to the creative informal meanings of symbolic work. The success of Centreprise and Strongwords community writing projects show that, in certain situations, traditional forms can be chosen by non-elite groups to express direct and powerful informal symbolic meanings. The recent successes of certain museums and art galleries in appealing to more people and communicating with new audiences, and the continuing success of*

*many libraries in providing an ever wider range of symbolic materials rests not on extending an old idea to 'new people', but in allowing 'new' people and their informal meanings and communications to colonise them, the institutions (Willis 1990a p59).*

This is old youth arts territory, and should not be wholly cast aside, simply updated and placed against a new range of cultural policies.

More optimism can be gleaned from the success of certain existing initiatives which it should be said, are working in the face of opposition from the forces of the State. Venues such as The Leadmill in Sheffield, the Waterfront in Norwich and the Riverside in Newcastle, or community radio stations such as Wear FM, have all offered spaces which young people value, though they can often (as with Riverside) fall into the 'alternative cinemas' trap. Some have argued recently that young people's interest in live music is on the wane, with the advent of mixing, techno and sampling, and that nightclubs are now more important venues than live music centres. This may well be true, so perhaps public agencies could be encouraging reputable night club, radio and rave operators to come to their area. Most night clubs in all but the largest towns are seedy, tacky places frequented by young people because of the lack of alternatives. And in the bigger cities, as with the Hacienda in Manchester, a major night club can become the hub of creativity in the area. So, just as local Councils try to encourage high tech new businesses, why not do the same for night clubs? Nevertheless, those existing live music venues have played a valuable role, even if they seem to be drifting towards becoming the art centres of the nineties. It is vital for such venues to realise that they will sacrifice any relationship with young people if they try to be theatres, galleries, or jazz venues. Young people frequent cultural centres - pubs, clubs - where they dominate an environment, where the terrain is exclusively their own. Attempting to dilute this atmosphere for the sake of attracting the odd Arts Council grant, or to try and make themselves 'respectable' is a major error, and public bodies should exert pressure on venues to sharpen the focus of their provision, not dilute it to host art with an Arts Council seal of approval. This is of course, the problem of the static venue. A radio station can vary its offering according to the time of the day when people of different groups will be listening - older people in the afternoons, younger people at night. This option makes the broadcast media infinitely more flexible than building based venues, in the new cultural map.

Other services such as cheap public address systems, rehearsal space, or recording equipment has been offered by many agencies for some time now, and generally with great success. There is potential for over estimating the appeal of this kind of provision which is still based on creativity as original artistic production, the straitjacket which Willis has exploded.

Lastly, I would like to explore the idea of cultural space. As we know, society as a whole regards young people as troublesome, dangerous, and threatening. Most local authorities go out of their way to prevent raves, public gatherings of young people are attended by the police, indeed there is no large scale coming together of young people (at say, a popular music festival) in the North of England. There is a major role for public bodies to play in developing spaces and sites which young people can control and take ownership of. Ken Worpole's recent 'Out of Hours' study (1991), soon to be published by the Open University discusses the way our cities and towns are being taken over by multi-national interests, how local identity is being destroyed, and how urban centres after dark are becoming 'dangerous'.

Here is Willis' solution:

*Many of our cities are in danger of collapse socially and economically. Public space is being eradicated, housing has been removed, shopping malls are dirty, dull and shut up after dark, the young unemployed are the new pariahs unwanted and shunted around by private security guards. Too often the assumption is made that it is the inner city dwellers who are the problem. But the pressing needs for inner city revitalisation will only be met in and by the release of the talents and energies of the young and other people who live in the inner city. Why not start some new projects from the premise that all young people are their own kinds of cultural producer, and apply state subsidies, service, and 'pump priming' to these existing human and symbolic resources?*

*There are a lot of possibilities here. The idea - from Sheffield and Wolverhampton - of creating entertainment zones where venues and facilities are concentrated to create a 'Covent Garden Market' effect is of great interest. This would help to create local night-time economies - live music, clubs, cafes, bars, late night shops - and provide clean, well lit places for young people to go as well as places to work in. It would bring life back into centres and create a sense of local ownership (Willis 1990a p62).*

This is exciting thinking, bringing together consumption, production, and the creation of environments in which young people will feel comfortable. For, at present, there is no space for young people to occupy, in a town, with the exception of the pub, and although there is creativity here, the potential for young people to enhance the nature of an area by creating spaces and services which they value, is enormous.

So, in the creation of more appropriate venues, resources, and spaces, in the active intervention in the process of creation and consumption, in the way we encourage access to older forms and media, and in the social action based services young people need, and demand, we begin to sketch out a positive way forward. Such action would require a radical revision of the nature of arts and cultural support, and would necessitate a cross-agency approach between plan-

ners, the youth service, cultural providers and the commercial sector. But difficult as this may be, it is in the end preferable to focussing our energies on the forms of the last century, and attempting, as Willis puts it, to encourage 'youth inoculations' against the Market. Paul Willis has opened up a new debate, and re-defined a whole area of service provision - Common Culture is to be welcomed, discussed, and used as a platform for radical action.

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# YOUTH TRAINING FOR 'POST-INDUSTRIALISM'?

*The Case of Wearside*

**ROBERT G HOLLANDS**

One is often reminded of the fact that Britain has supposedly entered a new era of economic activity and organisation known as 'post-industrialism'. The shift from manufacturing to technical and service occupations, increasing use of new technology, and the need for new skills and flexibility at work, are all characteristic of this broad economic shift.

Vocational training, in particular, has played a key ideological role in supporting the argument about the need for a new 'flexible' workforce necessary for a rapidly changing post-industrial economy. While vocationalism generally, and youth training more specifically, have been subject to numerous forms of criticism (see Cohen 1984; Cockburn 1987; Finn 1987; Hollands 1990; 1991b; Lee et al 1990), there has been little sustained assessment and examination of skills training in relation to the theme of post-industrialism.

The rationale of this paper is to look more closely at the reality of 'training for the post-industrial economy' by focussing in on a case study of the youth labour market and vocational preparation on Wearside<sup>(1)</sup>. The utilisation of this locality is particularly pertinent due to its high percentage of school leavers in training, a declining manufacturing and primary industry base, not to mention a virtual mountain of publicity about the merits of 'The Great North' as a developing economy. The key question is does the post-industrial thesis have any relevance in relation to the training and labour market prospects of young adults<sup>(2)</sup> on Wearside? I begin by looking at the concept of post-industrialism and its specific relationship to the vocational debate.

## **Post-Industrialism and the 'New Vocationalism'**

The debate about post-industrialism has its roots in conflicting sociological perspectives on the nature of modern society - namely theories of industrial society versus theories of capitalist society. Inherent within this former perspective is the notion that industrialisation (in the form of new technology and an increasingly complex division of labour) is the driving force in the movement from traditional to modern soci-

eties, and that such a transition represents a fundamentally progressive historical trend. Within this perspective, industrial society is also characterised by the rise of the liberal-democratic state and the decline of class conflict (Giddens, 1986). The extension of this thesis occurred amongst certain theorists in the 1950s and 1960s, who argued that 20th century industrialism was developing to such an extent that it was already beginning to create a new and different post-industrial order.

One of the major proponents of this version of societal transformation was Daniel Bell, whose ideas were exemplified in his earlier work, *The End of Ideology* (1962) and his later treatise on post-industrialism, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1974). His theory stood firmly in a democratic-pluralist mode, arguing that industrial capitalism had given way to industrial society proper, which in turn was becoming quickly superseded by a new form of post-industrialism.

The exact nature of Bell's post-industrial scenario was at least partly shielded by his careful projection of tendencies in society into future trends which were not fully instituted or operational at the time he was writing. However, the main elements of such a prospective society were clear. For instance, Bell highlighted the well recognised economic trend away from manufacturing towards service industries, particularly those concerned with providing information (also see Bell, 1980). In conjunction with this economic transformation, there was also to be a political change in class power - for instance the transcendence of class and class-based parties based on the control or lack of control of the means of production in manufacturing, by the rise of a so-called 'professional/technical' class who control the means of information in society.

An underlying critique of post-industrialism lies then in the problematic theory of industrial society itself. The idea that there was a mechanical transition from traditional to modern society (fuelled by new technology and a complex division of labour) is only one version of social development. Contrary to this, the

well known Marxist historian, E.P. Thompson, has consistently argued that this transition was not to 'industrialism tout court but to industrial capitalism' (Thompson, 1967 p.80). The Marxist position stresses the continuing importance of class, class conflict and capital as the main structuring influences on the shape of modern society (Miliband, 1969). According to this perspective, new technology and increasingly sophisticated production and management techniques are utilised by the capitalist class to subordinate workers in new ways to ensure the continued extraction of surplus value<sup>(3)</sup>.

Proponents of the post-industrial scene can also be criticised for their inability to accept capital and class as persistent features of modern society. Capitalism as an economic system is largely hidden from view in this perspective. Part of the problem lies in the post-industrial sleight of hand which separates the technical 'forces of production' from the 'social relations of production'. In other words, technology is viewed as neutral and is seen as driving our society inevitably towards a new post-industrial order. As Raymond Williams (1983, p.84) has argued:

*.... it is a very weak kind of thinking to abstract the technical and technological changes and to explain the widespread social, economic and cultural changes as determined by them. This error, now identified as 'technological determinism', bears with particular weight on interpretation of all the later stages of industrialisation. It is especially misleading in descriptions and predictions of a 'post-industrial' society.*

Despite wide-ranging changes in our society, Williams argues our economy is still driven by the needs of capital to expand and much work continues to be characterised by rationalised forms of production and an unequal wage-labour relationship between owners and workers.

Williams (1983, p.87) goes on to outline and criticise some of the other major elements of post-industrialism. For example, the tripartite division of labour markets into primary, secondary and tertiary sectors can mask the interdependent nature of work, and plays down the supporting function that service sector employment plays for manufacturing (e.g. the role education and health play in training and restoring workers). Williams also makes the point that a diversity of work is often lumped together under the service sector and that much employment in this area is subject to exactly the same processes of capital intensity and labour-saving devices as the manufac-

turing sector. Finally, Williams, amongst others, raises the issue of skill classification in capitalist society, arguing that while there indeed may be the need for a small, highly skilled technical and professional band of worker, a general process of deskilling across whole sectors of the economy may actually have been occurring (also see Braverman, 1974; Woods et al, 1989).

All of this forms the basis for a powerful contemporary critique of understanding modern society under the rubric of post-industrialism. The point is not that some of the changes are unreal or that modern society has not fundamentally altered (for a more thoroughgoing debate on this issue and beyond see Giddens, 1990), but rather how these changes are interpreted and utilised to construct an ideological argument which benefits and justifies the continued expansion and workings of modern western (i.e. global) capitalism.

Vocationalism in general, and the youth training curriculum in particular, have been partly constructed within the context of a post-industrial scenario and similarly have actively been used to support the notion that we are moving rapidly towards a new and different type of economy. It is important to note here that while the training debate has included the whole of the workforce, young people in particular have been singled out as a special segment of the labour market. Part of this response, developed by the Thatcher government of the 1980s, was motivated by unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment. Additionally, employers have continued to see school leavers as malleable and yet socialised into 'appropriate' work cultures (Metcalf, 1988). Central to this argument was a call to dismantle 'out-dated' craft skills training and to instead develop new vocational skills and attitudes necessary for the growing technical, professional and service occupations (Cohen, 1982; Green, 1983; Cohen, 1984; Finn, 1987, Hollands, 1990). As such, the government quango responsible for training in the 1970s and 80s, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), generated a great deal of material on the need for a national youth training strategy designed to develop new 'flexible' and 'transferable' skills for a changing economy (MSC, 1976; 1977; 1981; 1982).

Much of the groundwork here was laid through a redefinition of the concepts of skill and vocation by policy-makers, professional trainers and government ideologues - a configuration which came to be called the 'new vocationalism' (Cohen 1984). In so called industrial society, vocation referred primarily to the

notion of an occupational 'calling', based upon an individual's adoption and mastery of a specific array of skills (usually over a lengthy period of time). In working class terms, vocation was specifically tied to the inheritance of a particular set of manual or domestic skills - a kind of cultural apprenticeship (Cohen 1983).

Under the post-industrialism banner, however, the term vocational is recast in a new form, and refers to broad-based, transferable, non-job specific sets of skills. The grouping of skills in youth training into Occupational Training Families (OTFs) were not intended to '....incorporate job elements specific to the task or the employer, or specific technical skills', instead 'the focus is on effective and appropriate performance rather than skills' (Farley quoted in Finn, 1987). Importantly, within the new vocationalism, skill begins to become redefined as 'performance' or more generally as a particular set of mental attitudes and approaches to working life (hence the use of such terms as 'personal effectiveness', 'life skills' and 'impression management'). What is 'new' about the new vocationalism is that it promises to churn out a whole new generation of young workers who transcend narrow and restrictive craft practices, who are highly flexible and adaptable, and who have the 'right' mental attitude towards their employment (Cohen, 1984, p.107).

Not surprisingly, all this fits very neatly into, and indeed helps to drive the post-industrial merry-go-round. In particular, the new vocationalism and youth training schemes have aided the demise of, and lowered level of craft skills in, manufacturing. This has occurred partly through the assertion that Britain no longer needs such craft skills and partly through the absorption and watering down of existing craft training by its incorporation into official government schemes (Finn 1983).

Similarly, the new vocationalists have heavily promoted the idea that youth training schemes can provide a step up the ladder to career opportunities in the new technical, professional and service industries. Much has been made over the introduction of 'information technology' and 'computer literacy' components of the training curriculum (MSC, 1983), despite numerous criticisms that neither the quality nor the quantity is sufficient to meet the needs of a modern economy (YTS Monitoring Unit, 1985; Copey and Hollands, 1988). Additionally, case studies of the vocational curriculum on YTS have demonstrated a consistent theme of self-improvement, entrepreneurship and career advancement in rede-

efined service occupations (Holland, 1990). Much of this redefinition has occurred within those service industries traditionally characterised by female labour. The idea has been to recast traditional skills under the rhetoric of the new vocationalism and locate training within an imaginary promotional and/or self-employment frame of reference (Hollands, 1991b).

There are clear parallels between the rationale of the new vocationalism and the rhetoric of a post-industrial economy. This is not to say that such an argument is valid or is the reality many young adults have experienced. Indeed, as the following case study demonstrates, there are many contradictory tendencies created out of the clash between local labour markets and cultures of work, and the modernising thrust of the new vocationalists post-industrial dream.

### **Training and the Youth Labour Market in Wearside**

Dramatic changes in the North East and Wearside labour markets have been closely tied up with the long-term decline of the British economy (Gamble, 1981). The concentration of primary industries and manufacturing in hinterland regions, has meant that the most significant job losses and de-industrialisation has occurred in the North (see Massey and Meegan, 1984; Martin and Rowthorne, 1986; Robinson et al, 1988). Also central to this decline has been the effect of the political-economic programme of 'Thatcherism' or more correctly the 'New Right' throughout the 1980s (Hall et al, 1983; Jessop et al, 1988).

The precise impact these economic and political trends have had on Wearside industrial and domestic life have been well documented (Stone and Stevens, 1985/6; Milburn and Miller, 1988; Wheelock, 1990; Stubbs and Wheelock, 1990). The most well publicised declines have occurred in the traditional primary industries like coal and shipbuilding. Employment in coal mining for instance declined from 18,000 in 1960 to 3,500 by 1985 and ten times as many were employed in shipbuilding in the mid-sixties as there were in the mid-eighties (Milburn and Miller, 1988, p 201). The percentage of the workforce in the primary sector stood at less than 5% in 1987. Despite various inward investment 'successes' (i.e. Nissan)<sup>(4)</sup>, employment in manufacturing has also shrunk consistently over the last two decades (Training Agency, 1990, p 6).

The key problem for the Wearside economy (as for much of the Northern region) has been that it has been largely unable to compensate for job loss in the primary and secondary sectors, with new employ-



ment opportunities in the tertiary sector (i.e. service industries). Although this economic sector has grown from 42% of the workforce in 1971 to nearly 67% in 1987, the main problem has been one of 'rate of growth'. The creation of service jobs has not been able to compensate for losses from traditional industries, nor has employment been of the same type within these sectors<sup>(5)</sup>.

Due to these imbalances and structural weaknesses in the economy, Wearside has consistently remained high in the national and regional league tables of unemployment rates. In the depths of the 1980s recession and manufacturing 'shakeout', Sunderland experienced some of the worst unemployment rates in the country. Unemployment rose by 100% between 1979-85, and by January 1986 the rate for the town was 22.7% as opposed to the national average of 13.9%. (Milburn and Miller, 1988, p. 206). While these figures fell consistently during the latter part of the 1980s (never reaching pre-1979 levels however), the region is now still relatively worse off than many areas in the country.

This history of changes in the Wearside economy calls into question some of the rosier aspects of the supposed move towards a post-industrial economy. Unemployment has wreaked havoc in the region and has not been reduced to acceptable levels in 'real' terms. The decline of admittedly back-breaking and dangerous work in the primary industries and monotonous assembly line jobs have not been matched by a corresponding increase in numbers or of comparable kinds of employment in the service sector. As such, it may be more realistic to speak about 'de-industrialisation' rather than post-industrialism. It might also be suggested that very few of the new jobs created (with the exception of a very small number of technical and professional posts) require high levels of training and skill.

All of these general features of the Wearside economy will have a particular bearing on the youth labour market<sup>(6)</sup>. Youth unemployment and school 'staying on' rates, the changing nature of employment patterns and the prospects for work for young adults, as well as the development of new training and work preparation schemes, are all affected by these elements of the local economy (Ashton et al, 1988; MacDonald, 1991; Coffield et al, 1986).

The first and most obvious influence a changing Wearside economy has had for young people, is the area of unemployment. The issue of unemployment is an often neglected feature of the post-industrial

thesis. The assumption is that the move from manufacturing to a service sector economy will be relatively smooth, new technology will create jobs and increased training and education opportunities will moderate the demand for work. As we have seen none of these post-industrial assumptions are borne out in Wearside and this is particularly the case for young adults in the area. Over the last decade unemployment amongst Sunderland's youth rose dramatically until the mid 80s, before falling more slowly over the second half of this period. By 1985 the 16-24 year old cohort made up nearly 40% of the total unemployed (while only making up 22% of the population). In some electoral wards (i.e. Town End Farm/Downhill and Hendon), the percentage of this age group out of work reached 58.8% and 54.5% respectively (Howard et al, 1986). Similarly, the percentage of school leavers<sup>(7)</sup> becoming unemployed remained consistently over 20% in the early 80s, reaching a high of 25% in 1986 (Career Service Minutes, September 1986), before falling more slowly during the remainder of the decade.

Employment opportunities for the youth cohort, particularly for school leavers, have fallen over this same period and one might be tempted to explain such changes in terms of an increase in training and education options. However, there is evidence to suggest that many working class school leavers actually prefer a job to training, education and of course unemployment (Hollands, 1990; Willis, 1985; Finn, 1984). The fact is that employment opportunities for Wearside youngsters have consistently shrunk in real terms, despite the fact that levels of qualifications have actually risen over the years. For example, an analysis of a Career Service report of 20 years ago, when levels of qualifications were not as high as today, shows that over 90% of those who left school were placed in work. Similarly, an ethnographic study of 58 Wearside women (in the 25-44 year old age range) showed that only one person was unemployed after leaving school, despite the fact that only about one-third of the respondents had gained some kind of educational qualification before leaving (Stubbs and Wheelock, 1990). In the last decade, the percentage of school leavers (see note 7) in the area finding work has fallen from 23.4% in 1981 to 14.4% by 1990.

It could be argued that employment patterns for young adults in Wearside have changed significantly over the years, and that most contemporary jobs are of better quality requiring higher levels of skill and training. Available evidence from the Sunderland Careers Service however, seems to show a remarkable

consistency in the youth labour market over the last twenty years. School leavers have always been recruited into servicing type jobs (wholesale/retailing and clerical work for example), as well as general factory work (**Youth Employment Committee Annual Report**, County Borough of Sunderland, Oct 1969 to Sept 1970). The difference has been a dramatic decline in apprenticeships and craft training in areas like engineering and shipbuilding. This is despite the fact that demand for high level craft skills has been revealed in numerous recent reports (i.e. Training Agency, 1990; Copsey and Hollands, 1988) and school leaver's first and second choice jobs surveys, which show a continuing desire to work in what might be called manual employment (this, by the way is supported by training 'choices' discussed subsequently, as well as by Willis' 1977 and 1979 work). The fact is that the majority of (admittedly scarce) jobs available today are limited to the clerical/service industry (the Sunderland Assistant Careers Officer quoted in *The Guardian* 24.1.91). Young adults then have only maintained employment in selective service occupations, while losing opportunities for traditional employment.

A further avenue for employment for young people in the borough is the setting up of small businesses. Self-employment, of course, has been a cornerstone of the Conservative government's attempt to construct an enterprise culture spirit amongst the population - and the effort has not been spared on the young. Enterprise training in schools, on youth training schemes and through special programmes such as the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (EAS), have all sought to instil the virtues of small business in young people. The problem, however, has been that in areas like Wearside neither the local work culture nor the economic climate are conducive to the spirit of entrepreneurship, particularly amongst young people who have few or no resources. Available figures suggest that self-employment is not popular amongst the young. In the 1985 Sunderland Household Survey, researchers found that only 12.1% of those classed as self-employed were from the 16-24 year old group (Howard, et al, 1986). The popularity and indeed success of the government's EAS in the area has been flagging, with a 40% business failure rate immediately after finishing the scheme and a declining number of people taking part. (Source: personal communication, Wearside TEC). In-depth research in the neighbouring County of Cleveland, has shown youth enterprise and self-employment to be a 'risky business' - characterised by a high failure rate, low pay, long hours and personal and financial bankruptcy (MacDonald and Coffield, 1991).

An additional test of the post-industrial thesis, and an important factor affecting the local youth labour market, is revealed through an examination of staying on rates in education. The general idea is that an increased need for professional, managerial and technical staff will result in higher participation rates in continuing education. Part of the problem here is that this aspect of post-industrialism is more applicable to North American society which has always had higher staying on rates and a higher percentage of young people in further/higher education. England, on the other hand, continues to have one of the worst staying on rates amongst its major economic competitors (Green, 1990).

The latest regional figure for staying on rates in education for the North was 44% in 1991, the lowest in England and Wales (*Guardian* 26.4.91). In Wearside the latest figure available (1990) stood below this at 39.1%, an improvement on figures from 1989 (36%) and 1981 (30.8%). While this rather modest increase in staying on is to be welcomed, it is hardly surprising considering the scarcity of jobs available, as well as numerous national and local attempts to vocationalise and make 'relevant' the educational curriculum (see Moore's article in Bates, 1984; Dale et al, 1991). Significant numbers of Wearside youth continue to reject furthering their education for a stab at the world of work, which as we have seen, is at least partly understood to be jobs in traditional industries.

Declining avenues for employment, combined with the inability of education to attract the vast majority of working class youngsters, has meant that vocational training has become one of the most significant factors affecting young transitions into work in the post-war period (Cohen, 1983; 1984; 1986; Finn, 1987; Hollands, 1990; Hollands, 1991b). At the last count, no less than seventeen employment and training initiatives have been launched since the creation of the original MSC. While not all these programmes have been exclusively aimed at the youth population, it is clear that they are viewed as an important target group. Nationally, numbers in youth training grew from 70,000 in 1979 to over 400,000 by September 1988 (*Employment Gazette*, Vol 96, November 1988). The development of the adult scheme, Employment Training (ET) in 1988, which was in reality targeted at the 18-24 year old group, initially was projected to cater for 600,000 participants, although actual numbers on the scheme were significantly lower than this due, in no small part, to its unpopularity. Numerous other pilot programmes (i.e. like Training Credits), not to mention changes in social security legislation, have all influenced young adults' transitions into the labour market.

While training has been a national initiative, there have been some significant local variations. In the North there is a clear regional pattern, influenced in no small way by a declining industrial and manufacturing base. It is not surprising to find that the Northern region had the highest percentage of school leavers in training in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1990 (Guardian 24.6.91). Wearside is no exception to this regional trend. The percentage of school leavers in training (excluding those staying on in school) grew from 45% in 1981 to a high of 63.8% in 1989, before dipping just below 60% in 1990 (Career Service Subcommittee Minutes, 1981, 1989, 1990). Additionally, there are those young adults who have gone on to post-17 schemes (i.e. Community Industry, ET, etc.) What is absolutely clear is that in an area like Wearside a majority of working class youth over the last decade have experienced at least one, if not more, government training scheme in their attempted transition into work and adulthood.

**Table One**

Given its significance, the central question is, 'how does vocational training in the area relate to the local labour market and more generally to ideas about a developing post-industrial economy?' One method of evaluating this relationship might be to investigate numbers in training by occupational category in light of post-industrial projections about the future needs of the local economy. Raw data provided by Wearside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) on numbers in training on Youth Training (YT) and Employment Training (ET) by Standard Occupational Category (SOC) for 1991 can be found in Table One.

While Table One highlights differences in numbers of trainees in specific occupational categories, the data is not present in a form to make wider judgments about total numbers in training according to post-industrial theories of the labour market. Table Two is an attempt to group together and present the raw

**NUMBERS IN TRAINING BY STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY (SOC)  
(EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (ET) AND YOUTH TRAINING (YT))**

SOC Group and Category	Numbers in Training (% in Brackets)			
	ET	YT	Total	
01 Corporate Managers/ Administrators	120	9	129	(2.2)
02 Managers/Proprietors	7	10	17	(0.3)
03 Professional Occupations	1	27	28	(0.5)
04 Science and Engineering Professions	28	155	183	(3.1)
05 Health Associate Professions	12	0	12	(0.2)
06 Legal, Business, Social Welfare & Other Associate Professions	107	0	107	(1.8)
07 Literary, Artistic and Sports Professionals	139	13	152	(2.6)
08 Clerical Occupations	271	260	531	(9.0)
09 Secretarial Occupations	409	229	638	(10.8)
10 Skilled Construction	427	122	549	(9.3)
11 Skilled Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Trades	56	214	270	(4.6)
12 Metal Forming/Welding Trades	77	16	93	(1.6)
13 Vehicle Trades	129	277	406	(4.6)
14 Textile Trades	38	68	106	(1.8)
15 Craft and Related Occupations*	438	119	557	(9.4)
16 Protective Service Occupations	14	0	14	(0.2)
17 Catering/ Waiting/ Travel	108	67	175	(3.0)
18 Health/ Childcare/ Related Occupations	345	311	656	(11.1)
19 Personal Service Occupations**	27	134	161	(2.7)
20 Buyers and Sales Reps	0	127	127	(2.1)
21 Sales Assistants/Other Sales Occupations	49	165	214	(3.6)
22 Industrial Plant machine Operators/ Assemblers	36	35	71	(1.2)
23 Transport Operatives/ Drivers	133	0	133	(2.2)
24 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Occupations	8	0	8	(0.1)
25 Other Elementary Occupations	69	513	582	(9.8)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3048</b>	<b>2871</b>	<b>5919</b>	<b>(100)</b>

Source: Wearside Training and Enterprise Council (1991 figures).

For further details about occupations within each SOC see OPCS (1990).

\* Includes Printing, Woodwork, Food Preparation, Horticultural and other Craft Related Occupations.

\*\* Includes Hairdressers, Beauticians, Domestic Staff and other Personal Service Occupations.



**Table Two**

<b>NUMBERS IN TRAINING BY LABOUR MARKET SECTOR</b> (Percentages in Brackets)								
	<b>Professional/ Managerial/ Technical (1)</b>		<b>Service (2)</b>		<b>Manual (3)</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
ET	414	(13.6)	1223	(40.1)	1411	(46.3)	3048	(100)
YT	214	(7.5)	1293	(45)	1364	(47.5)	2871	(100)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>(10.6)</b>	<b>2516</b>	<b>(42.5)</b>	<b>2775</b>	<b>(46.9)</b>	<b>5919</b>	<b>(100)</b>

1. Professional/Technical/Managerial Sector includes SOC 01-07.  
 2. Service Sector includes SOC 08-09; 16-21.  
 3. Manual Sector includes SOC 10-11; 22-25.

**Table Three**

<b>NUMBERS IN TRAINING IN MANUAL SECTOR BY SKILL CATEGORISATION</b> (Percentages in Brackets)								
	<b>Skilled (1)</b>		<b>Semi-skilled (2)</b>		<b>Unskilled (3)</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
ET	483	(34.2)	682	(48.3)	246	(17.5)	1411	(100)
YT	336	(24.6)	480	(35.2)	548	(40.2)	1364	(100)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>(29.5)</b>	<b>1162</b>	<b>(41.9)</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>(28.6)</b>	<b>2775</b>	<b>(100)</b>

1. Skilled category includes SOC 10-11  
 2. Semi-skilled category includes SOC 12-15  
 3. Unskilled category includes SOC 22-25

data in such a way as to evaluate this thesis. It contains three main categories of training in relation to the labour market. First a Professional/ Managerial/ Technical sector which represents training in occupational areas most representative of those characterising a post-industrial economy (SOC categories 01-07; for example, managers, professionals and various technical occupations). Second a Service category encompassing training in a variety of service jobs (SOC number 08-09; 16-21; such as secretarial and clerical occupations, health and childcare, personal services and sales). Finally, a Manual sector, which is broken up into skilled (SOC 10-11- i.e. skilled construction and engineering), semi-skilled (SOC 12-15- i.e. welding, vehicle trades, textiles, and craft) and unskilled (22-25- i.e. operators/ assemblers; transport; agriculture and other elementary occupations) sub-categories (see Table 3)<sup>(8)</sup>.

Taken together Table One and Two display some interesting and perhaps some unexpected patterns. First, Table Two clearly suggests that training in pro-

fessional/ managerial /technical occupational classifications (01-07) is not prevalent on Wearside. Just over ten percent of trainees are undergoing training in what we might vaguely call post-industrial type occupations. Table One provides a further breakdown of this grouping by SOC for both training schemes. The largest occupational categories making up this sector for ET and YT together are Science and Engineering Associate Professions (04), followed by Literary, Artistic and Sport Professionals (07) and Corporate Managers/ Administrators (01).

This closer look at these occupational categories raises a number of issues. First, one needs to seriously question the academic and vocational level of training provided on ET and YT in such areas as science and engineering, computer programming and management. Numerous studies have questioned the level of skills training provided in these areas (see NEDC/MS, 1984: Finn, 1987; Copsey and Hollands, 1988), and recent suggestions about cuts in the high tech and information technology areas

undermine any real commitment to post-industrial training (Guardian 24.10.91 and 5.11.91). Second, one would be hard pressed to believe that even a fraction of young people currently training in these categories would be able to compete in the market with graduates from further and higher education. As YT and ET are unlikely to lead to further training and education, and due to the questionable skill levels attainable on these programmes, it would be fair to say young adults hoping to progress to a professional career through this route will be disappointed to say the least. Taking into account these points, it could be argued that not only are numbers in training in this sector small, but overall this category is generally overstated.

The second major point which Table Two reveals is the relatively high number of young people training in what we might call the service industries. Over 40% of those in training fall into this category. While this phenomenon would appear to support the move towards a service-led post-industrial type economy, it is important to exercise caution in interpreting these general figures. Table One again provides a further breakdown of this service grouping by providing exact numbers in training on ET and YT by occupational grouping. By far and away the most significant categories within this sector are (SOC 08-09) Secretarial and Clerical Occupations (1169 trainees) and (SOC 18) Health, Childcare and Related Occupations (656 trainees). Taken together, numbers in training in secretarial and clerical occupations make up 46.5% of the entire service category. Health, Childcare and Related Occupations make up another 26% of the service total and consist of training in such areas as nursing, care assistants, nurseries and play groups.

The bulk of training in the service sector appears to be in traditionally female occupations such as secretarial/clerical work and the caring field and this mirrors national trends with respect to gender (see Cockburn, 1987; Fawcett Society, 1985; Hollands 1990). Training in service sector jobs like these is not anything particularly new or representative of the coming of a post-industrial economy. Careers Service reports of twenty years ago show a similar number of young people (primarily young women) training in the the secretarial/clerical field. While one of the arguments might be that skill levels in this occupational category has increased (hence the need for training), numerous studies have demonstrated that if anything clerical labour may have become increasingly 'deskilled' (e.g. Braverman, 1974; Downing, 1981). Similarly, research into training for 'caring' and 'personal services' (i.e. hairdressing/ beauty ther-

apy etc.) occupations abounds with evidence of low levels of skills transmission and assumptions about young women's 'natural' aptitude for this type of work (Attwood and Hatton, 1983; Hollands, 1990; Cockburn, 1987). Increased numbers training in the service sector do not necessarily support post-industrial assumptions about new types of work, nor should we assume the need for increased training for these types of employment.

Finally, the third and perhaps most surprising major finding evident from Table Two, is the continuing significance of training for manual jobs. Nearly 47% of the total number in training on ET and YT could be said to be preparing for manual occupations. Within this general sector, Table Three provides a further breakdown of numbers in training into 'skilled' (SOC 10-11), 'semi-skilled' (SOC 12-15) and 'unskilled' (22-25) categories. Of those training in the manual sector, just under 30% fell into the skilled category, 42% into the semi-skilled band and just under 29% in the unskilled category.

Under the post-industrial scenario this is precisely the kind of training that is no longer required for the economy. Not only are there significant numbers training in this general sector, but over two thirds are training for semi- or unskilled occupations. Table One presents a further breakdown of this manual sector again by occupation. The largest single SOC occupational category is number (25) Other Elementary Occupations (21% of the total), followed by (15) Craft Occupations (20%), (10) Skilled Construction (19.8%) and (13) Vehicle Trades (14.6%). Skilled Engineering/ Electrical/ Electronic Trades, by contrast makes up only 9.7% of the manual category. Ironically, the largest single category, Other Elementary Occupations, includes training in traditional industries as well as various other types of unskilled labour.

Once again, one might want to call into question the skill levels gained on YT and ET in occupations such as engineering and construction, by comparing it with those obtained under the apprenticeship system of the past. Research conducted on YTS has seriously queried the levels of skill training gained in the manual trades through the MSC's preoccupation with 'broad-based' and 'transferable' skills, as well as having criticised the quality of work experience in some of these fields (YTS Monitoring Unit, 1985; Hollands, 1990; Lee et al 1990).

Overall, the main finding here is that significant numbers of young adults in the area are continuing

to choose to train in occupational categories supposedly no longer required by a post-industrial economy. Second, skill levels gained must be questioned and there should be some concern over the fact that much of this training is for semi- or unskilled work.

One might be tempted to make the argument that these figures provide only a rough indication of types of occupational training and anyway such preparation is always somewhat out of phase with the wider needs of the economy. However, Wearside TEC has also attempted to match up numbers in training by occupational category with local data they have collected on labour demand, and their findings also support some of the assertions about inadequate skill levels being obtained (Training Agency, 1990). For example, they have noted that much of the demand in manufacturing/ engineering and construction is not in terms of sheer numbers, but rather a modest demand for highly skilled labour. For those training in construction the TEC admits that 'placing rates for YTS are poor' and that for both construction and engineering, demand is towards the 'higher skill levels' (p. 11). On the service sector side, the TEC justifies the high number training in office work citing continued growth, while being slightly more cautious about job prospects in the health / childcare sector. Cutbacks in local government spending might signal a note of caution here for both sectors.

A final way to assess the performance of training and work preparation for both the economy and trainees themselves is to look at the job success rate at the end of schemes. This is not to fall into the vocationalists' grand delusion that it is possible to perfectly match up training to job placement. The quality of the young person's experience and skills / qualifications gained should also be accounted for in any evaluation of the quality and applicability of training in meeting the needs of the economy, as well as contributing to young people's perceptions about the usefulness of schemes.

Not surprisingly, considering what has been said about the Wearside economy, job take up rates following training are less than favourable. Career Service figures for YTS (November 1988) showed that only 37% went into a job or another scheme, 1.5% went into FE, with 60% becoming unemployed. Recent national figures, which provide regional variations, claims that the jobless rate for YT leavers in the North rose by 26% from November of last year (Guardian 3.2.92). Area figures for job success following ET were even worse with only 20% finding work after leaving the scheme (Career Service Min-

utes 24.1.91). Locally produced figures (from Wearside TEC) claim a 55% and 30% job success rate for that cohort of young people who complete their training on YT and ET respectively. Whatever figures one uses, it is clear that for a significant proportion of young adults, training schemes have not been a successful avenue into the local labour market. Furthermore, as the TECs own data reveals, vocational training has done little to stimulate or move the region closer to a post-industrial economy.

### The Politics of Post-Industrial Training

This article has sought to evaluate the vocational preparation and labour market position of young adults in Wearside within the context of the 'post-industrial' thesis. While there have been substantial shifts in the local economy over the last couple of decades, it is clear that many of these changes cannot be accounted for by this model. Neither the data on training, nor information pertaining to the youth labour market, strongly support the idea that the region is moving towards becoming a post-industrial economy.

At the most general economic level, it is true that Wearside has witnessed a very real decline in employment in the primary and manufacturing industries. This trend has often been interpreted in a positive light as an inevitable facet of the movement towards a new post-industrial type economy. Additionally, much has been made of the fact that many of the jobs in the primary sector were both hard and dangerous, and that the region is better off divesting itself of this type of employment. However, there is much less discussion and commentary concerning the replacement of jobs in traditional industries, with developments in the tertiary or service sector of the economy. The fact is that while service employment has expanded, it has neither grown fast enough to absorb the jobless, nor has it provided comparable employment in terms of wages, skill levels, collective representation (i.e. unionisation) or job security.

With regard to vocational training and the youth labour market, the post-industrial thesis appears equally fragile in its analysis. This is so, despite the fact that the 'new vocationalism' has fundamentally sought to redefine occupational skills, shift the balance from manufacturing to service sector employment and re-shape young worker's orientations and attitudes to so-called new types of employment. The fact is that young adults in areas like Wearside have largely borne the brunt of the gap between the rhetoric of post-industrialism and the realities of the



Wearside economy. Instead of a bright new future, they have been more likely to experience considerable bouts of unemployment, punctuated only by low quality training schemes and/or short-term, low skilled and often part-time work. Despite the vocationalisation of the school and FE curriculum (i.e. TVEI, CPVE, local initiatives), class cultural dispositions to formal education and the lack of any real progression between training and further/higher education, have meant that very few young working class Wearshires have been able to take advantage of educational routes through the system.

The lot of the vast number of Wearside post-school leavers has been vocational training. One might have believed, through all the 'modernising' discourse, that investment in training and foresight of a changing labour market would lead to new opportunities and creative futures for young adults. Yet again, the reality of vocational training is out of step with the stated projections of the post-industrial dream. For instance, the North's number one position as having the highest percentage of school leavers in training, has more to do with weaknesses in the local economy than it does with any real vocational commitment. Similarly, a lack of training in professional/ managerial/ technical occupations, an overabundance of trainees in the clerical, secretarial and caring side of the service industry category, as well as a significant majority continuing to train in manual trades, all appear to question rather than support any kind of post-industrial scenario.

As the TEC's own figures show, just over 10% of YT and ET participants are gaining training in those occupational categories relevant to a post-industrial economy. Of those training in this area, there are very real questions to be asked about levels of skill/ qualifications gained and the quality of training generally. Additionally, the government's reputation for promoting information technology and high tech training has been tarnished by the fact that nationally they have closed 35 IT centres in the last 18 months (Guardian 5.11.91).

The reality of training for service sector occupations has also been shown to be problematic within the service sector. Locally, nearly three-quarters of young adults are training in two occupational categories - clerical/secretarial and the caring professions. Again questions concerning the quality of training, not to mention gender segregation, need to be raised. Clearly, increased training in these fields doesn't support the idea that a post-industrial labour market is just around the next corner.

Finally, there is evidence that a majority of young adults are continuing to train for manual occupations, jobs which supposedly are to become redundant in the not too distant future. For those few jobs that still exist in engineering and construction, emphasis is on the upper end of the skill hierarchy and there is justification to argue that training on YT and ET is nowhere near the quality required. Instead, over two-thirds of trainees could be said to be receiving training in either semi- or unskilled occupational categories.

What kind of conclusions can be drawn from this analysis? One inference might be that it is no longer acceptable to keep proclaiming the post-industrial miracle when it hasn't happened or isn't about to happen in the foreseeable future. Without accepting and addressing many of the contradictions and problems raised, it is simply wishful thinking to believe that somehow the local economy will transform itself through inevitable technological change or inward investment. The same can be said for the training debate. The rhetoric of the new vocationalism will not in itself change either the local or British economy into a post-industrial paradise. What is required is a real debate about training and the economy - a broadening of ideas and solutions beyond ideological rhetoric and pat phrases.

For example, we need to move away from the 'New Right' view that economic development, and more specifically educational and vocational preparation for the economy, can simply be left to employers, industry and the marketplace (Education Group, 1991). Historical evidence has shown that employers have traditionally only paid lip service to training in this country both in financial as well as ideological terms. Investment has been patchy, training needs have often been short-term and technical and professional training (i.e. management etc.) in particular have been less than adequate. Recent government policy appears to have ignored this history. Financial cutbacks in the overall training budget and the shifting of power and responsibility for training onto employers through the TEC will result in lower quality and more poorly monitored training provision. What is required is a sound financial commitment, national monitoring and a much wider partnership of participants in the organisation and delivery of training. This is not an argument for a renewed MSC or a return to the old corporatist structure of government, trade unions and business, but some kind of national structure may be necessary to coordinate policy and set national, or indeed European, standards. And while one of the positive aspects of the TEC structure

is that it possesses some local autonomy, they face very real problems regarding financial resources, not to mention a lack of equal partnership between employers and other constituencies concerned with training (including local authorities, trade unions, community groups, educational establishments and not least, young adults themselves). It remains to be seen how far the Labour Party's training strategy can begin to respond to these issues (Hollands, 1991a).

A second problem concerns the historical separation between vocational training and the education or schooling system. England in particular, continues to possess one of the most exclusive, class-ridden education systems in the world (Green, 1990). Working class resistance to formal schooling has a long history (Humphries, 1981; Willis, 1977; Hollands, 1990) and is reflected in high truancy rates, disruption in the classroom and one of the highest early leaving rates amongst Britain's economic competitors. The separation of vocationalism, particularly in the form of on-the-job training, from formal schooling and the persistence of a divisive examination system, has led to a three tier system of education and training, with little or no connection

#### Notes

1. I use the term Wearside purely as a term of geographical boundary-making, including the new city of Sunderland and the towns of Washington and Houghton-le-Spring
2. The term 'young adults' in this paper will generally refer to the 16-24 year old group unless otherwise specified.
3. While Marxists have generally been opposed to the idea of industrial society (as contrasted to industrial capitalism), there have been some exceptions to this rule. Ralf Darendorf's (1959) reinterpretation of Marx's theory of class and class conflict was an early version of a 'radical' theory of industrialism. A concern with the changing nature of class and class consciousness was later taken up by theorists of new social movements (eg. Touraine, 1974) and those emphasising the decline of the working class (eg. Gorz, 1982; Laclau, 1987). An excellent critique of some of this work can be found in Meikisins-Woods (1986). Theories of class recomposition can be found in Clarke (1979).
4. For a less than optimistic analysis of Nissan's production methods and contribution to the local labour market, see Garrahan and Stewart (1992).
5. For many analysts the problems with service jobs runs deeper than just sheer numbers. First, some commentators have been sceptical about the reclassification of jobs once thought to be manual labour, as new service occupations (Hews, 1981). Second, there is a problem with equating job numbers created in the service sector with those in the primary or secondary sectors. For example, many primary jobs were long-term (some for life), while service sector jobs may be short-lived as the domestic economy fluctuates. Service jobs are more likely to be gender-specific (i.e. taken up by women) and to be part-time, rather than full-time employment. This general pattern is evident in Wearside where it has been shown that the number of part-time employees increased by 9% between 1984 and 1987 and encompassed 27% of all jobs in the region (Training Agency, 1990, p. 7). Finally, many of the service jobs created in Wearside during the 1980s were in the public rather than the private sector and are under constant threat due to political and financial pressure on local government.
6. Much has been made in recent years of the fact that the youth population is declining. The general argument has been that this group is no longer a 'problem' or priority of government training policy and that this demographic miracle will effectively solve youth employment problems. For a thorough-going critique of this argument see Hollands (1991a). The reality is that young adults still make up an important segment of the local labour market. The latest available figures for Wearside (1989) show that approximately 42,500 young adults fall into the 16-24 year old band. This represents 14.3% of the total population and 30.2% of the population deemed 'economically active' (Training Agency, 1990, p. 9). Within this overall figure, the actual number of school leavers in 1989 was 4253 (Careers Service minutes), which represents about 10% of the 16-24 year old cohort and approximately 1.5% of the total population. Changes in the destination figures of successive cohorts of school leavers, provides an important monitor of changes in young people's economic prospects.
7. The figures quoted here exclude those who have stayed on in education. I use this mode of calculation throughout unless otherwise noted.
8. Part of the difficulty here relates to Williams (1983) two points about how to distinguish between service and manual work and how to judge skill classification. In devising these sectors I have included (SOC 13) Vehicle Trades and (SOC 15) Craft Related Occupations in the Manual category. The latter was most difficult to locate as it contains a host of different occupations such as printing, woodworking, glassmaking (clearly manual trades) as well as food preparation (i.e. butchers, bakers, fishmongers) which might be viewed, by some, as service jobs. Within the Manual Sector, judgments also had to be made about distinguishing skilled from semi and unskilled occupations. For finer details about occupations within these general Standard Occupational Categories see OPCS (1990).

between these levels. Again, successful economic countries like Germany possess a system which does not so readily distinguish between education and training and through which a higher percentage of school leavers gain qualifications and go on to further education and/or training. In summary what is required is an entire overhaul and reform of the 16-19 education/ training structure, and beyond.

To conclude, there is a need to re-open the debate about the economy and the role training and education play in relation to social and economic development. I have attempted to show that the post-industrial scenario, in its haste to confirm its own predictions, has failed to analyse the internal realities of a local labour market like Wearside. Additionally, the rhetoric of the new vocationalism has also contributed to muddying the waters sufficiently and has stultified the wider debate about training/ education. If there is to be an economic future for young adults in places like Wearside, then it is essential to widen the terms of the debate beyond the idea of post-industrialism and develop policies based on more useful paradigms and theories.

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# LOCALITY AND LOCALISM:

*The Spatial orientation of young adults in Sunderland.*

GILLIAN CALLAGHAN

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In recent years social scientists have become increasingly concerned with the significance of place. More and more they have embraced the idea that place in itself plays a major role in social explanation. This has entailed considerable debate about the issue of locality, its significance, its nature and its meaning. Most accounts which have been developed, however, as Cochrane (1987) has pointed out, have started from the point of view of structure and have consequently failed to give an adequate explanation of how people understand and create their worlds.

The purpose of this article is to attempt another approach to the study of a locality which emphasises the importance of the actor. It seeks to relate the theory of locality to the voices of young people living in a world that has been restructured.

It is based on evidence from a broader study into the world views of young adults in Sunderland against a background of declining traditional industries and the emergence of new industry with a very different set of industrial relations. My study centred on how young people were facing that change and what values and strategies they were developing creatively in dealing with it. At the beginning of the research I was mainly interested in issues of gender and class, my interest in locality arose from a growing recognition of its importance in the field.

I found that it was not possible to explain people's world views without relating them specifically to the places they lived in. This gave rise to considering the nature of that relationship and the importance of locality to the young people I interviewed. This article will seek to bring to a theoretical understanding of locality the findings of empirical research and to consider the value of the concept in the field. In developing an account which is based in action I have found the notion of localism helpful. The main thrust of this article will be to review the related concepts of localism and locality to learn how they can help us to understand people as active agents creating their own lives within a structured context.

## Locality

The uses of the term 'locality' have been so varied that it has been difficult to define what locality really means. A further difficulty arises in attempting to draw a boundary which identifies a locality, although I would agree with Cooke (1989a) in regarding this as a 'fetishisation of cartography' (p272).

As Duncan (1986) says the importance of locality as a focus for study is that it links with ideas of 'uniqueness of place, uneven development, local social movements, regional classes and local civil society' (p3). It is about more than just a spatial entity. Such a concept clearly has potential for a study based in Sunderland but its use must be predicated upon a more precise understanding of the term.

The concept is based in a realist approach and this has a lot to offer, providing an analysis which recognises the complexity of structures involved in producing a locality. Unfortunately by nature of its inherent structuralism it cannot satisfactorily deal with the problem of action. While it recognises action as a force in bringing about change, accounts having their origin in structure often fail to appreciate its creative power. This has been reflected in locality studies which have not embraced that purposeful, creative feature of human action.<sup>(1)</sup>

Duncan (1986) tells us that locality as an idea provides us with an opportunity to understand 'variation over space and to make room for human agency'. The realist foundation of the concept recognises that,

*people as self interpreting beings are able to monitor their situations and learn from them, have an exceptionally wide and volatile range of causal liabilities. They learn from their contexts and these contexts always have particular spatial forms (Duncan p10).*

From this one might construe an explanation of locality which is based in human action, however



such accounts are rare. Despite a recognition in theory of human agency, the difficulty arises when we attempt to put that into practice.

For the purposes of this article we need to understand what is the particular relationship between structure and agency. Marsh (1982) tells us that the aim of an explanation in sociology must be to show

*... how the actions of the people involved were the actions of conscious human beings reacting to an environment, trying to make sense of it and pursuing various goals with more or less success (p98).*

The difficulty in operationalising any account of locality arises in achieving this synthesis. Cochrane (1987) has pointed to the problem in Massey's work and we can see it recur in subsequent studies. Bagguley et al (1990) recognise the need to gain access to action but do so from actors in relation to their structural position. Marsh argues that it is possible to generate an explanation of the social system in terms of social action. Echoing Marx she tells us, 'people may make history, they may exercise choice, but they cannot choose the conditions, the avenues of possibilities open to them' (p100). This understanding of the relationship between the actor and the structure has formed the basis of my account in Sunderland.

Cohen's (1985) discussion of the symbolic construction of community elaborates this idea and suggests a way of developing its use in research. He addresses the question of how people derive and create meaning in their worlds. Cohen approaches explanation from the point of view of the collective actor ,

*.... if individuals refer to their cognitive maps to orient themselves in interaction, the same is true of collectivities. The maps are part of their cultural stores, accumulated over generations and thus heavily scented by the past (p101).*

Drawing on Robson's study of Sunderland (1971) we can see the importance this holds for understanding the notion of locality and its meaning in people's lives. Robson describes Sunderland as

*a town which is living on the dwindling fat of its Victorian expansion. The legacy of the industrial revolution is apparent in its appearance, its industrial structure, its population growth and in a host of social and economic characteristics. Even attitudes are coloured by its past heritage. The depression years, the final death spasm of the*

*nineteenth century in a Pre-Keynesian era, are still a real memory among much of the towns working population and impinge upon the attitudes of the working population (p75).*

Robson's study was conducted in the 1960s before Sunderland's boundaries changed. There has been a major spatial shift of population and employment in recent years and most of this development has been centred on Washington. What Robson describes is nevertheless the nub of my study. If locality as a concept has meaning then we will find it reflected in the actions and strategies of the people who live in the place. We need further to understand how people employ those strategies and deal with change.

I have adopted Cooke's definition of locality as a basis for my study because it invites consideration of actors' accounts. It points of the idea of locality in continual dynamic process.

*.... Locality is a concept attaching to a process characteristic of modernity, namely the extension, following political struggle, of civil, political and social rights of citizenship to individuals. Locality is the space within which the larger part of most citizens' daily working and consuming lives is lived. It is the base for a large measure of individual and social mobilisation to activate, extend or defend those rights, not simply in the political sphere but more generally in the areas of cultural, economic and social life (Cooke 1989b, p12)*

This definition has two important uses in this article: it stresses that the particular nature of the locality is the result of interaction of social, political and economic forces, both global and local; and it engages the dimension of the actor and in doing so allows us to establish an account which recognises that localities are unique because they are not just about how structural forces operate but also about how people respond, resist or initiate action.

It is important to recognise that the effect of a 'locality' on the young people living in it varies according to social class and gender and to move away from the notions of coherence which have been common to some accounts. Sunderland is a Labour town but that is not the whole story and, like many other traditional Labour areas, it certainly does not signify radical policies. Its history and the predominance of a working class population may make the tradition of Labour voting a strong one but this does not complete the account. Ideologies of individualism and collectivism which underlie the different political

philosophies are interwoven in a complicated way in the lives of young people because of the history and nature of the place. They can best be understood when analysed in terms of factors of gender and class and these ideologies go much further in their impact on young people's lives than simply determining voting behaviour.

These are issues I will examine through young people's accounts to develop an understanding of the relationship between locality and young people's spatial orientation in Sunderland.

## **Change**

Realism provides us with a framework for analysing necessary and contingent relations in terms of 'relatively permanent structures' (see Outhwaite, 1987). It allows us to consider social change. In developing an account of Sunderland as a locality this is fundamental. No explanation of the place could be complete without understanding the influences of the internationalisation of capital and de-industrialisation; of the processes of labour, its forms of accommodation with or resistance to these changes, the impact on civil society etc. In addition it is essential to understand its past in terms of successive rounds of accumulation because the place can only be understood in its history. Robson's study of Sunderland in the 1960s points to the significance of this idea.

Its continued relevance is indicated in the fundamental change which has occurred in the nature of the relation between industry and place. It is a town founded on the two traditional industries of shipbuilding and coalmining, both industries necessarily related to the geography of the place and giving rise to particular styles of worker-to-worker and worker-to-manager relations as well as to particular forms of domestic organisations. These industries have all but disappeared as sources of employment for young people entering the labour market today. They have largely not been replaced, but where new industry has arisen it is industry with no such fundamental relation to the area. The Nissan car plant may have chosen to locate in Sunderland because the workforce was cheap and there was no history of industrial relations in the car industry, but it could equally have gone to South Wales or any one of several other sites in Britain or Europe. The siting of Nissan in Sunderland can be seen as an outcome of conditions created by previous necessary relations but it in no way stands in such relation to Sunderland itself. Urry (1981) has analysed this process. Increasing centralisation nationally and internationally has

enabled capital to redistribute its activities in order to improve its exploitation of local labour. The local state responds, in its attempt to prevent de-industrialisation, by encouraging such capitalisation against the class interests of the workforce. Garrahan (1986) has shown how the 2,700 jobs in Nissan have been bought with the aid of over £100m in state grants in addition to the undisclosed aid given by the local authority for purchasing land. The true cost of these jobs, Garrahan points out, will only be learned when the impact of this competition on the domestic car industry becomes clear.

Sunderland's industrial history is part of its current character. The decline of its traditional industrial base and the need to provide alternative employment in the local economy, combined with its local political complexion of right wing labourism, has resulted in decisions to give incentives and to provide support which may lead to a change in the dominant industrial culture. This necessarily has implications for local civil society.

Accompanying this change, since the 1950s and '60s, Sunderland has seen a considerable growth in the size of its female workforce. From the establishment of the first trading estate in 1938 there were attempts to diversify Sunderland's industrial base. These have largely resulted in an increase in female employment while male activity rates have declined so that by 1984 women constituted 47.5% of the workforce. (Stone et al.). This necessitates a change in the constitution of households and the nature of relations within households. The notion of the family wage has largely disappeared and men no longer expect to be sole 'breadwinner'.

The increase in family reliance on the female wage could be expected to have implications for household organisation and the woman's position in the family. This was an issue I was interested in my research and one of several in which I found a whole mixture of resolutions both traditional and new. It brings us back to the point, made earlier, that both structure and action must be comprehended in explaining a place.

## **Localism**

I base my use of the term 'localism' on the work carried out by Jenkins in 1983. Jenkins recognised the importance of the concept in his ethnographic work with young people in Belfast. He defines localism as, 'restricted spatial horizons'. This is an important idea, reflecting a relationship between certain young peo-

ple and their world. It recognises that many young people, particularly from the working class, do not look to jobs or careers outside their local area. In doing so it expresses a real phenomenon and one which is encountered in Sunderland. Where I part company with Jenkins is in how he sees that relation as affecting consciousness. He tells us that

*Reflecting the comparatively limited geographical mobility of the working class, something which is not peculiar to Belfast, the socially mapped areas within which responsibility can be allocated is correspondingly restricted (p132).*

I think that Jenkins underestimates the impact and nature of a local world view.

While the idea of localism is important it is so because it holds far more within it than simply the attribution of responsibility for evils in the local world to outsiders. Localism is about how young people relate to the place they live in, whether they see their future there and the impact of that on their decisions in organising their personal relationships and family life. This does not require that they can't see beyond their local world. In Sunderland this was certainly not the case.

Sunderland's nineteenth century prosperity was based on inward migration and it has a significant history of outmigration; people are used to people leaving. In addition capital is global and not local and this is recognised in a town where the major industries of mining and shipbuilding have (almost) disappeared in the course of one generation. All of the young people I interviewed were able to recognise much wider horizons. They saw and put their own construction on what was happening to employment and the local economy in terms of the wider scene. Some of them regarded the external world as hostile while others were positively drawn by it. In this context localism relates not to restricted attribution of responsibility but to a means of coping through mutual support of family and friends because, in the words of one of my young interviewees, 'round here you're brought up to look after your mates'. It is this which denotes their relation to their local area and which can tell us much about how the place is reflected in their actions.

My intention is to examine Sunderland as a locality and to gain access to it, at least in part, by understanding actors' spatial orientation. This relates to more than one spatial level. It seeks to provide a context for understanding the strategies people

employ in the labour market and the domestic sphere to deal with the reality of living in a changing world. Spatial orientation does not stand alone. To understand what it can tell us about young people's choices we need to consider it as it relates to issues of class and gender in shaping consciousness.

### **The Study**

The following account draws from ethnographic research undertaken in Sunderland. The major focus for concern was the impact of de-industrialisation upon the attitudes and expectations of young adults in the town.

Sunderland, as I have said, is a town in which the major employers have been the traditional industries of mining and shipbuilding. In its history there was also the experience of local ownership, a local dominant class tied to and concerned in the local economy. It is a place in which its male citizens, in particular, could expect to follow a well worn path into the labour market, leaving school to start work in the mine or the shipyard. In the course of a generation this has radically changed. Young people entering the labour market now do so on very different terms than their parent's generation. The skilled affluent working class is barely evident in this younger generation. Women's work, as we have already noted, has become much more important in Sunderland's economy. Some factory work is available and it is on the whole better paid, but most of women's employment lies in the service sector and offers predominantly part-time, semi or unskilled work (Stubbs and Wheelock, 1990).

Young men largely do not have the opportunity, through the route of highly paid, skilled manual employment, to establish the kind of lifestyle which their parents had. Nissan aims to establish high production based on a central stable workforce. It will do so on the basis of a very different set of industrial relations from those in the pits and the shipyards. The remaining workforce are, like the women, more likely to have access to only unskilled, insecure and poorly paid employment interspersed with periods on the dole.

At the same time there has been an increase in white collar work and this has been identified with the rise in the new service class. Sarre (1989) in his review of the use of the concept points to the problems it poses in combining a wide range of jobs which consist of very variant qualifications, skills and remuneration. He also points to the distinction which must be made



between public and private sector employment. 59% of service sector jobs in Sunderland are private, overwhelmingly in leisure and retail services. These are frequently the women's jobs. Just over half of the public sector jobs can be described as professional and scientific and these are largely in health and education services.

The story of change is not peculiar to Sunderland. In this respect Sunderland simply provides a particularly graphic example of a much larger process. It is of special interest because of its reliance on two traditional industries and the coincidence of their decline. This has created a scene in which change and uncertainty require that young people entering the labour market in Sunderland reorder their own worlds and expectations. In addition the new forms of employment which have appeared represent fundamental changes in working culture and industrial relations.

My study aimed to learn how young adults were meeting the changes in their lives with which de-industrialisation was presenting them. From the study, as part of this explanation, there emerged some interesting insights into young peoples' spatial orientation.

### **Form of the study**

The study was based on a cluster analysis of enumeration districts in Sunderland. Thirty-two indicators of social and economic status were identified including, for example, levels of economic activity, unemployment, single parent families, car ownership etc. These were sorted by computer into three areas within which a considerable degree of internal consistency could be identified. When this was transferred to a map of Sunderland, Hendon emerged as a local authority ward in which the three 'local areas' existed in close proximity. The sample was drawn from these three areas by identifying all eighteen year olds on the electoral register. To facilitate discussion of gendered aspects of consciousness it was necessary to take equal numbers of males and females in each sub-sample.

The ethnographic work involved interviewing forty young people in their homes about a wide range of issues relating to their backgrounds, present lives and future careers. These interviews were tape recorded and the information they yielded was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. It was recognised that the size of the sample was too small to offer statistically significant data. The purpose of the quantitative analysis was rather to provide an

additional method of sifting through a mountain of information to draw out any consistent factors in relationships which could then be examined using the qualitative accounts.

Hendon encompasses some of the best and some of the worst housing and social conditions in the borough. These extremes are represented in the statistics for the three cluster levels which demonstrate wider discrepancies than those seen in Sunderland as a whole. A further determining factor in the choice of Hendon is the fact that a single state comprehensive school, Southmoor school, serves the whole ward. This enables a sample to be drawn of young people from divergent social and economic backgrounds but most of whom have a 'common' educational background, (although a small proportion attended Catholic or private schools). It should allow some conclusions to be drawn about differential experiences of education and their impact on work orientation and aspirations.

The ward lies at the heart of Sunderland and boasts a relatively high level of owner occupation echoing its Victorian past. (Potts, 1988). At its centre one can see the various styles of Victorian terraced dwelling, from large rambling houses to single storey cottages. There is a certain amount of redevelopment so that new council housing coexists, at the centre, with older types of dwelling, while on its western border lies more expensive, almost entirely owner occupied housing. Some of this is old property but most of it is post war.

It will be useful here to draw a brief picture of each area, based on the cluster analysis, to show the differential access to resources of its residents.

### **Area I**

The southern and western area is the most affluent part of the ward where the percentage of home ownership is very high at 88%. Homes tend to be larger than average while household size is average or less with only 3.5% of households comprising six or more persons.

The area has the highest proportion of economically active adults and of these 28% are employed in the professional and managerial occupations of social class I and II. This provides a marked contrast to areas II and III where the population in those classes is 6.7% and 9% respectively. Only 1.6% of the population of area I were employed in the unskilled manual occupations of social class V. In this part of the

ward the level of unemployment is relatively low at around 6%. The statistics suggest that in a relatively high proportion of households both husband and wife are working as over 52% of women are economically active.

### **Area II**

The northern and eastern part of Hendon contains a population who experience severe social and economic deprivation, relative to area I. The rate of owner occupation is at its lowest in this area at 21.5%. Over 56% of people lived in council housing and, although a small percentage in absolute terms, Hendon does contain a relatively high proportion of privately rented property. Household size tends to be large while homes are average to small in size. The percentage of households with children is at its highest in this part of the ward and by far the largest proportion of single parent families live in this area.

Within the economically active group, the largest single social grouping is that of skilled manual workers. This area holds the highest rate of unemployment for both men and women, averaging 43.6% and 24.3% respectively.

### **Area III**

This area forms a band across the ward from the north west to the south east. It provides a belt of intermediate housing between the contrasting conditions in areas I and II.

The population of this area tends to be older with the lowest number of households containing children and less than half as many single parent families as in the north east of the ward.

Housing is predominantly owner occupied, often older terraced property. The proportion of economically active adults is slightly lower than in the poorest area, however married women form a larger group within this population. The rate of male unemployment is less than half of that in the north east of the ward but it is almost three times that of area I. There is a wide range in terms of social class assignment but as in other respects this area is truly intermediate, having fewer members of the upper social classes than area I and a larger group from classes II manual and non-manual than area II.

### **Findings**

The sample was not designed to give a particular mix of social class groups, rather it was based on socially and economically similar local areas in which, it is

accepted, class plays an important role. The quantitative analysis pointed to the overwhelming importance of class and gender in structuring young peoples world views and inevitably became the basis for reporting the qualitative work. These findings will be reported in terms of three broad social bands which could be characterised as middle class, central working class and peripheral working class. Girls accounts are separated from the lads because again there was a significant divide in their views according to gender.

The specific composition of the resulting groups was as follows: (those with no social class of their own were allocated according to their fathers' social class). The more affluent group of ten people, was equally split between males and females. In the intermediate group there were sixteen people, twelve of whom were female. In the semi and unskilled manual group there were thirteen young people, ten of whom were male. The sample was not drawn as a proportionate sample of Sunderland as a whole, however it does reflect the employment structure in the town. The girls outnumber the lads in the intermediate, service occupations while the lads heavily outnumbered girls in semi and unskilled manual jobs.

For those in the upper reaches of the social class grouping, living in *Area I*, what was of overwhelming importance to their orientation was the place they held, or held in prospect, in the labour market. For all but one of the lads the decision to pursue a career in the professions or in industry would require that they leave Sunderland, a town which appeared to them to be devoid of all opportunity. All of this group recognised that to be successful, defined in terms of promotion and high salary, they must leave the area. One might suppose then that this necessity brought with it feelings of regret, but this was not the predominant emotion expressed by members of this group. Rather they embraced the idea of leaving a town which they described as a 'cultural desert'. There was a feeling that Sunderland was not for the young and vital, they wanted to move on to something new and much more exciting. Stewart articulated the extreme in describing the town as 'dirty and slum-like ... I don't want to stay here - there's a don't care attitude'. This appears to contradict a phenomenon which Coffield et al. (1986) found in their study of 'Growing up at the margins.' They tell us that young people were, 'with very few exceptions, very conscious of being geordies or northerners, were proud of their origins and traditions and had a genuine affection for their place of birth' (p142).

My findings are rather different but this is simply because my study involved a mix of middle and working class people and I discovered a difference in spatial orientation according to both class and gender.

Apart from their orientation to the national labour market a further spatial division which all recognised was that between local areas. As I have said they all lived in Hendon Local Authority ward but none of those in the upper social class bands identified themselves as living in Hendon. For people in Sunderland, Hendon has long been thought of as a rough and potentially dangerous place. Discussions with these young men about the area they lived in tended to bring with it ideas of roughness and respectability. Charles told me 'there's no way I'll come back to Sunderland. I live in the posh area - its alright - but I want to move'. Dominic didn't like 'the lads who go around and cause a riot of a Saturday night when they're drunk - I don't like the subculture'.

There was an implacable divide in experience and expectations between those lads in this group almost all in the upper locality, and those in the poorest locality who these lads identified as 'rough'.

For the girls in this upper social class group the picture was rather less clearly defined. There appeared to be rather more weight placed on the importance of family and friends and consequently a greater reluctance to consider moving away. It should be noted that this is relative to their male peers, of the girls in the sample as a whole it was this group which would be leaving. Two of these girls, Nicola and Helen, told me they will go south for work, and their interest in career and 'making a lot of money' was the basis for that. A third girl, Lisa, said she would be happy to stay in Sunderland but added in a rather revealing comment, 'my friends all think I'm weird'. Despite her contentment with Sunderland, in projecting the future she talked of living in America where she had recently spent several weeks on holiday. One girl was planning to remain in Sunderland because disappointing 'A' level results meant that the only course of higher education open to her would be teacher training at Sunderland Polytechnic; 'I like the town and I like the people, I'll stay in Sunderland, at least for the time being.'

Like the boys, the girls recognised the importance of area within Sunderland and the image of Hendon as rough, and like the boys they did not identify themselves as living in Hendon. Nicola pointed out 'if you tell people you live in Hendon they take a step back-

wards'. Nicola told me that, 'the people in Hendon are friendly', although she did not so much identify with them as 'know how to handle them'.

For the group as a whole the implications are clear. They believe that if you have ambitions in the professional field the opportunities are immeasurably greater if you move than if you stay. It suggests a class is leaving Sunderland. The significant boundary within Sunderland was not Hendon but the smaller more affluent part of Hendon in which they lived. On the whole they did not identify, mix with friends or have kin in the poorer areas.

The girls in the *intermediate group* were from all three areas. Those from the more affluent area were generally happy with the place they lived in. Those who lived in the intermediate area, in the 'long streets'<sup>(2)</sup>, like the boys were conscious of their reputation in the town generally and because of this, some would prefer to move away. Reputation was very important outweighing the actual experience of living in Hendon. Image and standing in the eyes of their fellow town's folk was naturally important to their own assessment of the place. It is true to say that in the intermediate and poorer areas there was a greater mix of attitude to their immediate environment. Only one girl from this group wanted to leave Sunderland, Angela was the only girl entering higher education. Angela told me that she wanted to go '..... somewhere not as big as London but with more opportunities than here.'

One girl from the bottom of the 'long streets' was keen to get away from her immediate area. She was the only member of her family to have a job. She was surrounded by her extended family and she told me that her twin brother belonged to one of the gangs '.... that stand on street corners and pick on people .... this street is alright but the next street is awful'. Generally for the girls in this group family relationships seemed to have greater significance, contact was more frequent and clearly family and friends were considered when judgments were made about the best place to live.

The lads in the *intermediate social class group* had solid jobs or prospects. They had not done exceptionally well academically but had achieved a respectable set of qualifications which would enable them to secure respectable jobs in the local labour market. They expressed little satisfaction with their immediate environment, but were generally happier with Sunderland as a whole. They were more aware from personal experience of, 'the gangs on the street



corners with nothing to do but cause trouble' (Barry), and only one lad considered the area 'quite nice'. They were all aware of the reputation of the 'long streets'. Norman pointed out 'It's bad to say you live in Hendon - you get picked on'. Although wider family lived close by and were in more regular contact than the upper social group, these young men would leave Hendon when they set up homes of their own. As a contrast to their counterparts in the upper group however they did not desperately want to kick the dust of Sunderland from their feet. Barry, aiming for a career in Engineering, would leave to further his career but would do so reluctantly. He would prefer to take a route through apprenticeship and remain local but felt the likelihood of such a path being open to him was slight. Norman would return to Sunderland when he had served his full term in the marines. For the other two lads in this group the ideal they sought was a home of their own in a 'nicer part' of Sunderland.

The girls in social classes 4 and 5 lived in very different areas. Lesley although in the poorest area lives in a modern council house located in the centre of the ward. She describes it as 'alright ... we've been here fourteen years now and I talk to everyone. Nana and me auntie Brenda live in the bad part of Hendon ... but they've always been there.'

Debora, also in the poorest area lived at the bottom of the long streets. She saw herself as a respectable person living in a rough area. 'I can't bring people round here I'm ashamed ... most of the lasses round here end up pregnant - breeding for the family allowance - the kids live on packets of crisps! They tear everything down ... I want to move out, if they put decent families in I wouldn't want to move. The area's been going downhill for the last four or five years. If you live in a bad area people think you're rough.'

Barbara lived with her husband and small baby in a rented first floor flat in a large Victorian house in the intermediate area. Her dissatisfaction with the area arose from family relationships and her desire to put a little distance between herself and her in-laws. All of these girls were firmly Sunderland bound and the notion of leaving was not considered.

The *semi and unskilled manual group* was the largest group of lads and like the girls in the intermediate group they came from all three areas.

Two lads lived in modern semi-detached houses in the most affluent area and were happy with the place they lived in. They did not identify it as part of Hen-

don. Tom said 'I moved from Hendon to here when I was a kid.' Andrew said 'a few years ago Hendon used to be rough .... there's just a few nutcases .... In the north you cannot be upper class. When you go to school and say where you live people say you're from the posh end - but we probably look to the south what Hendon looks to us. It's the people in Hendon who make the place what it is .... in Southwick the dogs carry flick knives. I borrow me mother's car to go to me girlfriends in Town End Farm, people stare they can tell you're not local.'

For those in the intermediate and poorer areas the attachment to the place is strong and there is also a clear identification with Hendon. There remained, for some, a desire to leave an area identified for the trouble because 'they're not decent people .... always stealing and always in trouble', or more practically, 'you can't leave your car outside.' Most of the young lads were happy in their area 'I would want to live round here, I've lived here all my life .... it's a good place to live now and then there's fights - but not much.' William said 'I love this area .... I don't want to move. I've got my friends around here, the shops are close .... and you know everyone.' Generally they felt they wanted to set up home close to their parents. Three of the lads, two from the upper and one from the intermediate area were prepared to go south but reluctantly, if there was a job offered to them. There was absolutely no sense of the south as a 'land of opportunity' as their counterparts in the upper social class group saw it. This group of lads did have greater access to fiddle jobs (i.e. casual jobs undertaken when claiming the 'dole') and this may well be important in their decision to stay.

The issue of unemployment is one which illustrates the importance of local area to young people's consciousness and this relates to the ideology of individualism which I found was universally accepted among the young people I interviewed.

For those in the upper area who were also in the upper social grouping, unemployment posed no threat personally, nor was it a common experience among friends or family. Lisa articulated the general view when she told me that the responsibility for unemployment lay, '.... with the individual, if they leave school with no qualifications they know they are going to end up on the dole.' Another common theme throughout all of the interviews was expressed by Alex '..... if you really try you can get a job.' Hutton and Jenkins (1989) explained this phenomenon in their study in terms of the hope it allowed young people for improvement against a bleak background.

More than that its significance is as a view which restores to the actor the power to create and to change rather than emphasising vulnerability and subjection.

In the poorer area, especially among the lads (who were more likely to be unemployed than the girls) it was more common that there was no experience of a 'proper' full time job. They had had casual work, they often did 'fiddle' jobs but the kind of secure employment upon which one might traditionally have based a transition to adult life and family responsibility was entirely absent. This presented economic problems, but created less conflict in relationships than unemployment caused to those who lived in an area where the experience was the exception. Shaun was happy on the dole because 'everyone round here's the same.' Roger who was the only unemployed person in the most affluent area experienced severe conflict with his family. He had left home for a period and despite his return he told me that relationships with his parents were strained because he was out of work. Roger had changed his friendships to join other young people who were also unemployed. Hutson and Jenkins (1989) also noted this in their study of locality and unemployment.

The relationship to local area briefly summarised is; young people with careers in mind were seeking wider fields of opportunity than Sunderland could offer them, leaving for 'the south' and even the international labour market. Those who had done less well academically would stay where they were and build their future on Sunderland's economy. They, and young working class people with no educational achievement, denied the traditional route into employment, had an entirely local spatial orientation. This was the case for both sexes, although girls were consistently more locally orientated than boys.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that we can learn something about the meaning of locality from these accounts which is more than just a simple individual expression of like or dislike. It revolves around the notion that views on locality are a reflection of the ways in which young people organise, perceive and respond to their world. It is yet another illustration in practice of the proposition that social being determines consciousness. We can relate it to issues concerning a changing labour market, changing gender relations, its implications for domestic organisation and the family.

Individualism is a powerful philosophy and one which, for some middle class people, legitimizes their position in the social and economic hierarchy. The acceptance of individualism by those who are less affluent, living in the poorest area, imposes an additional burden. It tells them that they have neither the merit to achieve nor do they therefore deserve the rewards of their middle class contemporaries. In defence against this, localism allied to a sense of communalism preserves personal integrity.

The features of the labour market which young people are entering today are very different from those of their parents' generation. The removal of local ties with capital, the tenuous relationship, between capital and local area, links with young people orientation across the classes and clearly has implications for what they expect to achieve in Sunderland. The career orientated lack a local career structure. Research and development functions are not sited in Sunderland, the manufacturing activity which is there is conducted at a lower level so that those seeking professional and managerial careers must look to a broader field for opportunities. Localism is not an appropriate approach for these young people to take.

For those who are career oriented a local orientation is not considered desirable and there was clearly a mood among these young people which held that the best choice was to leave. The aim was to move south for better career prospects and to leave behind the 'cultural desert' which Sunderland represented. This was spoken of as the natural course to take, rather than as a choice in which ties of kinship and local area are outweighed by other considerations.

Localism appears to be a working class strategy for coping with structural change. Young people without the career opportunities of their more qualified contemporaries will stay in the place because local networks of friends and kin operate to support them against the worst aspects of unemployment or sub employment (Norris, 1978). They are well aware that going South has little to offer in the sector of the labour market they occupy. If they can get a job it is likely to be short term and they will not be able to afford a place to live. They cannot, after all, afford a place to live in Sunderland. The important thing is that 'round here you are brought up to look after your mates' and the young people I interviewed saw that as fundamentally different from the experience in the South. As one interviewee told me 'in the north you cannot be upper class'.

In an article about his own study in a rural setting Robert MacDonald described two 'Locales' which had very definite, agreed but opposite meanings denoting beliefs and opinions about lifestyles. The 'east side' for instance stood for aggressiveness, toughness, working class, council housing and all of the images which go with that. In my study the rough - respectable divide was also recognisable. It was those who lived in the poorest area who could have been described by these labels. The value of such labelling in maintaining the status quo has been discussed by Sean Damer (1989) in his study of a Glasgow housing estate. It serves to divide a class against itself. It reflects a changing class structure in which, as we saw earlier, there is a fractured 'service class', a small number of 'central' workers and growing 'residual' group of the poor. Janet Finch (1983) in her study of pre school playgroups also demonstrated the importance of the rough/respectable divide in working class women's images of themselves and those around them.

I found that while the label was universally accepted those young people who lived in the 'rough' area did not accept the description personally but rather related it to unnamed others. They related it to the place and sometimes to other people in the place but felt it was unjustly imposed on them. There was a clear gender divide here in that the lads seemed less concerned by the rough image and more likely to want to stay in the area when they formed their own families.

Young people's spatial orientation related to their ideology. For the individualist, career orientated young person a local spatial orientation would have been a positive handicap. For those young people who were not to be 'high flyers', local relationships and local place mattered far more. They had a commitment to their town through a collectivist ideology which was not perceived as defensive. They believed that ideology of looking after and sharing was superior to anything available to people in other regions. For them staying in Sunderland was not second best. The kids in the most difficult position were those who were likely to be unemployed upon whom (especially lads) there was a perceived pressure to 'get on your bike'. In reality promises of jobs with big wages in the South East were recognised as pipe dreams and most of these lads would not leave to pursue them. Those with work in the 'alternative economy' were in any case Sunderland bound. For girls in the lower reaches of the labour market jobs 'down south' were not even suggested because they would characteristically be low paid and insecure and in any case this kind of employment was available to them in Sunderland.

For these young women a local world view is in keeping with their role as the primary source of capitalist social reproduction. To understand this process one must refer to Beechey's (1983) argument that, in relation to women's consciousness, the point in the life cycle is crucial. Young women today recognise that most families need two wages to get by and that they will be drawn back into the labour force after having children. The child care support they need would prevent their returning to working if it were not for family, grandmothers acting unpaid were usually to be relied on to perform this service.

The increasing induction of women into the labour market is, necessarily, bringing with it changes in gender relations and the organisation of family life. McDowell (1986) suggests that 'at certain periods the ruling-class's need to maximise surplus labour predominates and causes severe dislocation in the institutions of family life and male dominance.' This, she says, happened in industrialising England and is happening now. If this is the case then we should look forward to a more fluid situation in which we may no longer be able to predict with such confidence, for instance, that women will be more locally oriented than men. It suggests a more changeable situation and one which is at least open to new resolution.

What we are seeing in general terms are young people's ways of coping with a place in crisis. The changes which are occurring have disturbed a perhaps more settled world of the past and brought to it disruption and renewed struggle. The concept of locality encapsulates that process, in providing a structural framework for understanding the change. The meaning which boundaries hold varies according to the spatial scale. Cohen (1985) says 'As one goes down this scale so the "objective" referents become less and less clear, until they may be quite invisible to those outside. But also as you go "down" this scale they become more important to their members for they relate to increasingly intimate areas of their lives or refer to more substantial areas of their identities'. Young people respond to and act upon the world in various ways according to their gender, their class and their educational achievement. Their spatial orientation forms a significant element in this response. It can account for an otherwise apparently irrational reluctance of working class kids to go South to pursue the individualistic ideals of their young middle class and more highly qualified contemporaries.

The form and nature of any locality is a result of the particular intersection of residual, dominant and emergent cultures within it which relate to wider



change but which have their own unique character. The young people I interviewed related not only to a place but to several significant boundaries. There was their relationship to boundaries within Sunderland which brought with it particular images of roughness and respectability. There was clearly identified a relationship to the town within a wider national and international context. There was a more general sense of being a Northerner which puts them in opposition to a cold and self centred image of the south and in which are vested images of class.

The concept of locality is difficult to define and has been used to refer to several different spatial levels. It

comprehends numerous processes subject to constant change. The problem in operationalising the concept has been that it lacks an action component. It is nonetheless valuable to field researchers in developing an explanation of how people understand and therefore create their world. In my research I have employed the concept of localism as one means of examining the element of action. As a field researcher I have found it useful because it suggests one way in which we might delineate the meaning of place to young people and thereby draw some understanding of their accounts in relation to their local world.

## Notes

1. Realism is useful because it seeks to distinguish between matters which are fundamental to the concept of locality and those which are separate but which are nevertheless important because of the way in which they interact with it.

Bagguley et al. (1990) sought to develop an explanation of locality on such a basis. They argue that the value of realism is that it allows one to start either by examining a set of 'generating mechanisms' whose interaction produces the particular locality effect, or by studying the effect to learn about the generating mechanisms. An analysis from either level should entail the other.

Nevertheless Bagguley et al's account remains structural in essence. Their methodology was to interview 'key workers', choosing their sample on the basis of their relation to the production process and their response to restructuring.

2. The 'Long Streets' consist of an area of housing in which the streets span the three cluster levels. At the top they are owner occupied and form part of area I. As you go down they become less affluent, although still owner-occupied. At the bottom of the long streets is some of the poorest council housing. This has long been regarded as one of the roughest areas of the town.

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# LEAVING HOME IN RURAL SCOTLAND:

*Choice, Constraint and Strategy*

GILL JONES

## Abstract

*Young people in rural areas are likely to lead a qualitatively different kind of youth from those in towns. A major aspect of the difference between rural and urban youth lies in their patterns of residence and migration. Young people in rural communities may be obliged to leave home for their education, for jobs and for housing, leaving a community which is impoverished by their absence. They may have no choice, and thus be obliged to leave home earlier than they may wish and earlier than those in urban communities. Alternatively, they may find ways of adapting to their different circumstances, eg by staying on at school, by modifying their ambitions, or, among women, by marrying locally. The article considers 'strategies' of adaptation or escape which may consciously or unconsciously be employed by young people in rural Scotland. The research is based on analysis of the Scottish Young People's Survey.*

## Introduction

The wild and lonely landscapes of much of rural Scotland may be attractive to town dwellers who visit them as tourists, but may offer little scope for the young people who grow up there. The issue of rural deprivation has recently returned to the public consciousness partly through research in Scotland (Midwinter, 1990). Rural deprivation is by its very nature less concentrated and therefore less visible than deprivation in the inner city; in consequence, it is both less readily researched and more expensive to overcome. And so the problems of the countryside are increasing. Younger people are moving away. There is a disproportionate number of elderly retired people and low income families in rural areas of Scotland, and the low levels of service provision and poor access to services, reinforce the patterns of deprivation among those without private resources. Public transport is virtually non-existent in many areas, and so for access to services of any kind, private transport (involving a degree of wealth) becomes more and more important. (Midwinter, 1990; see also Boseley, 1990). Housing often affordable only by incomers, may be in short supply, and the problem of homelessness in rural areas has now been recognised (Rural

Development Commission, 1992). Little research has yet been done, however, on the experiences of young people growing up in rural areas. Yet their response to the constraints of rural life may provide the key to understanding the needs of rural communities.

Young people living in rural areas are likely to experience their youth differently from young people who live in towns. Their experience of growing up and becoming adult may be affected by the lack of local provision for leisure, education, training and employment, by the unavailability of a local peer group, and by the difficulty of travelling to centres where facilities and peers exist.

Rural deprivation, lack of local opportunity, is likely to be one of the main structuring effects (cross-cutting class and gender inequalities) on these young people's lives. They may be obliged to leave home earlier than they may wish, and earlier than those in urban communities, in the pursuit of education, a long-term career, a job or a home; alternatively, they may find ways of staying on and adapting to their rural circumstances, for example by opting for a job in the restricted local labour market, or in the case of young women, by marrying locally and starting families. This article considers strategies of adaptation and escape such as these - which may be class and gender related - among young people in rural areas of Scotland.

## Growing up in Britain

The study of rural youth provides an interesting focus for understanding patterns of transition to adulthood in Britain, as it shows up so clearly the relationship between employment, family formation and housing careers. When social policies affecting young people - such as the social security regulations - so obviously fail to take a holistic view of young people and their needs, it is timely to indicate through empirical study the futility of trying to understand young people through focusing on one aspect of their complex lives.

Research on transitions to adulthood in Britain as a whole, shows the complexity of the processes occurring in youth. The period of youth contains strands representing in principle at least the processes of transition from school to the labour market, from the parental home to an independent home, from being the child in a family to perhaps becoming a parent. These transitions - into the labour market, household formation, housing career and family formation - interact with one another. Thus, changing marital and parental status affects employment careers, and these in turn affect household composition and thus housing and income needs. A lot of changes are going on in a young person's life, and it is difficult to understand youth, or the problems of young people, without taking into account the various facets of their lives. In most cases this means understanding young people in the context of their families as well as in their working environments, but in other cases it means understanding homelessness in the context of joblessness and exclusion from family life.

Over and above the need to understand processes in youth, it is important to be aware of inequalities which affect the processes of transition of adulthood. These structural inequalities of social class, gender, race and ethnicity, and other inequalities associated with forms of disability, all affect a young person's life chances, and the extent to which they are able to capitalise on the limited opportunities available, through mobilising to the full their own, or their family's resources (see Jones and Wallace, 1992). In this article, inequalities associated with geographical location are chiefly considered, but there are cross-cutting dimensions of inequality. Individual and family resources are likely to have a bearing on whether 'strategies' are conscious or unconscious responses to choice or constraint (see Crow, 1989 for a useful critique of the concept of strategy).

### **The Scottish Young People's Survey (SYPS)**

The Scottish Young people's Survey<sup>(1)</sup> (SYPS) has been conducted by the Centre for Educational Sociology at Edinburgh University for over two decades. This article draws on cohort data from a 10% sample of all the young people who were in the fourth year (final compulsory year) of secondary schools in Scotland in the 1983/4 school year. They were surveyed first in 1985, when their average age was 16.75 years, again in 1986, when their average age was 17.75, and finally in 1987, when their average age was 19.25 years. For the sake of simplicity, I shall round these average ages at each time point, referring to the cohort as aged 17 in 1985, 18 in 1986 and 19 in 1987, but it

should be remembered that because the cohort was based on a school year rather than the date of birth there is considerable age variation around the mean.

The response rate to the survey target sample of 8044 decreased from around 81% in 1985 to 59% in 1987 (Ritchie et al. 1989). Though the overall sample size is large, the population of Scotland tends to be located mainly within the Central Belt, and there are therefore still severe limitations on the analysis of young people living in rural areas, particularly among the more sparsely-populated remote rural areas of Scotland. The small numbers involved have, for example, limited the possibility of full analysis of gender differences in occupations or of class comparisons. Further work is, however, planned on many of the issues raised in this article, involving a larger rural sample.

The definitions of rural area defined by Stern and Turbin (1987) and used by Wallace (1991) in the south west of England are not readily adaptable to Scotland. Most rural studies cover relatively small areas of England and Wales, defined according to their local characteristics. It is important, nevertheless, to be able to compare types of rural area, and also to make comparisons with towns. The present study of Scotland makes very broad and unsophisticated comparisons between populations living in four types of locality; the four major towns (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee) of more than 100,000 population; other smaller town of 20,000 to 100,000 population (in practice nearly all under 50,000 population); remote rural areas, lying to the west and north of the Caledonian canal, and rural areas in the rest of Scotland (the latter two categories excluding the first two). These four locality types are used in much of the following analysis, though sometimes rural and remote rural areas have to be considered together, because of the small numbers involved. What emerges here is at best a tantalising glimpse of life in rural Scotland. It raises more questions than it answers, and indicates the need for more research.

### **Family Life**

Concern is often expressed in the media and in government circles about a perceived breakdown of family life and need to reinforce 'traditional family values'. In some respects, children in rural families may experience what might be perceived as very 'traditional' forms of family life; agricultural families in particular may reflect the family structures of pre-industrial Britain, in which the household is jointly concerned with the production, and there is little distinction between the public and the private spheres of work



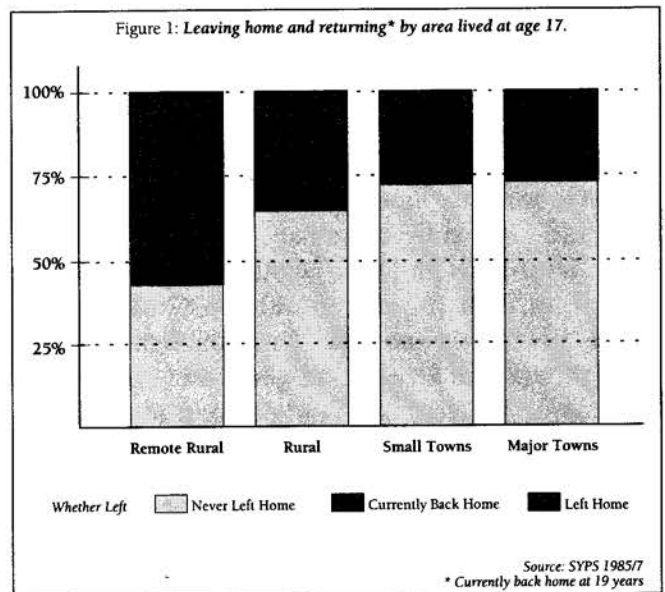
and home. The study of youth in rural areas may therefore throw light on practices where 'traditional family values' are most likely to prevail.

The specifics of family life in rural areas mean that rural households are likely to provide young people with a different home context, or 'launching pad' within which to begin their transitions into adulthood and independent citizenship. There is no magical transformation from dependent child to independent adult when a young person leaves home or at any other time. It is in the home and during childhood that the transition to economic dependence begins. Many types of home environments allow a gradual transition, which involves a period of economic 'inter-dependence' between young people and their parents, within which flows of money are two-way (Jones 1991; see also Morrow, 1992, on younger children). In rural families economic exchanges are more likely to be in the form of labour and services than in the form of money. My own research indicates that in remote rural areas of Scotland, money is less likely to change hands between parents and children than in other types of area (Jones, 1992, unpublished). John Hutson (1987) indicates the extent to which young people are engaged in co-operative productive activity in rural families in Pembrokeshire. Claire Wallace has reached similar conclusions from her study in the extreme south west of England (Wallace et al, 1991). There may therefore be a high level of closeness and co-operation between young people and their families in rural areas.

### Leaving Home

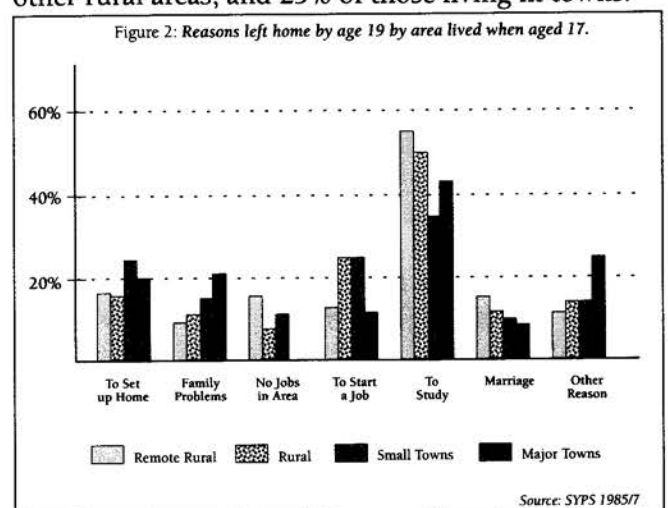
Closeness is not necessarily common to all rural families, however. In rural areas, home and school may be far apart, sometimes too far apart to allow daily commuting on a school bus. Some school children in rural Scotland have to stay away from home in a school hostel during the week, returning home for weekends (see Raffe, 1979). While some young people in rural areas may become heavily involved in the household/farm economy, and be in close contact with their families, others are obliged to separate from their families at an early age. They may thus be socialised into adult roles away from the community rather than within it.

If such a polarity exists, then it is likely to affect patterns of leaving home. Overall, by the age of 19, around one-third of young people have left their parental homes. While it is common for students to go away to college at the age of 18, leaving home below the age of 18 is relatively uncommon, mainly



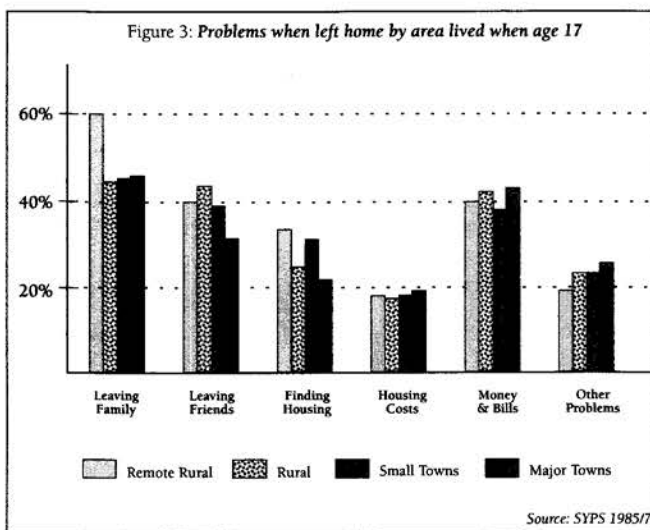
associated among men with taking up, or looking for, a job, and among women with marriage or cohabitation. Leaving home below the age of 18 is also often associated for both sexes with difficulties at home. Jones' study of the National Child Development Study data (1987) indicates that 25% of young people in Britain who left home before the age of 18 did so for 'negative' reasons, such as because they did not get on with their parents. In the SYPS, home leavers at nineteen tend to be students or those who left home for work-related reasons, though among women, family formation transitions provide a further reason for leaving the parental home in some cases.

By the age of nineteen or so, when they were surveyed in 1987, young people who were living in rural areas were more than twice as likely to have left home as those living in the major towns. Figure 1 shows that by the age of 19 years, 54% of people who had been living in remote rural areas at age 17, had left home (though some had returned again). This figure compares with 32% of 19-year-olds living in other rural areas, and 25% of those living in towns.



Reasons for leaving home by the age of nineteen are quite different for young people in rural areas. When asked why they had left home (Figure 2), young people from remote rural areas were far less likely than those in major towns to say they left because they did not get on with their families; only 9% gave this reason, compared with 21% of young people living in major towns. Instead, 16% said they had left because there were no jobs in the area (more than in other groups) and 55% said they had left in order to continue their education (compared with 42% of those in major towns). Leaving home in rural areas seems therefore to be mainly associated with the lack of opportunity in the home area, particularly in terms of employment and education. This lack of local opportunity leads people to leave home earlier than those who live in towns, where more local opportunities exist. No-one living in the major towns said that they had left home because there were no jobs in the area, for example.

Another pattern is, however, beginning to emerge here: 15% of 19 year olds from rural areas had apparently left their parents' homes in order to marry or cohabit, compared with only 8% of those in major towns. I will come back to this point later.



Leaving home was not without pain, according to our survey, but the problems experienced by people leaving home in rural areas varied from those experienced by leavers in towns, as Figure 3 shows. Young people who had left their remote rural homes appeared to be more likely to say that they had missed their families than others: 60% said that leaving their families had been a problem, compared with only 46% of those leaving home in major urban areas. This may relate to the degree of closeness and co-operation occurring in many rural families while

young people are living at home. The distance travelled on leaving home may well be a factor here, too. Urban young people may move only a short distance, while rural young people may not only move greater geographical distances but are likely to have moved away from places which are relatively difficult to reach. In other words, leaving rural homes may be more associated with geographical mobility and migration, and may cut people off more from their families.

Dench (1985) too comments on young people's feelings of affinity for their (rural) home area even when they are thinking of leaving it (and suggests that they are more likely to want to move to small towns than major cities). Her study found that they moved away mainly because of lack of job opportunities in the area:

*It is likely that a far greater proportion of rural young people than at present would either remain in or return to rural areas, if they were given the choice, or, more importantly, if they felt they were given the choice (Dench, 1985:28).*

Too often, it seems, leaving home in a rural area means leaving the community, and too often it may be a step taken unwillingly, a consequence of constraint, or at best of limited choice.

### Leaving the Community

It is important to understand patterns of out-migration among young people brought up in rural areas for two reasons: the first is to do with the quality of the rural community they leave behind, and the second is the quality of life they achieve on leaving home and family. The migration of young people from rural areas is a particular problem because they leave communities which consist increasingly of elderly people, who contribute only marginally to the local economy, but require a higher level of service provision. For communities to thrive, populations should be relatively stable and covering a range of age and economic activity. Some out-migration may be necessary, but many young people who migrate to the towns have problems when they get there, miss community support and may encounter homelessness and unemployment. Life in rural communities may seem dead-end to many, but is there any guarantee that town life is going to be better?

**TABLE 1: Migration between age 17 and age 19**

Column Percentages  
Standardised residuals from model of no association<sup>2</sup>

Area lived at age 19 %	Area lived at age 17					ALL
	Remote Rural	Rural	Small Towns	Major Towns	Out of Scotland	
Remote Rural	65 42.0	1 -9.0	1 -6.5	1 -7.0	-1.1	7
Rural	6 -9.1	70 24.4	6 -14.3	7 -14.1	(1) -2.0	35
Small Towns	4 -6.9	6 -14.0	79 37.0	2 -12.7	(1) -1.4	21
Major Towns	21 -3.7	19 -10.2	11 -11.4	87 28.1	(2) -1.5	33
Out of Scotland	4 -0.4	5 0.5	3 -2.0	4 -0.4	(13) 14.4	4
ALL (=100)	(343)	(1738)	(871)	(881)	(17)	(3850)

Migration from rural areas is common, and therefore gives cause for concern. Table 1 examines the extent of migration among young people in Scotland and its direction, away from remote and other rural areas towards the major towns, with small proportions from each group also moving out of Scotland. While 87% of 17-year-olds living in the major towns were still there two years later, only 65% of 17-year-olds living in remote rural areas were still living there in 1987. 21% percent of the latter had moved into the major towns. A similar pattern occurs among those living in other rural areas and indeed those living in the smaller towns, in a general drift towards the larger urban areas.

Migration out of rural areas is associated with lack of opportunity, reflecting constraint rather than choice. A report prepared for Tai Cymru (1990) indicated that 90% of young people left home for education or work reasons. Among those still living at home, many felt they would have to leave if they were to find work or affordable housing. Analysis of the SYPS (Jones, 1990) showed that among 19-year-olds who had been living in rural areas at 17 years, leaving home in order to start a job or course or to look for work was clearly associated with migration away. While it is possible for young people in urban areas to start a job or go on a course without leaving the area even if they leave home (and for them leaving home may reflect choice), young people from rural areas have no choice (and for them, leaving home and community may reflect constraint). Others, however, appeared to find a different solution: those who left home in order to set up home or to marry,

were more likely to stay in the area than to migrate away.

MacDonald (1988) suggests that in rural England education becomes more than in other circumstances the means of getting on and getting out away from boring 'dead-end' jobs and high levels of local unemployment. For others work represented a release from school, independence and the ability to contribute to the household. Stern and Turbin (1987), on the other hand, report that a lower proportion of rural young were in education after 16 years. This discrepancy may be a problem of measurement; among those still living in rural areas, staying on rates would be lower precisely because students have to leave rural areas to attend colleges or training centres. Willms and Kerr (1988) analysed the SYPS data from 1976-1984 and found that young women in rural areas did considerably better than young men at school. However, they attributed this relatively high female attainment to a lack of local employment opportunities for women, which adversely affected female pupils, so that they stayed longer in education. Men from rural areas were more likely to enter work than those from towns. Education may, as MacDonald suggests in the English case, be an escape route for young people from rural areas, but in the light of these findings, it is more likely to provide a means of escape for women than for men, mainly because it is women who have a greater need for survival strategy.

**TABLE 2: Economic status at age 19 by migration pattern since age 17**

Column Percentages

Migration pattern since age 17			
Lived in rural area at age 17	Stayed in rural area	Migrated to urban area	Migrated out of Scotland
Current economic status	%	%	%
Full time education	13	63	37
Full time paid work	65	25	55
Unemployed	16	10	3
Full time housework	2	0	1
Something else	5	2	2
ALL (=100%)	(1475)	(515)	(91)
Lived in urban area at age 17	Stayed in urban area	Migrated to rural area	Migrated out of Scotland
Economic status	%	%	%
Full time education	27	26	42
Full time paid work	51	53	50
Unemployed	17	15	3
Full time housework	1	1	
Something else	4	5	5
ALL (=100%)	(1562)	(130)	(60)



Table 2 shows respondents' economic status at 19 years, according to the area in which they were living at ages 17 and 19 years, but not, unfortunately, by gender. The table identifies migrants, mainly to towns, and those who stayed in the same area over the three years of the survey. Migrants out of Scotland are also identified. Among those brought up in a rural area, those who have stayed in a rural area are more likely to have a paid job (65%), and more likely (conversely) to be unemployed (16%), than those who have migrated to towns (25% and 10% respectively). This is largely because it is almost impossible to stay on in education in rural areas, and so young people who stay are generally in the labour force. Those who migrate to towns have done so mainly in order to study. Migration by the rural young out of Scotland is mainly for the purpose of work (55%) rather than to go on a course (37%). In contrast, the economic status of young people in urban areas, does not vary between those who have stayed in urban areas and those who have migrated to rural areas.

### Employment and Training

Stern and Turbin (1987) considered rural labour markets in terms of the opportunities they provide for young people. They suggest in the English context that rural labour markets, unlike urban ones, cannot be defined in terms of travel to work areas, because many rural areas rely on job opportunities in more than one urban market. Rural opportunities therefore need to be measured partly in terms of degrees of access to urban areas of employment. There are different types of labour market, however, including small locally-owned rural firms with national or regional markets, which as Stern and Turbin point out are more effective than larger subsidiary employers, for stimulating local employment growth. The authors found no evidence of a separate and distinct rural labour market for young people. A full study of employment opportunities in rural areas would need to take these issues into account.

TABLE 3: Occupation by area lived in at age 19, among those living in remote rural or rural areas at age 17\*

Column Percentages				
Area lived at age 19				
Occupation at age 19 Code and description	Rural	Urban	Out of Scotland	
	%	%	%	
43 Nurses	3	19	4	
101 Sales managers	1	1		
115 Clerks and cashiers	27	20	9	
116 Retail cashiers	1	1		
118 Typists	6	3	7	
19 Office machinists	3	3		

TABLE 3: Contd.

Area lived at age 19				
Occupation at age 19 Code and description	Rural	Urban	Out of Scotland	
	%	%	%	
125 Shop assistants	11	20	9	
126 Shelf fillers	1	1		
135 Armed forces	2	1	56	
143 Chefs, cooks	2	3		
144 Waiters	2	7	4	
145 Bar staff	2	5	2	
151 Domestic	2	1	7	
156 Hospital orderlies	2			
158 Cleaners, sweepers	2	1		
159 Hairdressers	4	1		
166 Farmworkers	3			
168 Gardeners	2	3		
186 Butchers	2	1		
212 Sewers, embroiderers	3	1		
214 Carpenters, joiners	3	2		
248 Metal workers	2	1		
249 Motor mechanics	2	1		
253 Electricians	3	1		
260 Plumbers	1			
282 Painters	1	1		
283 Elect assemblers	1	1		
287 Packers	2	2		
313 Building labourers	1	1		
333 Stores/warehousemen	2	2		
346 Labourers	1	1		
ALL (=100%)	(787)	(150)	(45)	

Notes: Rural = remote rural + rural  
Urban = small towns + major towns  
\* Only the main occupations are included in this table

Even within the limited scope of the present study, we can consider the kinds of jobs for which young people migrated to towns, and the kinds of jobs they were able to obtain if they stayed in their rural areas. This does give some indication of the difference in opportunities offered by different local labour markets, though clearly the analysis is at a more simplistic level. Table 3 shows the occupations in 1987 of those who were living in rural areas when aged seventeen, according to whether they were migrant or non-migrant. Only occupations in which twenty or more young people were working are included in this and the following table. The small cell sizes do not allow for differentiation by gender, but nevertheless reflect an overall gender segregation of occupations. Thus, for example, jobs in the armed forces, carpenters, painters and farm workers are mainly male, while sewers and embroiderers, domestics, hairdressers and nurses are mainly female.

Most male migrants out of Scotland joined the Armed Forces - as many as 56% of all migrants. This may represent a strategic decision on the part of young

men wanting to move out of rural areas and learn a trade, since the Armed Forces provide housing and indeed a surrogate household. It is not perhaps as useful a strategy for young women, not only because opportunities for young women in the Armed Forces are more limited, but also because women seem to prefer to live more independently (see Jones 1990). Respondents who moved into Scottish towns obtained jobs as shop assistants (20%), or clerks and cashiers (20%). 19%, predominantly women, were in nursing - and nursing is attractive to female migrants because accommodation may be available, just as the armed forces are attractive to male migrants. Those who stay in the rural areas are at work in a variety of occupations, though again, most are clerks, cashiers and shop assistants. It does not appear from this table that the standard of jobs is any lower in the rural areas, and indeed median earnings varied little by area across Scotland (Jones 1990: Table 8.12). The types of jobs young people take up are therefore similar whether they work in rural or urban labour markets, thus indicating that there the youth labour market varies little between area types. It appears that in the shorter term it is the scarcity of jobs for young people in rural areas which forces them to migrate to the towns where more jobs exist.

Migration does not necessarily lead to better jobs at nineteen, therefore. Nor is it restricted to the more career-orientated. Those wanting qualifications or jobs with a career structure are unlikely to find either in their home rural area, and may have to migrate to urban areas if they are to fulfil their ambitions in the longer term. Very little training is available in rural areas. Dench (1985) and Stern and Turbin (1987) point out that the predominance of small firms in rural areas is one reason. But as Dench (1985) indicates, many lower ability young people are also likely to become dispirited in the country and want to move to towns. There still exists a folk belief that town streets are paved with gold - an attitude which has been found to influence young Scots who 'escaped' to London and became homeless there (Borderline/Shelter 1991).

It was suggested above that rural labour markets offer fewer opportunities for young women than for young men (Willms and Kerr, 1988). The effect may mean that more women than men stay on in full-time education to avoid unemployment and to improve their chances of finding work, but this is not a strategy available to all women. Given gender disadvantages at the local level, some women are likely to have to migrate to towns for work. Others find local alternatives.

### ***Access to jobs: information and transport***

Where there are jobs in rural areas, access to them will depend on access to job information and transport. First, let us consider job information. Good jobs in rural areas tend to be nationally, rather than locally, advertised. Young people in rural areas may therefore have less knowledge of the higher level jobs in the rural labour market. There is a need for local knowledge of the labour market (Coles 1988), but the types of jobs young people get to hear about through their families are mainly in agricultural and forestry work (Stern and Turbin 1987). A high level of self-employment among rural families was found in Wallace's study of the south west of England and 31% of those in remote areas reported that they had worked for their family in the last year (Wallace et al 1990). In such circumstances it is not surprising that those wanting to enter agricultural work would hear of jobs through local and informal networks, such as their families.

Family farming plays a large part in the Scottish agricultural economy. The 1990 Census data shows the extent to which agricultural workers are working in family concerns in Scotland (Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture 1990: Table C11). One third of all male full-time agricultural workers (and nearly half of all female) work on a holding occupied by a member of their family. Among part-time workers, the proportion is even higher among men (46%). Among full-time workers in agriculture, young men under 20 years appear from the Census to be particularly likely to be involved in a family holding. In comparison, the SYPS (1989) data on 19-year-olds indicates that across Scotland as a whole, only 4% have full-time main jobs in family businesses.

Respondents to the SYPS were asked whether they heard of their job through their family or friends. Among young people who had been living in rural areas when aged 17, 34% of non-migrants heard of their job through family or friends, compared with 43% of migrants to towns; among those living in urban areas at 17, 34% of non-migrants heard of their jobs through family or friends (Jones 1990). As far as young people in rural areas are concerned, there is no apparent benefit from staying in the parental home in terms of access to job information. There local informal networks appear to be more able to help them get jobs in towns.

Whether or not young people leave home to take up jobs depends partly on whether parents are in

employment. Overall, they appear more likely to leave home earlier when their parents are not in full-time employment (the reasons are complex, but in so far as they are instrumental, probably include parents' usefulness as a source of job information - see Jones 1991). The decision whether to look locally for work or to look elsewhere may also be affected by the type of work in which parents are engaged. The main influence is likely to be that of the father on the son, since young women tend to work in rather different segments of the labour market than their mothers (often, for example, working full-time rather than part-time). Indeed, this may be an aspect of young women's disadvantage in local labour markets. Whether or not parents can help their children with job information depends on their own position in the labour market. In view of the above analysis, it is likely that young men who remain in their home community are far more likely to be in the same industry as their fathers, than those who migrate.

**TABLE 4: Industry of father and son (at age 19) by area son lived at age 17 and whether son had migrated**

<i>Column Percentages and standardised residuals from model of no association<sup>2</sup></i>					
	<b>Father In SIC*</b>	<b>Son in same SIC</b>	<b>Std Reside</b>	<b>Sons in SIC(ALL)</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>	
<b>Rural area throughout</b>					
0	Agriculture/forestry	10	47	8.6	9
1	Energy and water	12	5	1.9	2
2	Raw materials	3	0	-0.5	2
3	Engineering	6	20	1.2	12
4	Consumer Goods	7	16	0.4	13
5	Construction	14	40	4.1	18
6	Distribution/tourism	10	40	3.7	18
7	Transport/communication	8	8	1.8	3
8	Financial Services	2	22	1.6	8
9	Public Services	28	23	2.0	16
<b>ALL (=100%)</b>		<b>(468)</b>			<b>(468)</b>
<b>Migrated from rural to urban area</b>					
0	Agriculture/forestry	4			3
1	Energy and water	9			1
2	Raw materials	6			1
3	Engineering	7			11
4	Consumer Goods	6			9
5	Construction	6			9
6	Distribution/tourism	16			40
7	Transport/communication	14			1
8	Financial Services	4			7
9	Public Services	29			17
<b>ALL (=100%)</b>		<b>(70)</b>			<b>(70)</b>
<b>Urban area throughout</b>					
0	Agriculture/forestry	1	0	-0.2	1
1	Energy and water	3	15	4.6	1
2	Raw materials	4	0	-0.4	1
3	Engineering	9	19	1.7	10
4	Consumer Goods	8	22	2.3	9
5	Construction	13	30	2.6	16
6	Distribution/tourism	11	33	0.4	30
7	Transport/communication	12	13	2.0	6
8	Financial Services	4	14	0.7	9
9	Public Services	36	15	-0.7	17
<b>ALL (=100%)</b>		<b>(399)</b>			<b>(399)</b>

\* Standard Industrial Classification (1980) of father and son

In order to test this hypothesis, Table 4 examines the Standard Industrial Classification (OPCS, 1980) of fathers and sons according to the area in which both lived in 1985 and the area in which the son lived when aged 19 in 1987. The standardised residuals<sup>(2)</sup> show clearly that among sons who have remained in rural areas, there is a much closer association between their industry and that of their fathers, compared with urban fathers and sons. Where fathers are in agriculture, fishing or forestry, their sons are relatively likely to be in the same industry, if they have not migrated away. Where fathers and sons are living in towns, there are similar generational attachments, but weaker and to different industries: namely energy and water supply, consumer goods, construction, and transport and communication. In all these cases, it is likely that job information can be passed from father to son. The finding that generational attachment to particular industries is stronger in rural areas reflects, of course, the relative lack of occupational choice in these areas as well as the relative strength of family tradition.

Transport is also an issue, since, as Stern and Turbin (1987) have pointed out, jobs may depend on private transport in areas where there is no access to public transport. Dench (1985) defines the transport problem as one of accessibility rather than distance. Wallace (1991) found that rural parents often gave cars to their children, rather than other kinds of gifts. However, in order to help their adult children with expensive gifts like cars (which in Scotland may be more appropriate to the roads and weather conditions than motor bikes), parents have to be fairly wealthy or make great sacrifices. Access to the widest range of local jobs is likely to be restricted to the children of better-off families, for this reason alone. The alternatives may be lower status, more local jobs, or unemployment.

### Unemployment

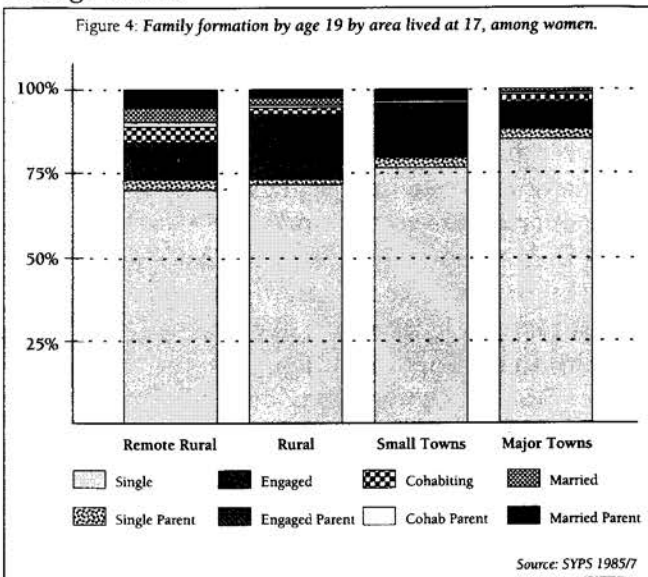
In dispersed rural communities, unemployment can be particularly isolating and individuating, according to MacDonald (1988: 103), in contrast to unemployment in towns where a greater concentration of unemployment may make the experience more bearable. Unemployment in rural areas is in practice higher than in urban areas (Table 2), but even this may be a distortion of a grimmer picture, since the rural unemployed may move to towns to seek work (Jones, 1990). Amongst the current rural population, unemployment may also be under-counted; it may be less visible in rural situations and Errington (1988) has found 'disguised unemployment' in farming families.



## Family formation

Studies have found a relationship between unemployment and family formation. Payne (1989), for example, found a two-way relationship in the case of young men. Wallace (1987) found that men were less likely to be unemployed once they had embarked on family formation careers. Studies of young women have suggested that fertility may even be an alternative to unemployment in some cases since motherhood at least provides access to an income and housing. It seems unlikely that motherhood is a conscious strategy on the part of young women, and there is certainly no evidence that women consciously decide to have children in order to gain access to housing (Greve 1990). Nevertheless, motherhood and partnership may provide young women in particular with a social role which is preferable to unemployment.

According to SYPS data, 77% of young people in remote rural areas were single at the age of 19, compared with 88% of those in towns; in all, 11% were married or cohabiting in remote rural areas, compared with 5% in large towns. Furthermore, 10% were parents, compared with only 5% of those living in large towns.



Given the age difference at marriage or cohabitation between men and women, it is not to be expected that many 19-year-old men will have embarked on family formation careers. Figure 4 examines the extent to which women are involved in family formation, and indicates that among women still living in remote rural areas in 1987, marriage and parenthood are far more common than among other geographical groups. 13% of women still living in remote rural areas were married or cohabiting at the age of nineteen, compared with 4% of women in the major

towns. Thirteen percent of women living in remote rural areas were parents, compared with 5% of women living in the major towns, suggesting that parenthood is more associated with marriage in rural areas. It seems clear from these findings that women in remote rural areas embark on family formation earlier than those in urban areas. Either migration delays (or is an alternative to) early family formation, or family formation is an alternative, for women, to migration. The hypothesis arising out of this analysis (which remains to be tested) is that by marrying (older men?), young women may be able to remain in the same neighbourhood as their families of origin, rather than migrate. If this is so, then it would be interesting to clarify how this mechanism operates.

## Conclusion

Young people in rural areas leave home earlier than those in the rest of Scotland. Generally, this appears to be a matter of constraint rather than choice, reflecting lack of local opportunity, in education, jobs and housing. In rural areas, leaving home tends therefore to be associated with migration or geographical mobility. However, those who left home in order to start education or work were more likely to have been geographically mobile than those who left home in order to set up home or marry. Those who leave home to marry (mainly women) appear mainly to stay in the same location as their family of origin. Young women in remote rural areas were far more likely to be married or cohabiting by the age of nineteen than women in the major towns. Marriage may represent an alternative to migration for some women. The overall picture is that young people move into urban areas because jobs are more plentiful there, rather than because jobs are better or because they want to leave home. Similarly they leave home in order to continue their education in the urban areas where facilities exist. If they stay in the rural areas near their families, they are more likely to suffer unemployment and more likely to enter into early family formation.

The mechanisms which cause some people to migrate to the towns and others to stay in rural areas are complex. There may be strategies for escape, such as joining the armed forces (for men) nursing (for women), or staying on in education. There may equally be strategies for remaining in the local rural community; among women, this may be through marriage, among men it may mean lowering one's aspirations and taking up, through family contacts perhaps, a job in the limited local labour market. It seems even from the limited analysis described here,

that there are important gender differences in the types of conscious or unconscious strategies available. It seems clear, however, that housing and employment are closely linked, and that a widening of opportunities on the one side needs to be balanced with a similar expansion on the other.

Increasingly, studies of homelessness are identifying rural homelessness. This takes two forms: it includes those who are currently homeless in rural areas, some sleeping in holiday chalets or other temporary accommodation during the winters when there is no tourism (Hutson and Liddiard, 1991), and it includes young people from rural areas who have become homeless in towns (Borderline et al, 1991). The problem of homelessness among young people in Britain is increasingly blamed on poor family relationships, or on the notion that they are leaving home too young and for reasons which are not socially legitimated. By studying the situation of young

people leaving home in rural areas, we can perhaps re-assess these prevailing notions.

If further research is done in this area, then it will be interesting to understand more about the mechanisms involved in deciding whether to remain in the community or to migrate away. If we are concerned about the preservation of rural communities, then it is important to develop ways in which an age and gender balance can be maintained. Some young people will leave their communities though, and we should think also about their needs when they migrate to towns. Some, but not all, will have kinship networks which can help; the incidence of homelessness among young people from rural areas suggests, however, that some young people lack the kind of informal advice and support they will need if they are to make a successful move into urban life, and may need more formal help.

#### Notes

1. I am indebted to Scottish Homes for funding the research project from which this article is drawn. The (SYPS) cohort survey used in this analysis was funded by the Scottish Office Education Department, Industry Department for Scotland and the Training Agency, and conducted by the Centre for Educational Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. My thanks to Lynn Jamieson and David Raffe for their very helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.
2. As a rule of thumb, standardised residuals of over 2 represent a significant positive association, while a residual of less than -2 represents a significant negative association.

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# CLASSIC TEXTS REVISITED

*The Milson-Fairbairn Report*  
Department of Education and Science (1969),  
*Youth and Community Work in the 70s*, London, HMSO

JOHN HOLMES

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## Political Contexts

It is impossible to read any historical text without that reading being influenced by current concerns and interests. It is to be hoped that we see the past with greater clarity through more recent history, and that we see the present and future more clearly through the past. This re-reading has taken place in the context of an election of a Conservative Government for a record fourth term, and trying to see what is appropriate policy in what can only be described as a threatening context for local authority Youth Services, if not all youth work.

The Milson-Fairbairn report, or more correctly 'Youth and Community Work in the 70s' was published by the Youth Service Development Council, chaired by Denis Howell, M.P. Despite the references for the need for financial constraints and limited resources, the political context in which the report was constructed was very different from today. Labour Governments, led by Harold Wilson, had been in power since 1964 and there had been a considerable expansion of education services in the 1960s, including the Youth Service following the recommendations of the Albemarle Report of 1959. The Milson-Fairbairn review was initiated by the Labour Government in the late 1960s, and undertaken by two separate committees, one chaired by Dr. Fred Milson (Head of the Youth Service Department at Westhill College, Birmingham) and the other by Mr. A N Fairbairn (Director of Education of Leicestershire County Council). Although the report was received by the then Labour Government its recommendations were still being considered when a Conservative Government was elected in 1970, led by Edward Heath.

It was at this point that more recent influences started to have a hand in Youth Policy. The Milson-Fairbairn report has the distinction of being one of the first pieces of policy to be considered by the incoming Secretary of State for Education, Margaret Thatcher. She rejected it. The report remains important partly because it did have a limited influence in the 1970s, partly because it addressed concerns which are still with us today, and partly because its

rejection can inform us about the nature of Thatcherite social policy which has dominated the rest of the twentieth century.

## Progressive Education/Social Democratic Assumptions

It is not hard to see why the report was not welcomed by Margaret Thatcher. Not only did it derive from the legacy of the previous Labour Government but it was much influenced by the thinking of the 1960s, the decade which is held up by Thatcherites as being the source of many of the social ills of the late twentieth century. The report tried to link Youth and Community Work with progressive education developments in schools and elsewhere, and did so in a framework which largely assumed a social democratic consensus. The conclusions and recommendations were not in themselves radical, in a political sense, but the assumptions of the report would be seen as ideological by the new Right. The sections on schooling, in particular, detailing the Newsom Report (paras. 94-6), the comprehensive approach (paras. 99-102), the effects of new approaches to learning (paras. 104-6); and on further education, in particular detailing the growth of General Studies (para. 138) and Student Activities (paras. 139-140) may well have been written as largely descriptive of trends in schooling and FE. in the 1960s. These progressive trends led to potential openings for the Youth Service for example.

*Informal techniques, such as group work and free discussion, which encourage genuine face-to-face encounters between teacher and student, become increasingly valuable to schools. We think that the total effect of all these new approaches to learning will be to blur the traditional distinctions between, formal education and the Youth Service .... (para. 106).*

However in attempting to link the development of the Youth Service with these trends will have done little to give it a positive image with the new Conservative Government.



Harder to identify in detail, but implicit in much of the report was the social democratic assumption that the Welfare State was here to stay and that the Youth Service (or rather as was recommended the Youth *and* Community Service) just needed to be recognised as an important part of state planning alongside other aspects of the Education and Social Services. The report was written in a way that concurred with the 'end of ideology' views of Daniel Bell and C.A.R. Crosland of the 1960s. It is true that in the most theoretical section of the report on 'The Active Society' (paras. 158-174) it is stated that,

*We find ourselves unable to answer the question. 'What kind of Youth Service do we want? Until we have answered the previous question 'What kind of society do we want?' In the most stringent sense, we think that a value-free approach is not feasible (para. 158).*

It is also true that some of the ideas deriving from the concept of the Active Society (from the U.S. sociologist Amitai Etzioni, a functionalist) could be seen on first sight as coming close to modern Conservative views on citizenship where individuals are encouraged to take responsibility on a range of public bodies. However on closer examination it can be seen that what is being advocated is involvement of all, especially young people, in a growing public sector which is contrasted to the 'controlled robots' (p.60) of the market economy of production and consumption. Community development is advocated as an alternative to the perceived limits of traditional family based local networks which are seen as inevitably withering away. Thus the democratisation of the Welfare State is advocated almost in opposition to the two Conservative key themes of market forces and the family.

### **Community Development**

The key to the Milson-Fairbairn report is the concept of community development. It is a key that many would argue (then and now) opened a can of worms for the Youth Service in the 1970s, a can which was only shut again in the 1980s, following the Thompson report and the return to Youth Service. Some would even argue that the reduced state of the Youth Service today, and questions of survival, can be linked to these attempts to take youth work into links with community development. Although the Milson-Fairbairn report was rejected this was where it had the major impact, primarily in the addition of 'and community' to many local authority Youth Services, and adding 'community and' to many of the 2 year youth work training courses for full-timers.

It seems clear that the emphasis on community development derived from both optimism and concerns about the then Youth Service. Growth since Albemarle had been considerable. Expenditure per capita on young people had risen by 120% in real terms from 1958 to 1968, the number of part-time workers by 215% (to 10,107 in LEAs), and the number of full-time workers by 238% (to 1639 in LEAs and voluntary organisations, aided by LEA funds) (table, p.142-3). It had already been agreed that the 1 year emergency training course at the National College, Leicester should be replaced by 2 year courses run in institutions of higher education. The image was of a small but increasingly professional service, and increasingly based in the statutory sector.

There was optimism about the future but concerns that there was a declining proportion of young people attracted (down from 1 in 3 at the time of Albemarle to 29%) and that girls and older young people generally had a lower level of interest in the Youth Service (para. 40). It was also noted that the image of the Youth Service was poor or non-existent in influential outside bodies (paras. 71-84).

### **Youth and Community?**

These weaknesses reinforced, in the views of the authors, that the emerging Youth Service must look outside its own clubs and centres to develop links with schools and further education, drop the 14-20 age limit, and do so in a framework of community development. This involved a recognition, particularly in the section on the 'Young Adult Group' (paras. 191-235) that the transition to adulthood, which was occurring at younger ages, often coincided with a rejection of youth provision. This was explained as a rejection of Youth Service as 'providers' and it was recommended that increased active participation by young people through community development approaches would help to rectify the alienation of young people from the Youth Service.

The idea of community development is a complex one which has different meanings according to the starting point and context. The report is not particularly helpful in defining carefully the type of community development envisaged and it almost appears that the idea of community development was used as a way of trying to bring together two different reports. The Milson Committee seemed to be trying to bring community development approaches into youth work, whereas the Fairbairn Committee was trying to bring youth work into the Community College approach developed in Leicestershire and Cam-

bridgeshire. Certainly the result in the 1970/80s was endless discussions on whether youth were losing out by the inclusion of community, and the compromise position reached by some that the emphasis should be on youth *in* community, not youth and community.

It has to be recognised that the emphasis in Milson-Fairbairn (and even in Milson *and* Fairbairn) was on youth but the criticism can maybe be made that the pre-conditions could have been laid out more clearly as to when community development approaches would benefit young people. Despite the cautionary comments concerning the role of community associations (and the National Federation of Community Associations) (paras. 206-207) the result in local authorities where community associations were strong was often the opposite of that intended by Milson-Fairbairn, with opportunities for young people reduced relative to those for adult groups.

The community development model operating in the new towns of the 1960s was commented on favourably (paras. 373-378) but this was not able to be transferred to more traditional urban settings. Possibly a model similar to that of comprehensivisation could have been suggested whereby local authorities submitted plans for approval to the DES (or elsewhere) for 'going' community. This is wholly hypothetical with the DES rejecting the report's conclusions.

A clearer example where more detailed empirical investigations might have led to more cautious conclusions about adding community was in terms of whether the emerging youth work profession was strong enough to maintain its identity in the proposed new community contexts of schools/colleges/social services. The welcoming of 'joint appointments' (i.e. with schools/F.E.) did not sufficiently take into consideration that not only were 75% of full-timers in those posts from a teacher background (para. 283) but very few had received any youth work training with their teacher training. Despite the rise in youth options within teacher training in the 1970s the numbers entering joint appointments (or even youth and community work posts) with solely a teacher training background rose in the 1970s. It would have helped if the moves to restrict qualified JNC status to those undergoing specialist training had been agreed earlier in the 70s as this would have helped to achieve the necessary professional identity. Of course this would only make sense if local authorities like Leicestershire had recognised JNC as well as teacher qualifications as a basis for entry to Community Colleges/F.E.

## **Ideological Differences**

The divisions that occurred in the Service in the 70s around the inclusion of community were as much to do with underlying philosophy as with the balance between youth and community. The critique of traditional youth work as being too heavily based around traditional leisure pursuits, and not in touch with the real concerns of young people, turned into a critique of centre-based work which was just as relevant to community centres as youth centres. The idea of workers acting as wardens of buildings, policing the activities of users, and constrained by local authority bureaucracy led to a student-led preference for community work (especially in voluntary organisations) or detached youth work.

The positions adopted in the 1970s constituted an ideological rejection of social democratic assumptions of the state supported Youth and Community Service. This occurred from the left by students in the training agencies and from the right by the Conservative Government. This was not predicted by Milson-Fairbairn because the conception of community development adopted whilst recognising the value of a critical stance, particularly by young adults, saw the aim as integration of young people within an evolving society. The lessons of the CDPs are not mentioned: that community development can lead to a more fundamental critique of the structural inequalities of class and power.

The limited notion of community development envisaged within the Milson-Fairbairn report is illustrated in their discussion of the position of girls and young women, and 'immigrants'. The suggestion that the development of Home Economics in schools could do much to rectify the criticism that the Youth Service has too often ignored the needs of girls (para. 288) shows the extent to which the report was out of touch with the feminist critique, which with the anti-racist movement did so much to challenge social democratic assumptions and fuelled a rejection of conventional welfare provision.

## **Lessons for to-day?**

So what lessons are to be learnt from the Milson-Fairbairn report? It might appear that the proposals satisfied nobody - not the youth and community work field that was divided by the proposals, not the government who could have supported the proposals but chose not to, and certainly not young people who despite bearing much of the brunt of the economic upheavals of the late 70s and 80s have not turned to

the Youth Service but have been on the receiving end of new forms of youth policy, more to do with social control. It cannot be known what effect the Milson-Fairbairn report would have had if its proposals had been agreed and introduced properly. There is a case for saying that the addition of community development could have been a successful marriage, from the evidence of local authorities where it was introduced with care and commitment.

It is less controversial to say that despite shortcomings the Milson-Fairbairn report was attempting to deal with issues that remain with us today. The definition chosen of Youth Work as,

*the response by informal methods to the personal, educational and social needs of young people (para. 152)*

was broad enough to be flexible to changing approaches but specific enough to help a developing professional identity.

Many of the recommendations have a remarkably modern ring, such as the insistence on the need for a 3 year training course for full-time workers, and that priority should be given to socially deprived young people who had left school. Also the importance of developing inter-agency links, particularly with schools following the recognition that schools were taking an increasingly important role in young people's lives, is even more true today.

The needs of young people are even greater today, especially around issues such as unemployment and homelessness which were not even mentioned in Milson-Fairbairn, and the value of informal methods remains just as true. It is easy now to see the Report as unrealistically optimistic after recent years but it remains important to keep on making these points. In this increasingly competitive climate any failure of nerve and simple acceptance of the 'new reality' can only lead to others, either in the public or private sectors, continuing to take over the role of the Youth Service. The self belief of Milson-Fairbairn needs to combine with the recognition that publicising concrete examples of successful practice in a variety of areas may be more influential than big ideas such as community development, which are open to rejection on ideological grounds.

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## WORKING SPACE

*Doing it for Themselves, Young People Organising*

**CAROLYNE WILLOW**

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The Children Act 1989 has been commonly accepted as a great friend of the movement for children's rights. Particularly it is expected that those children who are being looked after by local authorities will now be accorded new amounts of respect and involvement. Social Services Departments are to follow in the footsteps of other public welfare provision - hence consumer participation, agency accountability and quality assurance systems are to be the norm. Unlike developments in education, health and housing, for example, the legislative and regulatory changes in social work make explicit reference to children as service recipients. In short children (as consumers) do matter.

As with any new legislation, it is naively optimistic to anticipate overnight changes in individual attitude and bureaucratic manoeuvrings. This is especially pertinent when considering the effects of legal intervention in relationships that are typically characterised by long and complex histories of oppression and power imbalance. When considering the possible effects of legislation upon the relationship between social workers and children, and between children and policy-makers, one has to give regard to the very entrenched ideologies and social forces governing such relationships. Children have traditionally been viewed as second rate citizens, second rate to adults that is. (Of course not all adults are treated equally but the discrimination they face is less concerned with assumptions about age and more involved with categorising according to colour of skin, sex and economic class for example. Obviously, children too are faced with such discriminations.) Arguably then it is inevitable that children's assumed inferior status will impinge upon any of their relationships with adults. Plainly, the vast machinery of Social Service Departments, peopled by adults, will have many sacrifices to make in the coming years if children's voices are to be heard. And the responsibility for such giving up of power lies with us all.

As a child care social worker I have had my share of frustration and sadness when working with children and young people in care. It has been this experience which has prompted my interest in pursuing group-

work. The expected arrival of the Children Act assisted my bargaining power with regards to funding and also served to sanitise any possible notions that my expectations were out of place and impractical. Another happening which helped a great deal was the arrival of Jacqui, a student social worker, into the area. She too was very keen and proved to be an invaluable asset to the group.

So in February of last year the 'Social Group' began with a membership of seven young people, their average age being thirteen. They were all white young people and were living in either foster-care or in children's homes. The selection procedure was based upon age and nothing else. All young people in our area were sent an introductory leaflet which myself and Jacqui had prepared. These were sent out individually, and as far as we know, every young person received their own copy. The young people were then invited to contact us either direct or through their social worker. We eventually received interest from the seven young people who were to become the Social Group.

Jacqui and I were aware of our own power and of how we could affect the group processes. We enlisted the assistance of a colleague in Child and Family Therapy to, among other things, remind us of our original aims. He was to help us in developing trust and provided us with a forum to reflect and plan. Paul never participated in any of the group sessions and accordingly did not meet with any of the young people.

Because of the uniqueness of this group we anticipated that the young people would be wary and apprehensive when coming along to the first session. Thus we visited the young people individually, answering questions and generally reassuring them that our motivations were good ones. Unsurprisingly there was little trust forthcoming. I was particularly viewed with scepticism as I was a 'real social worker'. Jacqui had the fact that she was a student in her favour - the implication being that she still had time to see sense. The young people were quite right to question why we should be bothered and question

they did. Generally though I think we managed to prove ourselves - that is, they all came along on the first night.

The group ran for ten weeks and only one young person missed one of the sessions. Throughout these ten weeks we did a variety of things. We talked, we played, we laughed, we learnt, we complained, we shouted and some of us cried. Most of it proved exhausting on mine and Jacqui's part. I found difficulty in balancing my libertarian tendencies with the need to prevent the group from becoming directionless and boring. Basically it took a lot of work enabling the young people to structure and do things for themselves. They had not been used to taking control, particularly in the presence of adults/social workers. More surprisingly these young people were not used to talking about being in care. I was shocked that one young woman who had been living in a children's home for years had never talked with the other young people she was living with about being in care. It would appear that such discussion just does not happen. And it is not because there is nothing to say.

After initial worries about confidentiality were alleviated, and only when the young people began to trust each other and Jacqui and myself, the stories began to pour. Intimate exchanges became commonplace and a sense of collective experience developed. Horrible incidents were matched with equally horrible ones and feelings of injustice were mobilised. The young people developed interest in one another and week by week they would ask each other about home, about school, about their review which they were dreading but attended anyway - questions were being asked which they would never have asked weeks previously. And some of these young people had for years attended the same school and sat in classes together but still no talk about being in care.

Most of the sessions were loosely structured by Jacqui and me prior to the group meeting. Thus we would begin with warming up games (which went down well) then we would prepare tea before another, longer activity followed. Jacqui and I prepared the food and washed up but this soon became a group task. Some of the young men needed coaxing in this area but, apart from this, things ran smoothly in the kitchen. We had purposely booked the local community centre because of its facilities (also because we wanted to distance ourselves from the area office). Some evenings we spent longer in the kitchen, making pizzas and pancakes for example. Surprisingly role-play was a very popular activity with the young

people. In particular there was much enjoyment when role-playing social workers (Jacqui and I were allocated roles of a baby and a dog respectively in a heated scene where a social worker tries to steal a baby and dog goes for social worker's ankle.) The sights were revealing.

Part of our aim in setting up this group was to inform the young people about their notional rights whilst being in care. Thus we talked about the Children Act and about the projected changes. We also talked about the National Association of Young People in Care and about how this is fully organised by young people who are, or who have been, in care. Interests raised at this point and the young people wanted to know more. I had already been in contact with Mary Moss, who was then the London Development worker, and she was keen to come and meet with everybody. Consequently a date was set and Mary invited.

Mary's visit proved very successful and the young people were impressed and excited by what N.A.Y.P.I.C. stands for. So much were they stirred that the 'Social Group' henceforth became Nottinghamshire N.A.Y.P.I.C.

The ten weeks had not yet expired when the nature of the group had, in theory, radically changed. Also, as time went by, four of the seven young people stated that they no longer wished to continue after the ten weeks. Thus Jacqui and I tried to maintain a balance between the usual activities of the old group and the different demands of being a N.A.Y.P.I.C. group.

We officially ended the 'Social Group' as planned after ten weeks. This probably sounds more complicated than it was. The ending was symbolised by an Italian meal out, which was decided by strength of feeling. Apart from taxi related stress (the taxis which these young people used throughout the duration of the group invariably arrived at the wrong time or at the wrong place) this evening was lovely. It gave us all an opportunity to reflect and consider our achievements, as well as think about what we would have changed. For those of us who were to be involved with N.A.Y.P.I.C. it offered us the chance to look forward. Nevertheless there were many good-byes (addresses and telephone numbers had been exchanged weeks before) and the odd tear was shed.

Since April Nottinghamshire N.A.Y.P.I.C. has been meeting, on average, every three weeks. We have had a television interview, we were involved in the County Council's review of residential care and we have facilitated training sessions on the needs of young

people in care. New members have joined and we have been given a setting up grant and administrative support. At the moment we are in search of our own premises to provide a base from which we can work. We have been impressed by the commitment shown by our Social Services Department so far and we look forward to the group expanding and involving even more young people. Importantly the group has maintained its focus upon *young people's* needs and views and any adult involvement has had to be on these terms. Recently we have decided that the group could benefit from the help of another adult. As a consequence we have interviewed interested people - a unique experience for both candidates and interviewers!

Young people in care have lots to benefit from group-work activity. This is particularly so when they are able to self organise. Obviously I am not arguing that there is no place for adults in this : clearly if I were I would be shooting myself in the foot given my own involvement. The Children Act is not being implemented by Social Services Departments up and down the country. Apart from, and in conjunction with other developments, there is a definite ethos which is calling for young people to assert themselves and for

the adults around them to listen. Given the track records of many of these institutions, there should be little surprise if the new breed of consumers (namely children) display large amounts of cynicism. Similarly it is overoptimistic to believe that young people have the confidence or practice to engage in such activities. N.A.Y.P.I.C. is an organisation which has evolved in an era where child participation in mainstream planning and service-delivery has been notably absent. Its value is in its independent and often antagonistic nature. It is an organisation which has no vested interests other than those of young people themselves. But, perhaps more importantly, it is a forum for young people to share their commonalities and to reject their previous fatalisms. For all of these reasons it is imperative that groups continue to emerge and that young people do not become co-opted by the new look Social Services, but maintain their presence from without. And for those of us who are within the system, we can be committed to encouraging and assisting such activity. Client self-determination has always been held up as a worthwhile goal for social workers to ascribe to. Now is the time for our younger clients to be allowed to express such determination.



# POPULAR FRONT

## Football

### *The Power and the Passion*

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#### Introduction

This piece does not profess to contain any painstakingly researched explanations for the decades long malaise which has afflicted this very British game or the recent surprising upturn in respectability, but it is rather a very personal view from one who has to accept the game's many failings along with its innate potential for fostering positive initiatives.

'Football isn't a matter of life and death; it's more important than that'. Possibly the oldest cliché in the world of soccer journalism, but one whose splendidly portentous timbre, when presented to those interviewing him in Liverpool's dressing room by a suitably straight-faced Bill Shankley, drew few murmurs of dissent.

Passion is also a word which appears with monotonous regularity in the back pages of newspapers, but one which is used, in my opinion, very appropriately. Defined variously in Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary as 'the sufferings (esp. on the Cross) and death of Christ: Martyrdom, suffering, a painful bodily ailment: strong feeling or agitation of mind, esp. rage, often sorrow, a fit of such feeling, esp. rage: ardent love.' Anyone who's been to a Newcastle match (present season excepted) over the last thirty years will no doubt identify quite strongly with these emotions, and would probably include a few stronger ones to boot.

If we want to get *really* pretentious about it, we can also compare the similarities of the game with the basic elements of classic Greek Tragedy; as important to Hellenic society as it was in terms of mass entertainment, healthy catharsis and the microcosmic distillation into dramatic form of the noblest and basest aspects of human nature, so is football to modern day crowds. (Anyone who's taken part in the concerted and unhinged howls of disapproval at a referee's errant decision will appreciate the wonderfully therapeutic and harmless release of emotions). It's also no coincidence that both art forms take place in huge, atmospheric amphitheatres greatly conducive to

crowd psychology and the unleashing of the atavistic herd instinct; both primitive and powerful.

The last 100 years has seen the game become so deeply rooted in this country's psyche, both on a regional and national level, that it has become a religion for many, a universal language, as much a part of the nation's psychological make-up as our insatiable craving for weather updates.

Unfortunately for all of us however, the strength of feeling, devotion, fervour, call it what you will, which has been the cornerstone of British Football crowds over the last few decades has sadly been inversely reflected in terms of media coverage by the criminal disregard shown by those controlling the game for crowd safety and a head in the sand attitude to the depressing cancers of hooliganism and racism present in a high profile minority of the game's followers.

Given this strength of feeling then, it seems strange that the positive potential of this staggering intangibility has been so little exploited over the years by those in a position to do so. As badly organised in terms of safety and tarnished in reputation as the game has become over the last few decades, with the attendant catalogue of fatal crowd disasters (Heysel, Bradford, Hillsborough to name but a few), there are at least some faint glimmerings of hope now being kindled.

Whether the recommendations of the post-Hillsborough 'Taylor Report' will ever be implemented in full, the various clubs Boards of Directors have at last been forced to address the over-riding criteria of crowd safety. Though involving huge outlays in financial terms, passed on unsurprisingly to the fans themselves in the form of raised ticket prices, at least the idea of a people-first approach is gradually sinking into many a club's financial hierarchy.

A combination of more effective policing methods linked to closer co-operation and mutual consultation between the clubs, the local forces and to some extent supporters associations, has seen the hooligan problem diminish significantly.

The racism depressingly evident in a number of grounds over the years is at long last starting to be addressed, although the level of condemnation by those in a position to make a difference, ie. top players, managers and of course, directors, is still far from being unified in its strength and sincerity.

For all the (generally) encouraging legislation recently introduced to combat these and other problems, the power of those individuals courageous and innovative enough to set a positive example of what the game *should* be all about is and always will be the main factor in terms of quantum leaps from a sociological point of view.

Managers such as Brian Clough have for many years applied their own highly idiosyncratic ideas of what the game should be about in their own sphere of control; All Nottingham Forest's players contracts include a clause obliging them to devote a few hours per week in unpaid work for the community and local charities. In the early sixties a small percentage of their wage was deducted and donated to famine relief. Sporting behaviour and the ethos of non-retaliation instilled in his players not only earns them awards for fair play and low penalty points ratings but also serves as a positive example to the local youth as to how the game should be conducted.

The behaviour of individual high profile players such as 'Saint' Gary Lineker also does no harm in terms of fostering that ancient concept of 'gentlemanly conduct'. Add to that the active encouragement of 'family' groups (i.e. any child(ren) accompanied by an adult(s)) by providing special enclosures (Leeds United and Millwall making concerted efforts in this direction to counter their reputations as 'hardman' clubs - at least in terms of their supporters' image) and we are going at least some of the way to the American sports ground concept of a safe day out for any member of the community.

Other football clubs are beginning to realise the value of effective interaction with the local community which is, of definition the club's own lifeblood. Clubs such as Millwall and Sunderland employ a full time Community Liaison Officers who involve local supporters of all ages and both sexes in club activities, encouraging the concept that the club belongs to

the local community. Countries such as Denmark are already light years ahead in terms of community involvement - most clubs there have up to fifty teams (all ages, both sexes) affiliated to the main team, and provide support in terms of facilities, training and all the other benefits, tangible and intangible, of close association with a major professional club.

The bond between the club and its local community is thus made stronger and feelings of involvement are the norm, as opposed to the alienation commonly experienced by British fans regarded by many club directors as faceless numbers to be financially exploited and tolerated for 90 minutes every Saturday afternoon.

Also conspicuous by its absence in the community until the last few years is the hugely neglected area of Women's Football. Though long ignored and in some cases actively discouraged by the male dominated hierarchies of most professional football clubs, there are now the first signs of more enlightened attitudes being introduced. Clubs such as Sunderland, Fulham and Doncaster provide support for their own women's teams, and TV coverage by companies such as Channel 4 is helping the game develop apace. Again years behind European attitudes, where countries such as Italy have highly organised, well supported and financially successful professional women's leagues, Britain has yet to awaken itself to the possibilities in terms of community involvement and mutual support on any appreciable scale.

Again, the problem seems to stem from the deep seated conservatism and disregard for the needs of the game's supporters at grass roots level (whatever their sex, age etc) which is so much a feature of the attitudes of the governing bodies of British football. It's an interesting historical fact that Women's football in Britain was phenomenally successful in the First World War, when women's teams sprang up to replace their male counterparts being systematically slaughtered on the Western Front. The Vickers Armstrong factory on Newcastle's Scotswood Road produced one of the country's most successful Women's sides of that time. In fact so successful were the Women's Leagues, Wembley finals being played in front of 50,000 plus crowds, that the Football Association, fearful of the financial impact on the reforming male leagues, banned women from playing professional football in the early twenties.

Given the correlation evident in some statistics between the levels of hooliganism, violence and general bad behaviour in football grounds decreasing in

inverse proportion to the percentage of women present in the crowd (the reasons for which never having been completely analysed, though perhaps self evident given the facts of crowd psychology) the reason for the footballing world's shortsighted refusal to provide facilities and even some forms of financial backing to this section of the game's adherents seems at best inexplicable and at worst simply ludicrous.

Another positive example of football being harnessed for the general good of the community is the introduction of an innovative pilot scheme encouraging younger long-term drug addicts to break their addiction by forming their own teams, helping each other through the distress of withdrawal with strenuous physical training programmes and the demands made by the strong mental commitment associated with competitive teamwork, thereby swapping a dependence on, say, heroin for adrenaline along the way. The levels of recidivism in those taking part in the scheme have been encouraging enough to pursue this idea further.

It has to be hoped that the refreshing wind of change evident in the air over the last couple of years will

prove to be just that and not just a pleasant but ineffectual zephyr.

The reasons for the increase in support for the game over the last few years are hard to pinpoint, but the positive repercussions of the dramatic spectacle of the 1990 World Cup in Italy must certainly have helped things along. For one golden period English fans learnt the value of behaving well abroad, gaining themselves new friends and doing a power of good for the game's public face at home. Besides blubbing his way onto a thousand t-shirts, Paul Gascoigne also reflected the prevailing mood of good humour and disdain for pomp and circumstance in the Cup games by initiating the Mexican wave which undulated chaotically through the combined teams of Italy and England in the third place playoff photocall.

In conclusion, then, the potential for clubs to initiate and develop much more positive mutual involvement schemes with various elements of the community on a variety of levels is there to be exploited. All it takes is people far-sighted and determined enough to pursue their dreams and make that difference at an individual level.

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**CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT TELEVISION**  
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Listening to the radio while driving, recently, I recognised the voice of a man I had known twenty years ago when we were postgraduate students. Now a sociologist of the media he was talking about the negative effects of television watching. His family don't have a television, he said, and his children were intelligent and creative. They didn't miss television, they played musical instruments. I felt instantly guilty. My ten year old daughter watches a lot of television - children's programmes, *Neighbours*, films, nature programmes. She can sing all the songs from *Grease*, *The Sound of Music*, *Calamity Jane*, and is collecting the videos of Fred Astaire movies. She is also, I think, lively, bright and energetic and reads books. So why do I feel guilty? Maybe because I was trained as a teacher. Teachers tend to be critical of too much 'passive' television watching, although most of them seem to do quite a lot of it. Possibly because I am aware of the extent to which some television represents values or views of the world which I dislike. Possibly because like many parents, and like child care workers, I am aware of having used it as a way of occupying children to create space for myself. For many parents and professionals there is still a feeling of ambivalence towards television - is it really bad for children?

This book doesn't entirely help to resolve the question. It is a book for libraries, for those looking for a source material rather than for arguments. It is rather frustrating in that it states clearly at the beginning that 'it is not about the effects television may have on children' but acknowledges that this is the underlying issue, while never properly addressing the question. In a way it seems like evidence that has been collected to support one side of an implicit argument.

The book discusses research carried out in 1988 using a qualitatively based methodology as part of a project funded by the Independent Television Authority. The research team interviewed 384 boys and girls in an 'outer London suburb which contained a wide ethnic and social mix.' They were interviewed in small groups, with equal number of boys and girls, sometimes using clips from the programmes discussed.

The kids watched television an average of 4 hours daily. 202 had a tv in their bedroom. (Mainly boys which is interesting in the context of other discussions about girls and the 'culture of the bedroom'). The majority still said that they preferred to watch with the rest of the family. Parents mainly decided on the programmes watched, with fathers as the ultimate control. The children were interviewed about, and each chapter of the book based on -

popular drama, soaps, situation comedy, quiz and game shows, music, variety and chat shows, sport, news and current affairs and general information programmes.

Although the research was only carried out four years ago, the constant change of television programmes means that it

sometimes feels quite dated. (For example my daughter confirms my analysis that of the 18 characters mentioned from *Neighbours* only 4 still appear in the series.)

The book is concerned to assert that children do not watch television passively. They suggest that '... television has not been treated fairly. Criticisms of its impact are one-sided and often exhibit poor understanding of how children actually watch and respond to programmes.' The evidence from the individual chapters demonstrates that children do not watch uncritically and should not be seen as simply impassive viewers or as passive receivers. Childrens' response to, and use of, television is seen as more varied and complex than often assumed. It provides shared topics of conversation. 'It is a constant source of pleasure and amusement, a time-filler, and something from which they can learn.'

One serious flaw, I think, in their approach involves their decision about the range of programmes on which they focus. Although the children and young people in their study are from seven to fifteen years old they restrict their discussion with the kids to programmes '...broadcast during what broadcasters designate as *family viewing time*' i.e. before 9pm. This is clearly unrealistic. More than half their sample had televisions in their bedroom and stated that they used them for late-night viewing. The authors defend their decision by stating that since programmes broadcast after 9pm may not be suitable for young viewers '... broadcasters expect parents to share with them the responsibility for what children watch.' It would have been valuable to ask what and how much was watched after 9pm. Anyone working with young people is aware of how much late-night television is watched.

Popular drama is discussed in the context of concerns about violence and its impact, and of values and beliefs. They focused in particular on *Grange Hill* with the younger children and *The Bill* with the older. *Grange Hill* was seen to give an unrealistic and inaccurate picture of secondary school life and, by some of the children, to offer a bad example e.g. in the use of drugs by some characters. Most of the children however saw this as a valuable social lesson. It was clear that the children understood the difference between drama and real life. They were able to comment on the aspects, for example in *The Bill*, of police life that they saw as inaccurate. They had quite clear expectations, developed through the years of growing up, of what 'True to life' television should be, and of what to expect from different kinds of drama programmes.

*Neighbours* was the most popular soap. Even the youngest children were able to name the principal characters and their family and romantic relationships.

Roisin (13) 'You talk about the people as though you knew them.' Sadly and predictably the girls said that they identified with the characters who were 'pretty and nice'. This is discussed with the comment from the authors - 'Presumably this could be regarded as seeking to perpetuate a subservient role in the eyes of feminists' movements.' This tells us a lot about the concerns and values of the authors!

They like the soaps for their cliff-hanger endings and in *Neighbours* for the balance between 'participation' and 'escape'. The children were active soap viewers '...regular-

ly discussing and arguing among themselves about characters' responses to different narrative situations.' The authors argue, I think rightly, that soaps can provide a focus for the discussion of social and moral issues.

The children were not entirely clear as to what a situation comedy was. They expressed liking for *Bread*, *Blackadder*, *No Place Like Home* and for sitcoms where they could identify with one of the characters. 'For a simple good laugh, however, .... cartoons and stand-up comedy in preference to sitcoms. From sitcoms they expect more; here they look to be emotionally stirred and to experience sadness as well as joy'.

The children interviewed liked factual programmes but not news and current affairs, other than *Newsround*. Only the older teenagers watched the news regularly. They did show awareness of issues of bias and fairness in news presentation.

This book seems to me to provide some useful evidence to inform the debate about television and its effects on children and young people. It supports the kind of position that states that television cannot be blamed for the evils of society. It doesn't for me, however adequately discuss the relationship between them. It doesn't properly discuss issues of race, sex or class (other than in a discussion about the children's views of middle-class bias in *Blockbusters!*) It doesn't discuss advertising. It doesn't discuss the presentation of affluence to young people who are denied access to it. It doesn't discuss the current political context and the debate about the kind of television we should have and the kind we might get. It doesn't discuss the use of video recorders. I know very many children and young people through my work who regularly watch films like 'Nightmare on Elm Street' often unaccompanied by adults.

It has made me think about my own views. I accept that children watch television critically and should not be seen as merely passive recipients. However the book argues that television watching can be seen as positive in a context that assumes clear parental control over viewing and responsible programming by broadcasters. We cannot assume the former for many children and the advent of satellite television and possible changes to other channels may mean the end of the latter.

*Gwynedd Lloyd*

**Audrey Mullender and Dave Ward**  
**SELF-DIRECTED GROUPWORK:**  
**users taking action for empowerment.**  
**Whiting & Birch 1991**  
**ISBN 1871177 11 1**  
**pp 194**

Self-directed groupwork, although arising from the work of practitioners, has been developed at the Centre for Social Action, Nottingham University. I reviewed an earlier publication from there in the journal (December 1991) but this book gives an updated and more detailed account of the model. It has an undoubted relevance and will be of practical use to all those concerned with empowering the people

they work with. As such the model can be used in various settings and by various professionals - social workers, community workers, youth workers, volunteers, teachers, health visitors, etc. It is a timely, interesting and informative book.

'Empowerment' has been in vogue, not least in social work circles, for some time now. For those on the right it means, for example, those people who can afford to buy services having a choice (while, of course, unpaid carers, again for example, have to struggle on alone, unsupported!) For those on the left, and those involved in the user movement 'empowerment' demands much more including people controlling standards and services themselves and, most fundamentally of all, it rests on the collective voicing and meeting of universal need. Mullender and Ward emphasise that social work practice needs to enable this second view of empowerment to occur, and this is what this book is about. Furthermore, for them, and I agree, empowerment itself is not enough because it must involve confronting power and oppression, drawing on anti-racist and feminist (and I would add radical) social work perspectives.

As stated, this book draws on the work of various practitioners, and it notes that these workers were 'often an oasis of empowerment in a desert of stultifying organisational oppression'. From my own experience I have to wholeheartedly agree. (At this stage I guess I should also declare an interest as some of my work in this area is actually used in the book!) 'Organisational oppression' can cause problems for individual practitioners, something the authors acknowledge and which I will return to, but nevertheless possibilities for empowering practice do exist and have to be taken. At the heart of the self-directed model is a statement of practice principles, embodying: an anti-oppressive view of those who we work with; a belief that they have the ability to define their own problems, set their own goals and take their own action for change; a commitment to basing change on a broader social analysis; and a style of working in partnership with people. Also stressed is the need for practitioners to clarify their underlying values before starting out and ensuring their ensuing practice adheres to the now refined five practice principles (previously there were six). These are: all people have skills, understanding and ability; people have the right to decide whether or not to participate in self-directed work, and the right to define issues and take action on them; practice should reflect that people's problems can never be fully understood if they are seen solely as the result of personal inadequacy - issues of oppression, social policy, environment and economy are major contributory factors; people acting together/collectively can be powerful - people can gain power by working together in groups; and finally, practice must reflect non-elitist principles in that (a) the practitioners do not lead but rather they facilitate the members in making decisions for themselves and controlling outcomes and (b) all work must challenge oppression - race, gender, age, social orientation, disability and not least class.

The book then sets the scene for working alongside group members asking the questions 'what?' are the problems, 'why?' do they exist and 'how?' can they be resolved. The practical steps in setting up and operating the self-directed model are then charted. There are chapters on the planning of the group, the group 'taking action' and the group 'taking over'. Throughout there is reference to the work of some of the various practitioners mentioned earlier. Thus,

there are groups for: young people in care of the local authority; parents involved in child abuse allegations and subsequent investigations (the group I was involved with); mothers whose standards of care were causing concern; young Asian people; disabled people; elderly people; mentally ill people and people with learning difficulties. All these groups had an influence on the development of the self-directed model though the extent and nature of this varied from group to group.

As indicated earlier I found Mullender and Ward's discussion of the problems confronting individuals who pursue the self-directed model of interest. In pursuing my own work, for example, I can remember derogatory comments about me being 'a maverick' and a 'loony Marxist!' More seriously though, it is sadly but often the case that there is organisational opposition to new, and what are seen as threatening, ways of working. This opposition may not be (although it can be!) a general refusal to allow self-directed groups, but agencies are skilled at absorbing and diluting new ideas in accord with their own norms, demanding compromise and spinning out discussions until all momentum is lost. But, and this cannot be emphasised too strongly, space can be created and, as the authors state, one has to decide whether to work with people on an empowering basis, as advocated in this book, or whether to ally oneself to those who are against it. Using the old sociological cliché, but nonetheless apt one, we have to decide 'whose side we are on'.

In conclusion then, this is a most worthwhile and welcome book which deserves to be widely read and better still bought by all those who wish to empower people. The self-directed model has much to offer, and I will leave readers with Mullender and Ward's view that 'there is no reason, in terms of its effectiveness and its ability to encompass the complex causation of contemporary social problems, why it should not become the norm for helping intervention, leaving currently more accepted approaches on the periphery'. Hear, hear I say!

*Steve Rogowski*

**Solomos, John.**  
**BLACK YOUTH, RACISM AND THE STATE:**  
**The Politics of Ideology and Policy.**  
**Cambridge University Press 1991**  
**ISBN 0 521 42381 3**  
**£14.95 (Pbk)**  
**pp 284**

Over the last few years John Solomos, a former researcher and now lecturer, has written extensively in the area of politics of racism and the role of the state. This book complements this evolving analysis by referring to a welter of published and unpublished material including policy documents, newspapers, reports of Parliamentary and other debates, and official documents produced by the state and the race relations institutions.

According to Solomos, the book has two purposes. He states in the introduction that one purpose is to 'provide a historically grounded political analysis of the genesis, for-



mulation and use of ideological discourses about *black youth*. The other purpose is to 'provide a critical analysis of the policies which have singled out the *problem* of black youth for special attention, whether in relation to social policy, law and order, unemployment policy, and more recently, in the context of responses to urban disorder' (p.2).

With this stated aim, the first chapter examines the development of the politics of racism in post-war Britain. Here, the author discusses how the state at both national and local level has managed the 'race question'. Although the social phenomenon surrounding the influx of black people to Britain since 1948, and the resultant racism, has been the subject of a variety of debates within the social sciences, the value of Solomos' interpretation is that it is focussed around the processes of racialisation and political ideologies. A major point he makes here is that there has been a perceptible shift in the official preoccupation with black immigration during the 1960s and 1970s to a concern with managing those who already live here. Building on this theme in chapter two, the author again focusses on the historical developments, this time by examining the role of the state in regard to 'second generation' black people. Here, he demonstrates how the fear of young black people engaging in street violence, together with the reports of 'race riots' in North American cities during the mid 1960s, led to British policy-makers identifying second generation young blacks as a societal problem. During the same period, the media was influential in establishing and amplifying an image of black youth as dangerous and lawless.

Chapter three discusses the dominant ideology and state policies of the 1970s that linked black youth with criminality. The continuing preoccupation during this decade was the 'connection between deprivation and supposedly pathological or weak black cultures which produced special problems for young blacks. This ideology had the effect of externalising the source of the problem and locating it firmly within the black communities themselves'. (p.117). Black, young people living in inner city areas were therefore seen as a 'social problem' and became an issue of concern within a range of government departments; the police, local authorities, race relation institutions and voluntary agencies. This concern heightened during the late 1970s with the dramatic growth in adult and youth unemployment which hit young blacks specifically hard. Solomos discusses in chapters four and five the nature of racism in the job market which prevented black youth from securing employment, and the response by the government that 'something must be done'. However, the official response was to see young blacks as having 'special needs' and in some way 'handicapped'. The logic of this argument was that young black people were to blame for their own unemployment, not the structure of British society. The other effect of this position was to marginalise the question of racism. The outcome was limited policy initiatives aimed at improving the employment position of black youth.

The final two chapters deal with the urban unrest during the 1980s which had led to the state responding in a number of ways. However, as Solomos argues, the promises by a range of state agencies of 'positive action' in respect of the needs of black youth was intended to defuse violent protests. 'Such promises fit into a broader context of policies which attempt to manage insoluble social problems

through public pronouncements which show that the government is actually doing something; such symbolic actions succeed in constructing a short-term truce even if they do not bring about any long-term changes in practice, precisely because they bridge the gap between political language and reality'. When resources were allocated to inner city areas they did not compensate for the massive outflow from such communities due to financial cut-backs and the loss of jobs and resources.

Overall, this is an insightful and valuable book. Solomos demonstrates a fine grasp of some interesting original material as well as secondary material that combines to illustrate and critically consider state ideology and policies since the late 1940s. In many cases the state was propelled into action by fear of unrest within both the black and the white communities. Although in times of social breakdown the state intervened in a coercive and often violent way, the outbreaks of street violence did have the effect of securing some marginal, and usually locally-based, resources for black young people. However, as Solomos points out, there is a real need for genuine anti-racist policies and initiatives that recognise and understand the political exclusion, social deprivation and economic inequality that black people experience in British society. At the present time all they are offered is palliatives and promises.

There are two major flaws in this otherwise important book. The first is that the text is almost solely devoted to Afro-Caribbean young people. This would be perfectly acceptable, if Solomos had stated this more clearly in an introductory passage. He remarks on page one that there is confusion over the category 'black youth', saying it is used to cover 'those blacks descended from an Afro-Caribbean background or an Asian background'. The author, however, does not indicate how he intends using the term, leaving the reader to gradually discover that he is focussing on young Afro-Caribbean. The real weakness of the book, however, is the absence of any analysis of gender. Throughout the text there is no differentiation between the issues and problems experienced by black young women and those experienced by black young men. The impression given is that the author is discussing young black men. If this was his intention, Solomos needs to have addressed this clearly in the introduction. This book is the paperback edition of the 1988 hardback volume and could have provided the author with an opportunity to rectify these significant errors.

This is, nevertheless a significant book. Solomos demonstrates a fine understanding of how, over nearly four decades, the local and central state has attempted to manage the 'race question'. It adds to our knowledge of the state's intervention in the lives of young black people and it illustrates clearly the racist agenda of the political processes. It also offers us an overview of alternative perspectives. By interweaving scholarly research with journalistic accounts and his own critical edge, Solomos has produced a stimulating and important contribution to race relations literature.

**Keith Popple**

**Joseph Bristow**  
**EMPIRE BOYS: Adventures in a Man's World.**  
 Harper Collins 1991  
 ISBN 0 04 445630 1 (Hbk)  
 ISBN 0 04 445631 X (Pbk)  
 pp 233

According to the blurb this book 'examines how and why a distinctive type of combative masculinity triumphed during the heyday of the British Empire'. The focus is on a popular literature which took boys from all social classes, turning them into heroic figures who would civilise a savage world: 'Fighting fit, morally upright, and proudly patriotic'. Throughout the book, which covers the period 1860-1920, the author attempts to relate a notion of 'imperial boyhood' to debates involving culture, literacy, realism and romance. *Empire Boys*, it is claimed, will be of interest to 'students of literature, social history and education'.

The material is presented in five more or less discrete chapters each of which, Bristow says, examine 'particular formations of boyhood and empire'. Chapter one is a general account of culture, literacy and juvenile literature, with particular reference to the *Boy's Own Paper*. The second chapter looks at public school fiction; chapter three describes the permutations of 'the Crusoe myth' through three island stories; *Masterman Ready*, *The Coral Island* and *Treasure Island*; and the penultimate chapter looks at the African romances of Haggard, Henty and Conrad. The concluding chapter discusses 'the type of heroic boy survivor' as portrayed by Baden-Powell, Kipling and Burroughs.

Bristow tells us that his study grew out of two related concerns, namely, radical male notions of masculinity, as developed in the 1980s, and British imperial history. In themselves these are promising departure points for an assessment of juvenile literature used to assist in the creation and promulgation of a certain kind of masculine world view for male adolescents, which was framed within an imperial context. However, though the material is clearly written and well organised, too much of the book is a generalised descriptive account of particular novels, ranging from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* to *Tarzan of the Apes*, interspersed with brief discursive passages on imperial and racial attitudes, and too little attention is given to providing precise explanations of the 'formations of boyhood and empire'.

If a book of this type is to succeed, it must examine and unite three themes: the creation of a changing literary culture that focused on adolescents and young men; the development of the Empire as both an ideal and a political fact; and the evolution of 'boys' into 'adolescents'. We are given glimpses and snapshots of each of these concerns, but there is no sustained account of any one of them, except possibly in the case of the changing literary culture from Arnold through to Kipling. In important respects Bristow's treatment fails to deal adequately with the relationships between the themes. While he often asserts the existence of the relationships, he rarely identifies their component parts; nor does he show them in motion, and so they tend to remain elusive. Moreover, his view of the history of 'adolescence' (which should surely figure prominently in this project) as a concept and as lived reality is limited to a single reference (p.85). John Gillis' standard text, *Youth and*

*History*, is not even mentioned. Thus the history of 'boys' is virtually absent from *Empire Boys*.

The fundamental weakness of the book is that it does not possess a sufficiently strong and clearly defined analytical thread with which to sew together the historical and sociological passages in such a way that they both illuminate and elucidate what is basically a socio-literary account. We never confront in sufficient detail the making of 'masculinity' through popular literature; we are never shown the means by which 'Empire' in all its ambiguities slithered its way into 'culture'; and we never see the connection between 'Culture', 'Empire' and 'Age'. On the other hand, it should be admitted that to write such a book would indeed be a significant achievement, and at least Bristow has made the attempt.

All in all, however, this ambitious study promises more than it delivers. Broadly speaking much of the subject matter is already very well known from the collective account provided by the writings of Springhall, Rosenthal, Richards, Mangan, Dunae, Turner, Quigly, and Drotner; and by the specialist literary studies of Brantlinger, Ratz, and Street. Nevertheless, it is almost certainly true that *Empire Boys* will be of interest to students on literature, social history and education courses. Similarly, those readers who are unfamiliar with literary studies will find several useful interpretations of representative novels. To this extent the book will have served a useful purpose and, therefore, is to be welcomed.

**Harry Hendrick**

**Michael Jacobs**  
**INSIGHT AND EXPERIENCE**  
**A manual of training in the technique and theory of psychodynamic counselling and therapy.**  
 Open University Press 1991  
 ISBN 0 335 09792 8  
 pp 231

When it comes to manuals there are, as they say, two sorts of people. There are those that painstakingly go from step to step following each instruction to the letter; and there are those that want only the most basic information, such as how to get into the word-processor, and prefer to take the plunge, working things out as they go, with occasional reference to the manual.

Since I am a confirmed member of the latter group, it required a special effort of will over instinct to work through Michael Jacobs' admirably meticulous instructions to forty or so exercises for those whose job it is to train counsellors. Most of them are in the form of role-plays and, having been a resistant and unconvinced participant in many of these over the years, I approached this book with serious doubts.

However, I have a theory that sceptics eventually make the best converts so I was interested to test my hypothesis by persevering with Jacobs' book. He starts with exercises aimed at practising basic therapeutic skills and moves on to what he calls 'further skills', although the theoretical

dimension of the book never leaves a fairly rudimentary level. After a brief and rather diffident chapter on working with groups, the rest of the book follows developmental lines. Jacobs begins with oral, anal and genital themes which he subsumes under the headings of 'trust and dependency', 'authority and autonomy', and 'cooperation and competition'. In these, students are required, among other exercises, to imagine themselves as infants, toddlers and four-year-old children respectively. They then have to write of their experience in the second person, and we are given the benefit of some examples, such as: 'you are having a lovely time spooning your dinner onto the floor', and there are more in a similar vein.

Jacobs takes us on through adolescence, again a rather brief and insubstantial chapter in which students are called upon to imagine themselves as teenagers milling around in the lunch-break at school. There are further sections dealing with adulthood, loss and death, and the book ends with the case, or parable, of 'The Evil Man' which is intended to draw various themes together but instead encapsulates many of the flaws of the preceding chapters.

Jacobs is a highly experienced teacher and supervisor but in among some interesting material there are a number of surprising lapses. Some are minor stylistic solecisms such as a spate of rather irritating exclamation marks in the middle of the book, and a tendency to use quotation marks in a somewhat self-conscious way to bracket words or expressions that he doesn't feel comfortable with or would like to disown. Others are less trivial. In his guidelines for listening, students are urged to 'try to tolerate pauses and silences' where they should be encouraged to understand and gauge the meaning of different kinds of silence. They are told to 'keep calm, even when you don't feel calm', when it would have been better to have advised them to attend to the counter-transference significance of any anxiety or tension they might feel as therapists or counsellors with particular clients.

In a list of defences, Jacobs tags on at the end 'even what has been called the "gain from illness"', thereby understating the crucial importance of the concept of secondary gain, both internal and external. Perhaps more perplexing is the observation that 'other people find it difficult to face certain aspects of themselves, and they either hide the truth from themselves .... or they try to hide the truth from the helper'. I would have thought it axiomatic that this is true of everyone to a greater or lesser degree, and a basic and unexceptional assumption of all therapeutic work.

These, though, are intermittent shortcomings. More persistent - and serious, for someone trained on the four-cornered approach to therapy of theory, practice, supervision and personal therapy - is his reliance on role-play. Jacobs writes that he hopes his exercises 'provide those moments of insight which are so essential for the training of counsellors and therapists'. I have no doubt at all that they are fun to do but I suspect that they provide a kind of ersatz experience which is fundamentally different from the experience of the parties in a therapeutic transaction, and not transferable.

He claims, for example, that his role-plays 'on various aspects of autonomy and authority ..... provide practice in

counselling skills' but my own experience suggests that real practice can only take place in vivo.

All this is not to deny Jacobs' undeniable skill at devising and setting out his exercises, some of which take up to two hours. The impression they leave, however, is of good ideas struggling to free themselves from something rather obsessional and constricting. Many of his instructions sound like something from a rather manic boardgame; 'if there is time, there can now be a period of negotiation when any family member, through their alter egos acting as go-betweens, can contact any other family member to ask "for a chat"'. If the family member approached does not wish to talk to that person, then she or he sends a message back through the alter ego. There can be as many changes of pairing during this period (up to 15 minutes) as necessary, before dinner is called.' This sounds like one of those boardgames you put back on the shelf and opt for Scrabble or cribbage instead.

Other exercises read a bit like the instructions for flat-pack furniture; 'each participant in each small group is given a numbered label (1-7) which matches the number of the mini-session he or she will facilitate, and a briefing sheet outlining his or her role in each session. The briefing sheet for Facilitator 1 is given below (i). Note that there are four key phrases marked (A), (B), (C) and (D); these must be replaced in the briefing sheets for Facilitators 2-7 according to the scheme in (ii). For groups of five members, see (iii)'.

At times I found myself wondering what Jacobs sees as the aim of counselling. In writing of the 'difficult client', he tells us that, in choosing our words, we must 'sugar the pill'. An exercise on 'awkward customers' reads like a manual for shop assistants. To the uninitiated reader counselling would appear to be something that is done to clients, or essentially a question of devising strategies for outwitting them. In a case history, written as if it were an actual case which involved him, he tells us that 'a nurse in a hospital where I work as a medical social worker (asked) if I could visit' a young woman, who had a terminal illness, and her parents on the ward. It was an illuminating vignette: at no time were we told what he was doing, why he was involved and what the nature of his contract with them was.

Jacobs' book does have strengths: exercises on the issue of gender in groups and the ages of adulthood, are thought-provoking and revealing. But its weaknesses are laid bare in the final chapter. In the case of 'The Evil Man', students are gradually fed pieces of information about a 45 year old client. They are given a list of possible interventions and awarded points depending on which they choose. It reads strangely like one of those quizzes in women's magazines in which answers are scored and your total reveals whether you are a good lover or not. The case perpetuates the myth that the purpose of therapeutic work is to strive for 'a breakthrough', after which everything falls magically into place. The book ends on an Aesopian note with the client telling the therapist; 'I have learned that an evil act doesn't make an evil man. Each of us is capable of it.'

Jacobs book is worthy, certainly, but I am not sure whether it is worthwhile. For teachers who like to work in this way, it will probably be a boon but I suspect that ultimately what it teaches is tricks not the trade.

*Jeremy Walker*



## ...IN SHORT...

### EDUCATION

#### Increase in FE Students

The number of young people in full time education has more than doubled in the last ten years. An estimated increase of over 10% points (12-23%) in full time education by 16 and 17 year olds between 1980/1 but a small decrease in part time participation. Women accounted for 56% of all enrolments in further education. (Source: *Statistics of Further Education Students in England 1970/1 - 1990/1 (17/92) and Participation in Education by Young People aged 16 and 17 in each Local Education Authority and Region of England: 1988/89 to 1990/91*. Published by Analytical Services Branch, Department for Education, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, County Durham DL3 9BG).

### EUROPE

#### Delors II and Voluntary Organisations

The Delors II package, proposed by the EC Commission in March 1992 is the subject of intense debate and is unlikely to be decided until the end of 1992. The package concerns the allocation and distribution of structural funds, including agricultural monies and social/the amelioration of poverty funds (ESF). ESF funding has been important for voluntary organisations in the UK. 350 voluntary organisations received funding in 1991. 20,000 people benefited from training schemes organised by voluntary agencies in the UK as a result. However, the funds have been distributed by coalitions of voluntary agencies and the administration of funds has been a matter of concern to voluntary agencies.

There are possibilities that the Delors II package will support more social policy oriented programmes than has been the case. The process of consultation is still open. (Source: *Poverty Today, July/Sept 1992, Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin*)

### HOUSING

#### Need for more housing

Research by the Housing Corporation shows that Britain needs 102,500 homes for 'social' rent. This is more than twice as many as the government is prepared to fund. The shortfall is estimated to be 62,500 according to Christine Whitehead and Mark Kleinman (LSE) who carried out the research. (Source: *The Guardian, 6.10.92*).

### LAW

#### Children Act

A recent case involving a 5 year old child concerned a disputed application between relatives of the child, who were members of a sect known as 'the brethren', and the sole parent for a residence application. The relatives appealed under the Children Act 1989, on the grounds that it was never right for a child to be forced to abandon its religious beliefs. The appeal was dismissed and a res-

idence order was granted to the sole parent of the child. (Source: *The Times, 3.11.1992*)

#### Divorce

Proposals are currently being considered by the Lord Chancellor (Lord Justice Mackay) to force couples to go through conciliation meetings as a condition of receiving legal aid. (Source: *The Times, 3.11.1992*)

#### 'Divorce' from Parents

In the first case of its kind in this country a 14 year old girl is seeking a court order so that she can live with her boyfriend's family and be legally separated from her parents. The case is due to be heard in mid November 1992. (Source: *The Times 3.11.1992*)

#### Judges

A report argues that British Judges should be chosen on the basis of their ability and with regard to appropriate job specifications. The report maintains that Judges are presently selected by means of a process that defies rational analysis and the job presently has no job specification. The Justice Committee proposes that a commission be appointed to establish a fair appointments procedure. (Source: *The Times, 3.11.1992*)

#### Rape Reform

A radical reform of rape laws has been urged by Harry Cohen, Labour MP for Leyton, in a ten minute rule bill. The bill is unlikely to have a second reading unless it is adopted by the Home Office. (Source: *The Times, 29.10.1992*)

#### Sentencing

Differences in sentencing practice and the costs of sentencing in the crown courts of England and Wales were the subjects of a study by the Home Office. A report is intended to be made available to the judiciary and magistrates to help them to avoid racial and sexual discrimination and to make them more aware of the costs of jailing offenders. (Source: *The Times, 2.11.1992*)

### POVERTY

#### Statistics

The Households Below Average Income Statistics: a statistical analysis 1979-89, recognised as key poverty statistics, contain some devastating figures. Incomes after housing costs for the poorest tenth of the population fell in real terms by some 6% between 1979 and 1988/9 while rising by 30% for the average. Nearly a third of the poorest 10% were living in unemployed families in 1988/89 - a rise from 15% in 1979. A growing proportion of the nation are living in poverty. (Source: *Poverty, Summer 1992, CPAG*)

#### Young People

The Severe Hardship Unit in Glasgow is dealing with a far greater number of applications from young people than in previous years. In the first year of the scheme (Oct '88-Sept '89) there was an average of 1,268 applications per month with a success rate

of 65%. For the first four months of 1992 there were 7,940 applications and a success rate of 83%. Child Poverty Action Group have been critical of the SHU and of the services for benefits advice available to young people. They have pointed out that young people living at home may be in just as much need as those living away. (Source: *Welfare Rights Bulletin, No 109, August 1992, CPAG*)

### PUBLIC SPENDING

Proposals to cut public spending have been defended by the government on the grounds that public spending will increase in 'real terms'. The crucial figures are: *plans to spend*

£226.6 billion in 1992-3

£244.5 billion in 1993-4

However, the real bone of contention surrounds the assumptions made over spending to cover the unemployment estimates. Unemployment has escalated more rapidly than the 2.4 million estimated for the next financial year (it currently stands at 2.9 million). (Source: *The Times, 3.11.1992*)

### SOCIAL SECURITY

#### Asylum Seekers

The Benefits Agency issued a circular to local offices on procedures for dealing with the way asylum seekers should/or may be dealt with by District Benefit Offices, (circular IS (OS) 10/92). The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants has criticised the circular for various inaccuracies and wrong assumptions. A detailed synopsis of the inaccuracies has been made. (Source: *Welfare Rights Bulletin, No 109, August 1992, CPAG*)

#### Europe

Social Security in Europe is falling prey to cuts too. In what has been called the 'new realism' administrations of all political affiliations are in the process of cutting welfare spending. (Source: *The Guardian, 4.11.1992*)

#### UNEMPLOYMENT is still rising.

### WOMEN

#### Discrimination

#### in Management and Employment.

A Survey carried out by the Institute of Management found that women are still perceived as being less able and less committed than male counterparts. The survey also showed that women who had fought discrimination had done so at considerable cost to their personal lives. (Source: *The Times, 2.11.92*)

#### Contraceptive Advice in Ireland: EC Intervenes

The European Court of Human Rights found the Irish Government guilty of a fundamental breach of human right by preventing women from obtaining advice.

# YOUTH AND POLICY

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*Jeremy Walker* contributed a book review to this issue. Biographical information is not available.

## SUBMISSION DETAILS

Material for the journal, including correspondence, is welcomed within our stated editorial aims.

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# YOUTH AND POLICY

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