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We achieve this by:
- informing, advising and helping those who work with young people in a variety of settings;
- influencing and shaping youth policy and improving youth services nationally and locally; and
- promoting young people's participation, influence and place in society.

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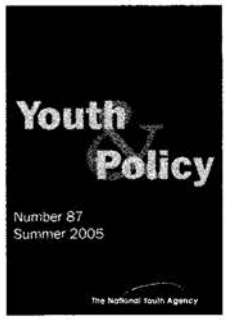

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The Continuing Story of the ASBO

Terry Thomas

The making of Anti-social Behaviour Orders on young people has become an almost routinised way of dealing with unacceptable behaviour. This article traces legal and policy changes in this field over the eighteen month period January 2004-June 2005. It notes the increasing numbers of ASBOs granted, and the speed of associated developments, as well as the views of the various constituencies with an interest in those developments. Critics of ASBOs have become more organised of late but they still speak out in a climate of 'popular punitivism' which is unforgiving toward anti-social behaviour.

Keywords: Anti-social Behaviour, youth offending, popular punitivism, media, children's rights.

In January 2004 *Youth and Policy* published an article which looked at the developing policies to combat anti-social behaviour. In particular it highlighted the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) introduced by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, as the single most important policy measure in this area. This was not to under-estimate the impact of local curfews, dispersal powers, Fixed Penalty Notices, truancy sweeps and other interventions aimed at anti-social behaviour amongst young people, but the ASBO included unique features and had come to epitomise the government's 'war' on this behaviour (Grier and Thomas, 2003/4).

The present article returns to the subject of the ASBO to bring the story up to date. Not only is this a fast moving area of policy development but the number of ASBOs being made by the courts is increasing rapidly. In the first two years after their introduction 317 ASBOs were made (April 1999 – March 2001) but in the six months alone between April and September 2004 some 1813 were made (House of Commons 2005, Volume 1 para. 187).

From the outset ASBOs were always going to be targeted at young people. Early guidance from the Home Office unequivocally suggested that 'in the case of 12-17 year olds ... applications (for ASBOs) may be made more routinely' (Home Office 1998: para. 5.9). Between April 1999 and September 2003 an estimated 56% of ASBOs were made on people under 18 (House of Commons 2005, Volume 1, para.188).

Following the same format as the earlier article, the questions considered here are (a) the definition of anti-social behaviour, (b) the 'disappearance of welfare' and (c) the increasing use of publicity. This is followed by a review of the countervailing voices now rising up to criticise the ASBO phenomenon.

Definitions of Anti-Social Behaviour

The definition of 'anti-social' behaviour has been problematic from the start. The criminal law states what is or is not an offence if a given law is broken. Anti-social behaviour is more discretionary and subjective, and far less clear-cut. In practice we know that this discretion is used to target working class young people on certain housing estates. ASBOs emerged from discussions between housing officials concerned with estate management in the mid-1990s (Burney, 1999: 86ff) and according to Professor John Gardner have now become:

> *...devices to create tailor-made criminal offences for particular people. This violates the rule of law ... (which is there) ... to contain the discretion of officials, who when drawn into disputes, are other-wise naturally tempted to side with the more popular or influential side.* (cited in Burney, 2005a)

Professor Gardner has gone on to speculate 'Why ASBOs are not sought against the parents who persistently drive their children to school in SUVs and park on the pavement?' (ibid), and Burney points out that only lately, for example, has city centre 'binge drinking' come under the anti-social umbrella but that:

> *...binge drinking is a culture of our times, and a lucrative one at that, which is probably why it has not attracted the same condemnation as 'youths hanging about' on impoverished housing estates.* (Burney, 2005b)

The point here is that an element of selection is coming into play by decision makers charged with applying for ASBOs. The degree of scope permitted by the law is very wide and according to some observers 'so broad that it is almost meaningless' (Lloyd, 2004) and 'incredibly weak with regards to objectively defining anti-social behaviour' (Quayle, 2005). The result has been a variety of behaviour caught up in the ASBO net. Although not all involve young people, these have included 'spitting', control of pigs, and suicidal behaviour (Ward and Branigan, 2005).

The Home Affairs Committee considered the arguments around ill-definition and concluded that this 'flexibility' was more a positive feature than a negative one. This was for three main reasons:

- the definitions work well from an enforcement point of view and no significant practical problems appear to have been encountered;
- exhaustive lists of behaviour considered anti-social by central government would be unworkable and anomalous;
- anti-social behaviour is inherently a local problem and falls to be defined at a local level. (House of Commons 2005, volume 1, para.44)

Part of their argument rested on the determination to 'stand with the victims of anti-social behaviour and their experience rather than ... the perpetrators' (ibid). Together with the allowance of local definitions this would appear to endorse Professor Gardner's points.

This wide scope plus the civil nature of the ASBO application has also led to a certain

'civilianisation' of the law. *The Economist* journal – not regularly cited for its liberal views – believes that:

> *ASBOs allow the police to bypass normal procedures of criminal justice when they suspect somebody of serious criminal activity but can't prove it.* ('Anti-social Behaviour in Britain' *The Economist*, 3 Feb. 2005)

The Howard League for Penal Reform has argued that the law now blurs the boundary between the civil and criminal law. The civil law allows for the 'reaction to behaviour' to be part of the arguments for an ASBO but the criminal law then reinforces it if the original orders are breached (House of Commons 2005, Volume 2, Evidence 62).

In the courts themselves, the applications for ASBOs have been pursued more vigorously by the introduction of so-called 'anti-social behaviour response courts'. These are courts that are particularly sensitive to the needs of victims giving evidence for ASBO applications, for dedicated staff aware of the need for speed and efficiency, who can co-ordinate the agencies involved in bringing applications to court. Twelve such courts were designated over the summer of 2004 but by January 2005, some 100 had been created (CPS 2004; DCA, 2004: para.4.11; and DCA 2005).

Amongst those agencies that the 'response court' must liaise with are the local authority 'anti-social behaviour units'. Tony Blair, as Prime Minister, reported 50% of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships now have dedicated 'anti-social behaviour units' and he wanted to see this percentage increase (Blair, 2004).

The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 passed just before the General Election introduced the idea that other non-local authority agencies could be brought in to apply for ASBOs on behalf of the authority. Section 142 of the Act amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by introducing a new s1F which allows the Home Secretary to contract out applications to a 'relevant authority'. The identity of such 'relevant authorities' was not revealed, but some have speculated that it could mean 'government sponsored bodies and quangos such as neighbourhood watch schemes and parent-teacher associations' ('UK Government to bolster CSOs and ASBO's', *Statewatch* 14(6): 12-14).

Magistrates, for their part, seem more than happy to make ASBOs. The numbers refused are small; of 3069 applications made in England and Wales only 42 have been refused (*Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, 3 June 2003, col.89W). In informal discussions with solicitors the author has heard how difficult it is to mount a defence; sometimes solicitors feel that all they can do is to appeal for a limitation on the length of time during which the ASBO is effective.

In making decisions on the length of time an ASBO lasts, the courts should arguably be making 'proportionate' decisions based on estimates of how long the community needs protection. In effect this is probably very difficult to do. In Manchester in November 2004 a seventeen year old was made the subject of an ASBO for life ('ASBO for Pestering TV Crew', *Daily Mirror*, 4 Nov. 2004). How such a calculation could be arrived at, that the community would need such a length of protection, is hard to imagine.

The Disappearance of Welfare

In the January 2004 article (Grier and Thomas, 2003/4) it was argued that the rise of the ASBO was accompanied by the inevitable demise of welfare. The hard-nosed approach of Anti-Social Behaviour Units was oblivious to any concerns about 'helping' people and if any concerns were expressed it was that 'welfare approaches' had failed and ASBOs – in contrast – worked. Such simplistic logic has held the day. What is actually meant by having 'worked' is more problematic when examined closely and for some critics this is all just a net-widening exercise to fast-track young people into custody for 'offences' not actually deserving of custody.

The criticism of ASBOs ignoring 'welfare' has been partly addressed by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 introducing Individual Support Orders (ISO). These Orders (available from May 2004) were to circumvent the allegation that ASBOs were entirely negative and offered nothing positive. The Orders were short-term offers of constructive help, to be implemented by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Until now the position of the YOTs had been anomalous and some ASBOs had even been made on young people without any reference to YOTs who knew nothing about the applications until the Orders had been made:

> *There have, for example, been cases where the court has imposed an order and the YOT has not even been informed, let alone consulted.* (Professor Rod Morgan, Chair of the Youth Justice Board interviewed in *Childright* 2004, No. 209, Sept. p.8)

Guidance has now been issued to YOTs and other agencies so that this should not happen in future (*YJB*, 2005); that it ever did happen was evidence of welfare simply being by-passed.

The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee tried to square the circle by insisting that there was no difference between 'prevention' and 'enforcement' and that the balance between the two was about right in the Government's anti-social behaviour strategy. It was claimed that it was just '(not) true that its strategy is skewed towards enforcement' (House of Commons 2005, Volume 1, para.116). In support of this contention the Government cited a survey of 100 nuisance neighbour cases that revealed '39% of families and individuals targeted reported that enforcement action had helped change their behaviour for the better' (Home Office 2005a; see also Seenan, 2004), and just to show that it could support welfare a £1.25 million 'cash boost' was also announced to promote projects of intensive family support (Home Office, 2005a).

Others have remained unconvinced, believing the hard-nosed approach is still at the expense of a welfare approach and not part of a coherent strategy. The National Association of Probation Officers has produced a dossier of cases where ASBOs have been implemented where individuals clearly needed counselling or psychiatric help (available at www.asboconcern.org.uk; see also 'Asbo's – two steps from prison for a non-jail offence', The *Guardian* 28 Dec. 2004; Krudy and Stewart 2004; Willow 2005). The Children's Society cite evidence that 'every ASBO is a failing of the (local) council to meet a young person's needs' (House of Commons 2005, Vol.2, Evidence 27) and the NCH believe that 'addressing the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour is a far more effective approach than just punishing (families and young people) through enforcement measures' (ibid, Evidence 107). The Howard

League has said:

> *Most people subjected to ASBOs are either mentally ill, have problems with alcohol or drugs or have a learning difficulty. These are people with difficult and chaotic lives.* (Editorial *Howard League Magazine* 23(1) 2005, p.2)

Instead of help, however, the ASBO if breached, leads only to custody (ibid).

The Increasing Use of Publicity

In January 2004 the increasing use of publicity attached to the issuing of ASBOs was noted. The reporting restrictions that fall automatically on a youth court hearing criminal proceedings do not apply to a civil magistrates court hearing an application for an ASBO. Reporting restrictions in the civil court have to be 'imposed' rather than 'lifted' and the official line from the Home Office is that 'the effectiveness of the ASBO will largely depend on a wider community knowing the details' (Home Office 2000: para.15.2). The wider community will then report breaches to the police for suitable action to take place.

Publicity has duly followed and tabloid (and broadsheet) newspapers now regularly carry stories of ASBOs which identify young people:

> Terrorised by Girl Gang Boss Aged 13 (*Daily Express* 17 Feb. 2004)
> Court lays down the law: stay out of town – or else (*Halifax Evening Courier,* 19 April 2004)
> Curfew for thug, 11 (*Daily Mail*, 6 October 2004)
> Boy banned from city for 10 years (The *Guardian*, 23 Nov. 2004)
> 'Cheeky' 10-year-old is youngest to get ASBO (The *Independent*, 10 Feb. 2005)

This publicity transgresses our conventional wisdom on legal proceedings involving young people, which is that they should be confidential and closed to the public; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child confirms this (UN 1989 Article 40 (2) (b) (vii)). On 25 March 2005 the *Daily Mirror* published a front-page photograph of a complete family, with three siblings aged 20, 18 and 16, under the headline 'Meet the ASBOs' – seemingly a parody on the Hollywood film 'Meet the Fockers'.

Publicising details about a child nationally somewhat dents the rationale that this is all about allowing the local community such knowledge so that they can report breaches. The Home Affairs Committee accepted this anomaly but then side-stepped it with the somewhat bland comment that 'with a free press, it is not possible to limit publicity to local communities' (House of Commons 2005: Volume 1, para. 223).

Publicity is also given out by means of individualised leaflets available to local residents. This might be one way of limiting national circulation but a new industry has arisen of producing these coloured glossy leaflets complete with photographs and maps delineating areas that a young person must stay out of. Some of them even include tabloid press cuttings as though to legitimate what they are doing (Thomas, 2004).

In evidence to the Home Affairs Committee a number of respondents pointed to the potentially damaging effect this publicity might have on young people:

> *For one young person that we have been working with the reporting of his ASBO led to an elevation to cult status in the local community and significantly set back the work that a youth organisation had been doing with him.* (The Children's Society, cited in House of Commons 2005, Volume 2, Evidence 28)

> *All behavioural and psychological research shows that where children gain attention or status from 'bad' behaviour, raising the profile of this behaviour merely reinforces that this is how they get attention and leads to more of the same ... the consistent use of terms such as 'yob' and 'scum' – goes far beyond a 'public interest' principle of informing people of the conditions of any order and can only serve to raise the levels of fear and antagonism to children and young people in general.* (Barnardo's, cited in House of Commons 2005, Volume 2, Evidence 15)

None of this evidence cut much ice with Home Office junior Minister Hazel Blears, who told the Committee that she saw publicity as connecting communities to a system working on their behalf and giving people 'a sense that action is being taken'. She confirmed that she was unaware of any specific research looking at the effects of this publicity on young people and was clear that the Home Office had '(no) intention to commission that kind of research' (ibid: Volume 3, Evidence 111). It might be added that there also appear to be no figures available as to just how many breaches of ASBOs are actually initiated from calls from the public based on publicity they have received; anecdotal evidence suggests it is more likely to be initiated directly by police officers who seek out breaches for themselves.

In October 2004 the pressure group Liberty represented three teenagers in London who appealed against the publicity attendant on their ASBOs. Publicity had included '3000 leaflets showing the boys' pictures, an article in a council newspaper and an internet story which described the gang's behaviour as "animalistic" and gang members as "thugs and bully boys"' (Laville, 2004). The case was lost with Lord Justice Kennedy accepting the argument that it was 'reasonable' if the orders were to be effective; some of the language used was, he said, – 'colourful ... but it was entirely appropriate' (ibid; R (on the application of Stanley, Marshall and Kelly) v. Metropolitan Police Commissioner and another [2004] EWHC 2229 (Admin) QBD).

Home Secretary Charles Clarke would later cite this judgement when introducing new guidelines on publicity for those on ASBOs. Using his own colourful language he referred to the 'mindless behaviour of a few yobs' and went on to explain that:

> *... publicising ASBOs has been tested in the courts and today we are making the position crystal clear – your photograph could be all over the local media, your local community will know who you are and breaching an ASBO could land you in prison.* (Home Office 2005b)

The Home Office published new guidance with this press release explaining how they saw publicity being used in the wake of the Liberty legal challenge (Home Office 2005c), and by April 2005 the Government had further amended the law to 'disapply' the youth court

presumption of restricted reporting when dealing with breaches of ASBOs (Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 s.141).

Counter Voices

The critics of ASBOs have been around from the start. They have been dismissed as '*Guardian* readers' far removed from street reality:

> *... if John Wadham (former Director of the civil rights pressure group Liberty) wants to come and park his BMW on one of the streets in question, he's welcome to do so.* (quoted in Quayle, 2005)

The critics, however, have not gone away and there is evidence of an emerging counter balance to the ASBO movement. The National Association of Probation Officers have compiled their own dossier (see above) and the Children's Society and Barnardo's have been strident in their criticisms (see their submissions to House of Commons, 2005).

The dismissive smear of 'liberal do-gooding' continues to be heard, however, and when Liberty challenged the publicity being issued on young people (see above) they were shocked at the hostility that came back at them. They were accused of promoting the rights of criminals whilst taking no interest in those of the residents. This sort of criticism they described as 'not unusual' but what was 'more worrying to us was that many people, usually sympathetic to us. were angry at what we had done. We hope that members appreciate the principle we were trying to protect' ('Brent Council, the High Court and Us', *Liberty*, Winter 2004, p.5). This truly is crime reduction policy driven by 'popular punitivism'.

Politicians in particular have been virulent in their condemnations. One Labour politician dismissed ASBO critics as:

> *Guardian-reading, middle-class wankers who make a good living from being awkward and don't have to live in the blighted areas.* (quoted in Quayle, 2005)

The Howard League surmises that 'anti-social behaviour has become a plaything of the politician' (Editorial, *Howard League Magazine*, 23(1) p.2, 2005) and that using anti-social behaviour legislation on children is just 'a nasty political trick' because 'the government is seen to be doing something – but the real challenges are left unmet' (Howard League, 2004). Professor David Wilson (University of Central England) sees the problem arising from New Labour's landslide victories and the creation of lots of backbenchers who do not know what to do with themselves:

> *... suddenly all these new MPs turn up in the Commons and report back from their various surgeries. The stories are all the same – constituents complaining about young people, and 'something must be done'. Et voila, ASBOs.* (In Book Reviews, *Howard League Magazine*, 22(4): 16)

Tony Blair himself has summed up the political position generally regarding youth crime.

Having acknowledged that locking-up 12 to 15 year olds is 'horrible' he is on record as saying that it is also 'necessary because the politics of law and order require it' (Tonry, 2004: 5).

A co-ordinated attempt is now being made to raise the level of opposition to ASBOs. The journal *Statewatch* has started a website called ASBOWatch to record the aberrant nature of ASBOs (www.statewatch.org/asbo/ASBOwatch.html) and a London solicitor Matt Foot, has instigated ASBOConcern as a consortium of organisations and individuals who want to oppose them (www.asboconcern.org.uk; Foot, 2005); an inaugural meeting was held in London on 7th April 2005 (Travis, 2005).

Conclusions

The ASBO has embedded itself in the range of interventions to 'deal with' children and young people and their incivilities. Politicians have promoted it and the Home Affairs Committee report coming out a month or so before a general election could hardly have been expected to be critical. ASBOs play well to electorates even if not to those who have to pick up the pieces of the people having ASBOs imposed on them. When the *Independent* newspaper ran a leader only gently critical of the Home Affairs Committee report the Chair of the Committee – John Denham – felt obliged to send a letter in defending the report (The *Independent*, letters, 6 April 2005).

After the Labour victory at the 2005 General Election, Prime Minister Tony Blair again declared anti-social behaviour to be high on the government's agenda as we attempted to build a 'culture of respect'. The Queen's Speech, opening parliament, announced a new Violent Crime Bill to ban the sale of knives to under-eighteens, reduce the availability of replica guns, and reduce binge drinking and poor behaviour in town centres. Later the same day, Blair said 'we will expand the youth service, sport in schools, Sure Start and the inner city new deal' but added that police would get extra powers because it was also 'time to reclaim the streets for the decent majority' (*Hansard*, House of Commons Debates 17 May 2005 col. 48).

As a background to the opening of Parliament, like a Greek chorus, the press continued to report stories of unruly youths. The Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent banned the wearing of hooded-tops by young people and the media went into over-drive:

> *A spokesman said its decision to outlaw the so-called 'hoodies', which was backed by Tony Blair and John Prescott had attracted 'extraordinary publicity'* (Condron, 2005)

> *In Manchester Chief Superintendent David Baines of the Greater Manchester Police warned that gangs of 'feral youths' were running wild with no fear of the police or the justice system* (Butt, 2005).

On a more considered level the Cambridge academic Michael Tonry has pointed to further anomaly over the politics of the ASBO. Drawing on evidence from the British Crime Survey he points out that public concerns about anti-social behaviour have actually risen since the introduction of ASBOs:

> ... *by making anti-social behaviour into a major social policy problem, and giving it sustained high-visibility attention, Labour has made a small problem larger, thereby making people more aware of it and less satisfied with their lives and their government.* (Tonry, 2004: 57)

The implication is that the government must now do yet more to combat anti-social behaviour.

The fear is that this differential application of the law to whoever is assessed as 'anti-social' could lead to separate laws and interventions that do not apply to the rest of us. We could have – and indeed already do have – the situation whereby two fifteen year olds can display identical behaviour in different locations in the same city. One may have committed no crime at all but the other could be on their way to a custodial sentence because they are the subject of an ASBO. In the end we start to talk of a 'jurisprudence of difference' whereby we have created an 'other' breed of person who has to live by different rules.

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Space, Autonomy and Respect: The potential contribution of youth clubs to the lives of disaffected and disengaged young people

Zoe Hilton

This article presents recent research which explores the potential of youth workers within youth clubs to work with vulnerable young people who have been alienated from mainstream schools and who are outside or on the fringes of formal educational provision. Based on a small sample of in-depth interviews with attendees of two youth clubs in Edinburgh, it shows that in addition to the more obvious benefits of centre-based youth work, such as reducing the amount of time spent 'hanging out' on the streets, the clubs also provided a powerful space for positive social development. Ultimately the research found that youth work within the club environment was effective with a range of young people, from some of the most highly excluded and vulnerable to those with less visible problems who were not necessarily eligible for more formal forms of support. This article argues that the contribution of the clubs, with their holistic approach to a mix of young people, is particularly important in the context of the current pressures in mainstream schools and the increasingly hard-line approaches to juvenile justice.

Keywords: youth work, clubs, support, school exclusion, disaffection.

Research shows the long-term damage that can be done by lengthy absences from school (Farrington, 1997). Yet the incidence of exclusion and truancy remains relatively widespread despite a succession of policy reforms aimed at promoting inclusion in schools. In England exclusion from school soared six fold following the introduction of the 1988 educational reforms (Cooper, 2001) and levels have remained high following this rise. Scholars who have investigated the persistence of school exclusion in England and Scotland, frequently point to the limitations of policies and to the wider patterns of disaffection in schools with reference in the context of educational reform (Blyth and Milner, 1994; Cooper, 2001; Gerwitz et al, 1995; Gerwitz, 1996; Gillbourn and Youdell, 2000; Hayden, 1997; Lloyd-Smith and Davis, 1995). They argue that in the current marketised and competitive school system there has been a marked decline in tolerance towards disaffection and disruptive behaviour within school. They explore how policies and practices that have proved successful in sustaining inclusive environments within mainstream schools are sidelined due to the kinds of performance pressures currently bearing on the school system.

Other analyses of the persistent problems of school alienation and failure point to the importance of conceptualising school difficulties in relation to the wider context of young people's lives outside school (Mortimore and Whitty, 1997). This is important since exclusion from school mostly affects those suffering from various other forms of social disadvantage,

including family disruption and poverty (Blyth and Milner, 1996; Hayden, 1997; OFSTED, 1996; Parsons, 1999a). It is also argued that young people face difficult and uncertain transitions for which schools may not be equipped to prepare them. A growing body of sociological literature on the conditions of youth under late modernity points to new uncertainties around youth transitions and a lack of guidance and traditional signposting for young people who are attempting to make their way in the world (eg. Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). This is exemplified by the increasing exclusion of poorer young people from secure, rewarding, or long-term employment, which in turn may impact upon their attitudes towards the value of schooling. For example, in a study of 88 school leavers in Teesside, which considered the impact of de-industrialisation on the creation of 'flexible' youth labour markets, MacDonald and Marsh found that all 88 could be described as 'economically marginal' individuals who are 'leaving school with poor educational qualifications and then circulating around the various options available at the bottom end of the local labour market' (MacDonald and Marsh, 2001: 386).

In relation to the persistent and substantial problems of school failure and drop out of some of the most disadvantaged pupils, it becomes important to ask how vulnerable young people *can* access support and guidance as they make difficult and complex transitions to adulthood. The research upon which this article is based involved qualitative interviews with pupils drawn from two youth clubs in Edinburgh, and was specifically aimed at hearing and understanding these young people's own accounts of the role in their lives of the youth club and the adults who work there. An important finding of the research was that youth clubs were supporting not only the most vulnerable, but also successfully engaging and integrating a wide range of young people, many of whom had been unhappy within mainstream school. Such success in working with not only the most seriously 'at risk' young people, but also sustaining a successful *mix* of young people, is a distinctive and important feature of the clubs. The research highlights not only the shortcomings of school in alienating such a broad range of young people and the distinctive contribution made by the life of the clubs, but also emphasises the valuable role of this particular form of youth work. This article will argue that the youth clubs provided appropriate space in terms of an engaging and secure environment, autonomy in terms of choice whether or not to get involved in activities or access the support available, and respect in terms of the construction of relationships between the young people and the adult youth workers.

In England the focus of youth work in recent years has to some degree moved away from the model of open access youth work at a local centre to more specific targeted work on young people 'at risk' (Robertson, 2000; Jeffs and Smith, 2001). Smith (2003) argues that there has been a shift from 'youth work' to 'youth development'; the latter more closely aligned to the work of teachers or social workers, which work on a one-to-one basis with the most vulnerable individuals. Recent Scottish policy, by contrast, acknowledges the importance of 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000) in its guidance for community learning and development and makes allowance for youth work to work beyond a narrowly defined risk group (Scottish Executive, 2003). Nonetheless, Scottish youth work doubtless faces many of the same pressures as in England in terms of bureaucracy, limited funding, and the push to achieve specific targeted outcomes. In both countries there is a mounting pressure for youth work providers to achieve measurable goals with particular groups. This article explores the significance of the voluntary participation of young people in clubs and points to the

benefits of mixing in a positive community and building informal relationships with skilled adults.

The processes of assessment and allocation of school pupils in need of extra support to different forms of alternative provision tend to be rather muddled and inconsistent (Lloyd and Padfield, 1996). Edinburgh is no exception to this. Interviews with teachers, education officers, youth workers and social workers involved in pupil support, as well as the young people's own accounts, confirmed that the processes of exclusion from mainstream school and the subsequent allocation of alternative placements varies widely. The ways a pupil receives extra support depend on how proactive their school is in supporting them, how vigorously their parents pursue access to additional support, and on the availability of appropriate alternative placements at particular times. There is certainly no consistent or predictable pathway for a young person into a particular setting based on an analysis of their needs.

It is recognised by professional practitioners that in Edinburgh many young people simply 'slip through the net' in failing to receive support from the generally overburdened support structures. This happens at various different stages, and as a result many vulnerable pupils in schools never access more specialised forms of assistance. In addition to those highly disruptive pupils who drop out of the school system because of a lack of appropriate placements, there are also those pupils whose vulnerabilities do not bring them into direct conflict with authority structures. As a result they may stop attending school and go relatively unnoticed. Attempts to make accurate records of truancy or unauthorised absence from school have long been plagued with difficulties (O'Keefe and Stoll, 1995; Blyth and Milner, 1999). The two Edinburgh youth clubs offered the advantage of providing access to a range of young people at different ages and stages who had found themselves outside or on the fringes of school life including those most highly vulnerable young people, those with more mild difficulties, and others from the local community.

Mango Youth Club

The Mango Youth Club is located in the middle of the city and operates as an open access drop in centre for young people[1]. It is based around a café and runs during Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings when it arranges a busy timetable of social events, mixed with informal support groups and workshops. The café also provides a base for courses for young people in need of more extended forms of support such as the 'Turnaround out of Offending' programme which takes official referrals and runs during the school day. However, other programmes tend to be short-term or one-off sessions which are open to all and integrated into the evening schedule. Overall the club offers considerable informal support to young people since the youth workers not only arrange events and activities but are also available to give confidential advice to any young person who requests it. The 'recruitment' to the club tends to be for a diverse range of reasons, through friendship groups and parental persuasion, as well as outreach work by the youth workers. The club is based in two large, light and spacious rooms, one of which contains the café bar and a seating area with a couple of sofas, the other is a games room with various video games and board games kept in it. The main staff include three key youth workers who have been

at the café some time and are fairly experienced, and a number of other volunteers who attend on a part time basis.

The aims of the club are to provide a lively mix of social activities and a warm friendly and informal space for young people to spend their evenings. In addition to this they also seek to provide supportive guidance to their attendees, both in counselling them through specific individual difficulties they may have, and in providing more general advice sessions to help with the transition from school to work, or the move from the family home into independent living. The club is an open access service and it serves an extremely broad range of young people at different ages and stages. Although it provides a setting for the more specialised programmes described above which run during the day and takes official referrals – the evening club is open to all. In fact it is relatively common for the more vulnerable young people referred to the day programmes to also attend the open clubs in the evening. In general the participants of the café are a fairly mixed group.

The open, easygoing, and distinctly friendly atmosphere of Mango appeared, at least in part, to be a product of the efforts of the youth workers. These workers helped to sustain a lively, fun and positive atmosphere by mixing freely with the young people and encouraging them to get involved in activities. It was also observable that these youth workers worked hard to establish a rapport with each of the individual young people who came into the club, either by talking with them about specific things or having a joke with them. One of the most striking aspects of Mango youth club was its sometimes very lively and excitable atmosphere which appeared partly to be a result of the wide range of activities available. There was often a considerable amount taking place, and it was common for youth workers and professionals based in other places to come to the café to run seminars or workshops or assist with evening social activities. The activities were highly varied. During the field visits the events timetable included, for example, organised sessions at Laser Quest, Box Exercise classes and a Valentines Quiz, alongside more structured seminars or programs such as an Anger Management Seminar, a Sexual Health Focus group and a Racial Awareness Discussion. It appeared that because the young people enjoyed the club they were often also willing to take part in the more structured activities which were delivered in a fairly lively and interactive way.

Castle Hill Youth Club

Castle Hill Youth Club is a neighbourhood youth club based in an economically and socially deprived area in the North of Edinburgh. Castle Hill works with about 150 young people in various different groupings of ages and circumstances. The club runs during the evenings for young people in the local area but unlike the café it has a series of regular attendees rather than being open to all on any particular night. The building where the club is held is large and spacious with a large central area with a pool table and food bar where snacks were available. Off the side is a comfortable room with sofas and there is also a large art room (although this is rather dingy). The participants are drawn from a group that is geared towards older teenagers and aims to support them to make the transition from school to work. The research participants from Castle Hill were members of the 'Monday Club', which offers casual youth club social activities and informal support work on Monday evenings.

Some of the young people in this club were referred through school but most were simply encouraged to attend by families or community representatives. Overall the evening club attracted a genuine mix of young people from the local area but reflecting the socio-economic profile of the neighbourhood these tended to be disadvantaged young people.

The aims of Castle Hill involve assisting young people through the transition from school to work, both by offering a relaxed social space for them to 'hang out', and by providing supportive advice and guidance. During the Monday club the two key youth workers used their friendships with the young people to help make them aware of realistic choices they could make for their futures and to encourage them to plan for their next step. While some of this was delivered through group sessions and more structured tasks, the youth workers provided much of their support by simply mixing with the young people and getting to know them. They explained that this was often the best way of finding out what was going on in the young people's lives and in turn gently shaping their choices in positive ways. Indeed much of the advice and guidance from the youth workers appeared to be offered during games of pool.

The Research Study

This research was carried out as part of a larger PhD study funded by CRSIS (Centre for Research into Socially Inclusive Services) a research centre based at Heriot Watt University which undertakes and disseminates independent policy research[2]. The aims of the study were to understand the causes of the disaffection and school failure among disadvantaged young people and to explore what (if any) effective sources of external support were available to troubled young people as they experienced difficulties in their lives. The data presented here is derived from this larger study which engaged young people in six different alternative institutional settings outside mainstream school. These settings ranged from relatively formalised special schools to the two informal local youth clubs which are of concern here. The larger research study also included 29 background interviews with a range of practitioners involved in pupil support. This article explores the accounts of 18 young people interviewed in the two youth clubs in order to draw out some issues that appeared of wider relevance to the role of youth work and youth clubs. For this purpose the accounts of the adult youth workers drawn from the two clubs are also examined.

Extended, individual semi-structured interviews with young people took place in Edinburgh during the summer of 2002, in the two clubs described above. The sample of young people included pupils of both genders, between the ages of 12 and 17, with very different experiences of disruptive behaviour, truancy and exclusion. For example, the varying levels of vulnerability in the sample were indicated by the fact that six of them had been permanently excluded for disruptive behaviour and five had experience of persistent truancy. Of these a number also had fairly significant offending careers. However by contrast there were also several young people in the sample who had far less serious problems and who had remained within their mainstream school.

Each interviewee was asked to reflect on his or her experiences of school as well as on wider aspects of their lives, including the way they perceived and experienced the various different

forms of support available. During this wide-ranging, open-ended inquiry interviewees were asked about any support they had received that was important to them and in this way given the opportunity to discuss youth work if they wanted. Respondents were encouraged to approach topics in their own way over the course of the discussion. The interviews usually took place in one of the private spare rooms in the clubs and on the occasions when this was not possible participants were taken to a quiet café nearby. The research engaged participants on a voluntary basis, which involved finding willing individuals and explaining in detail to each of them what the research was about and giving a few examples of the kinds of questions that would be asked. It also involved explaining the purposes of the research and the ways in which their answers might be used in research publications. It was explained to the young people that their names would be changed for this purpose.

It hardly needs stating that young people, particularly poorer young people comprise a particularly disadvantaged group. Many young people find that their schools, orientated towards assessment and achievement, offer them an unsatisfactory set of experiences. At the same time they tend to be excluded, more fully than older workers, from enjoying secure, rewarding or long-term employment (Byrne, 1999). Yet while the impact of economic and welfare restructuring has been to prolong their dependence on their parents (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Rugg, 1999), young people are continually bombarded with the cultural messages and expectations that they should be independent. The rights of young people are also poorly protected in law. The clearest example of this can be found in the Crime and Disorder Act (2003) which has seen the use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders extended and increasingly targeted at children and young people. This legislation makes possible a custodial sentence for minor breaches of law and nuisance behaviour.

Out of trouble

All of the young people in the sample described their youth clubs with warmth and enthusiasm. At the most basic level a number of respondents talked about how the youth clubs had enabled them to stay 'out of trouble', simply by removing them from temptation and unsupervised 'hanging out' on the streets. Many of the respondents talked gratefully about the kind of benevolent supervision within the clubs which kept them occupied and removed from potential trouble:

> *When I come up Mango that way I know that I'm not in any trouble I'm not in any hassle.* (Eddie, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

> *Its like...I go up there instead of going out with my friends and getting in trouble...going up there instead of going out at night.* (Julie, 14 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Clearly the youth clubs provided warm, informal settings where young people could spend their evenings:

> *A place where they get young people off the streets. ...I've been going five years and it's a... I've seen people come and go in that Café and it's like, mostly everybody hangs about there eh, it's like a place to hang about with all your mates.* (Cathy, 17 years old,

Mango Youth Club)

They keep you out of trouble and if you're having problems they sit and talk to you about them. (Marie, 13 years old, Mango Youth Club)

For some of the young people, attending the youth clubs had brought about an important shift in their friendship groups, moving them away from peers that were inclined to engage in antisocial behaviour or offending.

Just started coming up to Mango and that instead of like hanging about with the wrong people from my area and that eh
(Ben, 14 years old, Mango Youth Club)

One respondent elaborated on the link between boredom and offending behaviour:

The thing about Oxgangs, there's nothing for us to do eh, there's nothing. Nothing! That's why there's loads of offending in Oxgangs, as there's nothing for us to do. It's boredom, that's what I think it is, it's boredom, that's why people get in trouble.
(Daniel, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Support and positive pressure

The young people explained that the youth clubs had provided them with an alternative to hanging out on the streets. In doing so they described being diverted from engaging in forms of anti social behaviour and offending – and they were commonly grateful for this. Overall, however the majority of respondents described the clubs as having a more significant role in their lives than simply providing an alternative to the streets. It was clear from their accounts that the clubs had provided them with a range of resources that they felt helped them to cope with the pressures they faced:

Basically it's stuff that prepares you for the future...stuff like that [...] school behaviour... and the way I behaved in life...so it has had a good effect. (Graham, Mango Youth Club, 15 years old)

Castle Hill's helped me a lot I'm glad I've come...ye get to have fun via learning things... no' things like you learn at school but its like things that can help you with your life and getting jobs. (Ross, 15 years old, Castle Hill Youth Club)

Although the youth clubs did not provide formal educational support, it was apparent that they had helped a number of the respondents to focus on their futures and think about their educational and career development:

They do stuff [...] that helps ye with careers, careers people come in and that. (Alex, 17 years old, Castle Hill Youth Club)

The respondents also commonly described positive kinds of pressure from the youth workers:

I want to stay on at school and that...the old worker that just left...he was like, 'Oh go to university' and all that. (Mike, 15 years old, Castle Hill Youth Club)

Successful relationships and positive sense of community

A number of the respondents expressed their appreciation of the emotional space and understanding they had been offered in the youth clubs. It was clear that both clubs had offered a supportive and encouraging environment and the young people commonly associated this with their successful relationships with other attendees.

A number of respondents described the positive community spirit fostered by the clubs and the way in which friendships thrived in an atmosphere of trust:

You get to meet good friends and some people who you can trust and know what I mean get to go away on residentials and be good friends and talk to people about stuff...and you can talk in a group and no ones going to blab and stuff like that (Graham, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

In fact, it appeared that the clubs created valuable emotional space by exerting influence on peer interactions, and helping to prevent the emergence of social tensions between different groups of young people. It provided an environment where they were able to construct their own positive relationships with one another. There was appreciation of the way that the relationships and interactions were kept safe and comfortable, unlike those of the school or those out in the wider community:

Everyone here's really good pals, it's not like in here there's a group and then there's another group, everyone here's good pals. (Mike, 15 years old, Castle Hill Youth Club)

The respondents were particularly positive about their interactions with adult youth workers. A common theme was the level of respect that they felt they were shown. The informality of the clubs meant that the workers were able to offer young people access to informal guidance and support without dictating to them or depriving them of autonomy. The respondents described the friendly, sympathetic, and respectful influence of the workers:

Usually just sitting down at a table and things come up in conversation they're just so friendly you can just sit and talk to them...I was talking to Bill[3] earlier on like saying about truanting and he was saying like different y'know ways of getting round it...and what classes I need to go to and I should be sensible. ...At the end of the day you've still got to make your own decisions. (Gillian, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

One respondent described how at a particularly upsetting time in his life, he had been able to depend on the youth club for support:

You can actually sit and talk to people in that place. There are workers there that you can sit and actually talk to them. It's like...when my cousin Sarah died eh...the night she passed away I came up to the café and I knew I could sit and talk to somebody, so

I come up and sat and talked to Bill about it, sat and talked to him, and he just sat and listened. (Ben, 14 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Across all of the settings the respondents praised the way these adults consistently gave their time and listened respectfully to what they had to say, and they described how this had helped them. It became clear that personal relationships with adult workers had underpinned some real processes of change for some of the young people.

I got scars and that on my eyes and, ken it was just through stress and all that...and ken the people up here ken they would sit and talk to me about it...and then I just stopped doing it. Aye it was them, like ken they just sat down and talked to me and said, 'Why did you do things like that?' (Clare, 14 years old, Mango Youth Club)

One seventeen year old, Cathy, who was supported through the club, described the positive pressure provided by one youth worker in particular:

Jen was supportive no matter what I'd done when I was in school or left school but ken if I did skive right Jen used to find out and she used to nag my brains out and most of the time I never really listened to her and then when I did start to listen to her eh I started kinda getting my act together and that eh and not getting suspended and that and they dae these wee positive referrals its like a wee pink card and that I started getting out by the time I finished fourth year...my record of achievement was quite good. (Cathy, 17 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Support and guidance – the particular contribution of clubs

During the interviews the young people were invited to discuss all forms of support they had received. These accounts revealed the scope that the youth clubs had to provide a unique form of support in contrast to the mainstream schools. In discussing school difficulties it became apparent that most of the respondents had felt unsupported by the over-stretched guidance departments at their schools. For many it appeared that the authoritarian nature of school shaped these guidance relationships in ways which made them unhelpful:

I just felt like the people that were speaking to me didna like me...so I thought, well, if they don't like me then there must be something wrong with me – so I just kept on doing it. (Daniel, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Similarly it was common for the respondents to feel negatively about their social workers:

We've had social workers out like talking about the family problems but it doesn't really help they always take my mum and dad's side (Gillian, 15 years old, Mango Youth Club)

Clearly this contrasted with the relationships in the youth clubs which were effective because they had been cultivated in more respectful kinds of ways. The clubs offered the young people the autonomy of choosing whether to access support depending on their own needs.

Adult testimony

This research also sought to record the views of a small number of the key youth workers from each of the settings. These adult practitioners contrasted the time and flexibility that they had in the clubs to build personal relationships and offer support to individuals with the lack of those opportunities in mainstream schools. For the youth workers this kind of informal but complex environment was key to the kinds of holistic support they were able to offer to help prepare young people for adulthood. One youth worker explained why it was important to have an informal social setting where there was considerable influence over peer group pressures and it was possible to create a safe space.

> *The whole school environment is completely different from the kind of environment we have here, and the whole kind of role of teachers is completely different as well. You know, you could have a Maths teacher who gets given Social Education, which is kind of, and they then have to deliver sessions around sexual health. You need a really quite safe group environment to be able to kind of get young people to benefit from a session like that.* (May, Youth Worker, Castle Hill Youth Club)

One of the main underlying problems that the practitioners discussed was the competitive academic focus of the present school system. They felt that the narrowness of the present curriculum was damaging to pupils whose abilities lay in less academic fields and they linked this to the kinds of exclusion and disaffection that they were so familiar with:

> *We expect all kids to fit into one education system, and we need to find a way, y'know we can't keep excluding young people, and perhaps just a different approach that's more suitable to their needs. [In] other countries you can have wonderful talents and skills, perhaps not academically, but in other fields and other countries you might work on that kid's talent to be an artist, or to do woodwork, or joinery, but if you can't take the whole package that we're offering kids here then you're out.* (Gina, Head Youth Worker, Mango Youth Club)

The adult practitioners had a strong belief that it is important to offer young people an opportunity to develop a sense of achievement through their successful participation in creative or practical work. They believed the young people could be encouraged to achieve intrinsic rewards within the clubs in more stimulating and imaginative kinds of ways than exam performance. In addition they had developed a pedagogy of informal methods using group discussions and debates.

One of the key issues for the adults was persuading vulnerable young people to participate in the positive community of the clubs. One youth worker described how they generated positive social pressure in peer interactions by requiring the attendees of the club to vote for which individuals they believed should receive the rewards and opportunities it offered.

> *We create a lot of peer pressure for [good behaviour] because y'know we have this, we have this debate, for example, when we do have money to go out on a trip or a residential: Who gets to go? And why do they get to go? And that is really powerful in terms of the debate it creates here, for the kids here. It's about people who are going*

to be respectful, people who have shown a sort of kindness and respect to other young people who have used this project. (Gina, Head Youth Worker, Mango Youth Club)

She reflected on how this could be extremely challenging for young people in demanding new kinds of behaviours. She described how individuals were often used to the negative dynamic between themselves and others and that this made it difficult for them to know how to act differently:

It's quite interesting that they are probably the most troublesome youngsters in their school, but at the end of the day most are insecure about coming in here at night time and it takes quite a bit of work. If they cause trouble perhaps in their community their experience of people, or other young people, is just going to be trouble...so it takes a lot of support and convincing [for them] to actually come in here. (Gina, Head Youth Worker, Mango Youth Club)

The youth workers often supported young people into work placements but encouraged them where possible to take the initiative for this and to direct their own positive changes. Again the emphasis was on allowing and encouraging autonomy.

The policy context

Through the direct testimony of young people, the research presents a clear endorsement of the potential of youth clubs to undertake work with highly vulnerable individuals, as well as pointing to their often-unacknowledged inclusive support of a broader band of young people many of whom have problems. However it also contains important policy implications about the role of mainstream schools and the failure of mainstream schools to properly include and engage many pupils, including many of those who are still technically included within mainstream schools (Bynner, 2001; Hornby, 1999). In fact some analysts argue that the climate of 'inclusion' may become dangerous when the system actually fails to be truly inclusive, leading to what Cornwall describes as 'maindumping' (Cornwall, 2001). In such cases it may be common for young people to be within a mainstream school but in practice be allowed to truant or not properly included in the life of the school (Lloyd et al, 2001). Certainly most of the respondents in my sample had some level of difficult school experiences. It was here that the clubs were of immense value in offering the kinds of listening relationships these young people needed.

Researchers in England have argued that centre-based youth work has fallen out of favour there as youth work is increasingly integrated into a 'youth development' agenda (Smith, 2003). Certainly there is an increasing focus on targeted work with vulnerable young people (Merton et al, 2004). However this research detailing the work of a local café and a local club in Scotland shows how valuable the club-based approach can be and the scope offered by relationships of autonomy and consent developed in that environment. The young people in this study had the freedom to choose their level of participation in the activities and relationships offered by the club enabling them to access what they needed at particular times and retain a sense of autonomy and control. The contrast between targeted work with individuals in schools and with social workers, which many of the young people

in my sample disliked, finding it intrusive and stigmatising, and their appreciation of the open and autonomous nature of the clubs is significant. The narrow use of assessment and targets within mainstream secondary schools in Scotland has removed a considerable amount of free time and space for informal kinds of learning, and in so doing has alienated many young people. It is counter productive if youth work is forced to become narrowly preoccupied, firstly with systems of measurement and accreditation and secondly with certain target groups. Youth clubs provide a unique space in which all sorts of young people can mix together. It is to be hoped that Scotland can continue to offer a distinctive approach in youth work, one that recognises the role of relatively free form, generic, centre based youth work, allowing the agency of individual youth workers to develop and sustain relationships (Bamber, 2000; Holman, 2000).

The emphasis on building social capital in the Scottish Executive's recent guidance is to be welcomed. However there are potential policy conflicts here as in many respects Scotland has been subject to the same policy pressures as those in England (Mooney and Poole, 2004). Resources and staffing levels are under considerable financial pressure, and as a result the focus is often placed on a small percentage of young people, for whom very specific outcomes are then measured (Bamber, 2000). In this context the empowering and community based opportunities of youth work for a broad range of young people is lost to view. Indeed approaches to juvenile justice have taken the same narrow punitive approach that is visible in England. In response to the recent Antisocial Behaviour Bill (2003) a number of leading children's charities in Scotland have expressed concern about the specific targeting of young people and the lack of emphasis given to preventative and diversionary support services such as youth work (Children in Scotland, 2003; 2004). Children in Scotland, Youthlink Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament have all condemned the 'quickfix' punitive solutions contained in the Antisocial Behaviour Bill and its failure to address an enduring and complex problem. These organisations also highlight the need for community-based work and express anxieties around the continued funding of generic youth work alongside strategic work such as crime prevention (YouthLink Scotland, 2003). In the current policy context of pressures within schools and an increasingly unsympathetic framework surrounding juvenile justice, it is more important than ever that the role of youth clubs, where a range of young people can engage in a meaningful community, is recognised and sustained.

While this investigation only explores the experiences of a small sample of respondents, the accounts recorded here do raise concerns about the evolving direction of youth services. This small exploratory study of the role of youth work does suggest an urgent need for greater debate and analysis around this policy area. The impressive depth and breadth of recent DfES sponsored research confirms many of the powerful attributes youth work has in contributing to the personal development of young people, and highlights the dangers of losing universal access provision due to the focus on targeted project work (Merton et al, 2004). However, it is not clear how the data from such research justifies some of the policy recommendations it makes for accreditation, impact measures and managerial systems. The praise that the authors have for the holistic nature of what youth work offers is surely contradictory to this demand for measurable outcomes and forms of accreditation. These would soon run the risk of providing yet another narrowly defined hierarchy of success and failure. This small study in Edinburgh, which sets the experience of youth work in the

context of disaffection with the processes of the school system suggests the need for a far more cautious response to the development towards curriculum and accreditation within these alternative spaces.

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Notes

1 The names of both clubs have been changed

2 I would most especially like to thank my PhD supervisor Dr Hazel Christie for her guidance and support during this project.

3 Youth Worker at Mango (The names of all of the practitioners have been changed)

What Now? Working-class lesbians' post-school transitions

Yvette Taylor

In this article I explore working-class lesbians' post-school transitions, from school and home settings and into - or out of - the workplace. For most respondents, unemployment immediately followed from school, being precisely what was expected. In many cases women were deemed 'failures' while at school and unlikely to economically 'achieve'. In describing their journeys beyond school, from youth to adulthood, I highlight the interconnections between class and sexuality and make a case for the consideration of class as a crucial component in considering the relationship between materiality and sexuality. To this extent I build upon important work on lesbian lives, exclusions and transitions, avoiding a deficit model whereby working-class lesbians' become pathologised in terms of class and sexuality.

Keywords: Class, sexuality, post-school transitions, economic achievement, exclusion.

This article is based upon my PhD research 'Working-class lesbians: classed in a classless climate,' (2001-2004) which examines the significance of class and sexuality in the lives of fifty-three women, living in a range of localities, who self-identify themselves as working-class and lesbian. Here I will explore (mostly retrospective) accounts of immediate post-school transitions. I seek to put class back into the analysis of lesbian. A nuanced approach to class can take into account individual agency, identification, dis-identification and classed embodiment which themselves become the signifiers and markers of classed struggles, resistances and responses (Lawler, 1999, 2002; Skeggs, 1997).[1] In highlighting the dual operation of class and sexuality in the lives of working-class lesbians as they left school and home and entered the workplace (or did not), the lived interconnection between these two categories becomes apparent, not simply as an 'add on' but rather as a concrete, constantly negotiated material and subjective process, with real and felt consequences, reaching beyond and encompassing schools, workplaces, unemployment queues and classed and sexualised emotions.

The relationship between sexuality and economic status has been explored previously. Dunne (1997) claims that there is an inter-relationships between lesbianism and financial independence: being a lesbian becomes an 'economic achievement' and career planning, with a view to establishing financial independence, becomes a well thought through approach to developing a 'lesbian lifestyle'. What then for working-class lesbians' who may be excluded from such career strategies by virtue of their uneasy and unequal

location in terms of both sexuality *and* class? For those who lack formal qualifications, Dunne (1997) suggests that manual work remains a popular path upon which to establish financial independence and career choices. Although some women I interviewed did work in male-dominated manual sectors, most did not and those who did rarely experienced this as comfortable or financially beneficial. Instead their choices and experiences, both immediately after school and beyond, were informed by continued tensions and constraints around class, gender and sexuality; less economic achievement and more of the same.

My findings concur with those of John and Patrick (1999) who document the extent of social exclusion among lesbians and note the ways that this group faces exclusion from the schooling system, and the real and devastating financial and emotional costs that often accompanies this. Most women in my study eventually, if not immediately after school, engaged in low-paid, 'feminised' and often insecure work, which contrasts markedly with Dunne's findings. The differing results, no doubt, are due to different studies, conducted in different times and locations, with different people – and for different and distinct purposes and so my point is not to discredit Dunne's findings, which do still point to the connections between sexuality and materiality. Rather, my purpose is to divulge and describe the 'difference' that class makes to lesbians' post-school transitions. While Valentine et al (2001), in drawing attention to the vulnerability and marginalisation of lesbian and gay youth as they move from schools, homes and into scene spaces and workplace, suggest a deficiency in previous structuralist models of the 1970s and 1980s, which relied too heavily upon class positions as shaping youth transitions, I am suggesting the necessity of not removing, on a wholesale basis, the continued relevance of class in understanding routes into adulthood for young lesbians.

Feminist theorising has produced good analyses of the continued gendering of the workplace, although Adkins (1995) argues that most labour market theory, including work produced by feminists, either ignores sexuality or considers it unimportant for the gendered operations of the labour market. To extend this slightly, it is also necessary to think about those not in the workplace – or in certain forgotten sectors – to include their experiences in the account of interconnecting social inequalities. Prendergast et al (2001), in exploring the experiences of leaving home among young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, do highlight the ways that for many, such transitions are rarely smooth, linear or unproblematic and in fact they suggest a widening gap between those 'getting somewhere' and those 'getting nowhere'. In rejecting the idea of a youth underclass, they still point to the devastating consequences of being a 'have not', being excluded from typical and normalised transitory pathways by virtue of being a member of a 'risky' (LBG) group. In looking at homelessness among young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in England, Dunne et al (2002) primarily focus upon the impact of sexuality, rather than, for example, class and thus the possibilities of exploring two interconnected inequalities, operating in the lives of lesbians, are minimised.[2]

While some theories argue for the endurance of class in explaining continued inequality and social experiences (Marshall et al, 1988; Devine, 1992), others point to structural changes, inexplicable through and departing from class. Subsequently they argue for the necessity of re-thinking the relevance of class (Urry, 2000; Beck, 2000; Castells, 2000). Proponents of shifting global flows often dismiss the importance of class at an economic level and

such suggested 'transformations' also spill over onto identity concerns and similar key phrases mark out the supposed shift from class to ... what? In an all moving, uncertain, shifting climate society, it would seem that the economy and the individual cannot be adequately described (Giddens, 1993; Beck, 1992; Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994). Against such conceptualisations I situate my own work within those debates which do concede the continued relevance of class, as a factor informing economic and social experience (Marshall et al, 1988; Devine, 1992). I also see the importance of enquiring into class identification, rather than denouncing its relevance without empirical evidence. For the women I interviewed class was clearly and regularly spoken about, in all its variety and complexity. Rather than there being a comfortable 'mixing' of employment 'opportunities', characterised by 'fluidity' and 'mobility' (Urry, 1995, 2000), there seems to be a 'fixing' and a re-churning of the poor in low-paid sectors (MacDonald and Marsh, 2000). But try telling them that at the Jobcentre.

In analysing many aspects of working-class lesbians' lives and in seeking to situate my research in the broader literatures and debates on sexuality and class, I have constantly avoided a deficit model whereby working-class or lesbian identity is inevitably seen as problematic, while at the same time striving to represent potential problems in all their diversity and intricacy. I contest the idea of an underclass (Murray, 1990; 1994), like Prendergast et al (2001), the dual romanticisation/ pathologisation of working-class life (Rubin, 1976; Bulmer, 1986) and the attribution of homophobia solely to the working-class (Moran, 2000; Taylor, 2004a). These notions were, however, salient in negotiating everyday life, if only to dispel them as stereotypical (see Taylor, 2004a). The concept of the 'underclass' individualises class processes, where people are blamed for their own circumstances and for their apparent unwillingness to take advantages of employment 'opportunities' (Bradley and Hebson, 1999). However, women gave me an account of their struggles with un/employment and the emotional and economic consequences suffered as a result, highlighting their own desires for something better – not many people put 'member of the underclass' on their CVs. Opportunities, such as voluntary work were occasionally seized upon as a 'way out', as something taken up in recognition of its best-worst status. Unfortunately such experiences could rarely be capitalised upon at an economic level. Voluntary work experiences, together with family networks of support do not form a bank of social capital to be drawn upon (viz Putnam, 1993); instead such strategies often indicate limitations upon employment 'opportunities', a case of getting what you can where you can.

Both class and sexuality were negotiated in, and out of work, where structural and interpersonal positionings were daily experienced, performed (Hoschild, 1983; Adkins, 2000), recognised and misrecognised (Skeggs, 1999, 2001). There was an awareness amongst interviewees that what they did for a living, both in the past and in the present, positioned them in class terms. Simultaneously, they rejected being told that what they did and who they were had no value. The women I interviewed had agency, opinions and choices and their powerful voices, which I aim to present here, should alert us to this. Many women resisted prevailing opinions of them as 'failures' while in school, the labelling of which is widely recognised as a classed operation (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Skeggs, 1997) but which also has relevance to the consideration of lesbian identities (Epstein, 1994). Here I look at the 'choices' of employment or unemployment, faced by many women upon

leaving school. Having already been deemed 'failures' in school many women left with few qualifications and entered low-paid jobs, Youth Training Schemes or voluntary work – the choices they made were constrained by class, gender and sexuality. Across the women's post-school transitions and continued employment experiences, both class and sexuality interrupted and channelled their job choices and their experiences of the workplace – it was often not a straightforward journey, or transition, from A to B.

Essentially then, this article is about the variety of ways in which the women I interviewed were kept 'in their place' and the ways that they responded to such regulations, devaluations and restrictions. These women made choices within constraining circumstances, actively deciding on their best move, or their 'way out'. Often this was as much about avoidance, evasion and escaping as it was about possibilities, progress and security. Evading the social security, avoiding the army, escaping the fish factory, never being 'under' class or part of an 'underclass'. It was also about being 'realistic' – knowing your place, knowing the problems in changing this. 'Vulnerability' characterised these movements, and indeed fixed the women in these positions, through stigma and poverty; a vicious 'Catch 22' with no clear get out clause. How then to move from 'working-class lesbian' to 'flexible', 'mobile' worker?

Methods

Fifty-three women who identified themselves as working-class and lesbian, from Scotland (the Highlands, Glasgow and Edinburgh) and England (Yorkshire and Manchester) took part in my research, through a combination of one-to-one interviews, paired and group interviews.[3] Using empirical data gathered, I highlight the relevance of working-class and lesbian identity across various social sites from family background and schooling to work experiences, leisure activities and intimate relationships, drawing attention to the meanings of class that working-class lesbians themselves attributed to it, including both the 'obviousness' and variety of class. The significance of sexuality and class was explored in relation to their biographies, everyday lives and identities, including their views, experiences and access to commercial scene spaces.

Lesbians are a 'hard to reach' group and working-class lesbians may be even harder to locate, given their marginality, if not absence, from academic agendas and, as I discovered, typical, commercial scene spaces (Taylor, 2004b). As such, it is inevitable that the women I interviewed are not representative of all who may fit this categorisation. Notably the majority of women in my sample are White with only one Asian woman participating. Kitzinger states that 'lesbian accounts are subjected to a severe process of selection' from homosexual identification to the particularities of the research project's sample criteria', making it more difficult to gain a representative sample (1987:66). This sentiment is echoed by John and Patrick (1999) who, in attempting to measure the extent of poverty and social exclusion of lesbians and gay men in Glasgow, also note the difficulties in researching lesbian lives, compounded by combined exclusions. Nevertheless, aside from the overwhelming whiteness of my sample, there was a substantial level of diversity amongst respondents, particularly across age groups. The average age of respondents, ranging from 16-64 years, was 34 years although the largest group of interviewees were between 20–25

years (fourteen women) and such range allowed experiences across the age range to be charted. Here, I look mainly at the retrospective accounts of interviewees as they look back at their own movements from youth to adulthood, while recognising that interviewees are differently located in this 'journey', which for many did not have a clear destination, or arrival point. That is not to say that interviewees' were somehow lost in all of this, lingering between adolescence and adulthood but simply, and crucially, to point towards the fraught nature of such processes.

Most, if not all of the women I interviewed described the areas where they currently lived as 'working-class': most respondents grew up and currently lived in urban areas, while only three women said they currently lived in rural areas. Thirty-four women grew up in council housing while only seven were living in council housing at the time of being interviewed; the majority of women I interviewed lived in 'private rented' accommodation (twenty-six), many of whom had been on different council house waiting lists for years. There was missing data in six cases but, given their lower incomes, I would guess that they too lived in either council or private rented accommodation. Two women lived in hostel accommodation, while five women had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, where the lived interface of class and sexuality left them without financial capital and unreached by lesbian and gay support networks.[4] The majority of interviewees' own incomes were below £7000 per annum (twenty-eight): the highest income was between £21,000 and £30,000 (seven).[5] Fourteen women from my sample were unemployed, a figure which includes four of the five women in the young persons' focus group (aged between 16 and 21 years). The women I spoke to were not one homogenous set, as no member of any 'group' will ever be (Valentine et al, 2001) but instead often expressed common concerns about, as well as gaining comforts from, their class position and sexual identities.

Working-class lesbians' employment choices and ambitions were often made via school 'failures' and for the vast majority of women, this transition was characterised by low-paid work, unemployment and sometimes, voluntary work. However, for a small minority of the women in my sample, university followed on immediately after school. In making the transition from school to university, many of these women already had succeeded in challenging the low opinions and expectations of them, only to find that these resurfaced in the university setting. For Dawn (22), Mandy (22), Sam (22), Kim (22), and Pam (24) the 'obvious' aspects of class inequality were often to do with the economic and emotional costs of being in an environment where being middle-class was 'taken for granted' and where being working-class was still the exception, the unusual and the stigmatised. Those who attended university often voiced complex feelings around guilt and privilege, of 'buying into' university, yet not being able to quite afford it and never really feeling certain about being there anyway – and as such, I would not conceptualise these women as part of the 'haves' as opposed to the 'have nots' (Prendergast et al, 2001).

And what would you like to be when you grow up?

Most women did not experience a straightforward transition from school to work or to university. Rather than a linear progression, their immediate post-school experiences

were characterised by unemployment and low-paid unskilled, feminised labour,[6] which supports (and classes) Glendinning and Millar's (1992) claim that women are more likely to be employed in 'pink-collar ghettos', doing poorly paid part-time, insecure work. The vulnerability is evident through working-class lesbians' experience of unemployment and rapidly changing and unstable low-paid employment. Indeed, many women's transitions were characterised by uncertainties, fears, disruptions and limitations.

These limitations were reproduced through the women's school experiences and in the broader societal structuring of class, sexuality and gender inequalities. Many women were deemed 'failures' throughout their school careers, negatively impacting upon their choices. This judgement was reiterated in post-school experiences as structural inequalities and expectations devalued their abilities, ambitions and choices. In making a transition from school to often precarious locations women 'accepted', negotiated, and challenged social expectations of them, whilst also encountering economic barriers and physical limitations. They moved through insecure positions and without economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984), the resources of class which could offer protection from uncertainty.

In illustration of this some women, including Sharon (47), Angela (42) and Lynn (44), spoke of and resented the fact that they were not expected to go to university; instead expectations revolved around heterosexual marriage. That these women have challenged and rejected these expectations, judgements and stereotypes of them says a lot about their 'agency' as individuals. Yet the expectations placed upon them, as well as the constraints of economic inequalities, informed many women's movements through social space. Transitions continued to be experienced through these processes and were rarely smooth or unproblematic (as highlighted, this was so even for those who attended university and found their immersion in this middle-class environment deeply upsetting and (still) uncertain).

Lack of formal qualifications and negative school experiences channelled women into already restricted options and careers guidance became a matter of telling many interviewees which 'dead end' job was ideal for them. The economic imperative of having to work was negotiated alongside the lack of positive guidance and support, generating confusion and anxiety. Sharon's options were seemingly circumscribed by what she could not do – as well as knowing she would have to do something. Her rapid changes in occupational direction are determined through avoidance and renegotiation:

> *So I left school with the view of my mum that 'You've to get a job, nobody's going to keep you for nothing'. So when I went to school you could leave school when, I was 16 in November so I could leave at Christmas if I wisnae staying on for the exams. The teachers were quite glad to get rid of me, em, I left the school and got a job straight away in a bakery, so that was that, I had a job and it was an apprenticeship, four years, once you'd been onto the second year they sent you to food technology college, which then panicked me 'cause then I would have to start to read and write. So I worked in the bakery for 18 months and then went onto working on the buses.* (Sharon, 47, Glasgow).

Negative school experiences, where teachers are quite 'glad to get rid of you', especially, as

in Sharon's case, in time for Christmas, affected post-school transitions, not just because of lack of qualifications but also because of the adverse emotional impact which 'failure' produces. Feelings of discontent and disillusionment were widespread. Jeannette illustrates this bitterness and disappointment, taking the form of an educational cliff-hanger with no easy answer:

> *What was I gonna do? You know, was I gonna learn clerical work, you know, I just couldn't picture myself doing these things. But I was so disillusioned as well with the education system, I don't think I could have gone back into it in any case, because I was just really angry and really bitter. I felt really, really let down. So I just kicked around on the dole for a long time about seven or eight years and spent a lot of it down here, getting trashed, you know, just running around. Not living here but running around here. Being angry. (laughs)* (Jeannette, 39, Glasgow).

Jeannette's expressed anger contrasts with some women's voiced satisfaction with their post-school experiences, although this was often talked about in the context of what could have gone wrong, where they could have 'ended up', walking a tightrope with a real chance of falling off. For others, unemployment was seen as the follow up to school, being precisely what happened to siblings, as Jill (28, Edinburgh) points out: 'All my brothers and sisters, the main thing was you left school, signed on, got a flat from the council'. This is therefore what Jill expected as it had proven to be realistic, a well-used route already outlined, tried and tested.

Yet Jill's account also demonstrates the risk arising from occupying a disadvantaged labour position, where Jill for the first time, on a minimum and insecure wage, feels 'loaded', but still cannot pay her rent. She is unsure whether I really want to hear of her experiences, perhaps pointing to the expectation of such struggle; given that it is expected it seems unworthy of comment. Why point out the obvious?

> *Do you really want to hear this? Well see when I was 18 I got a job straight after school, I was working in a bar, it was everything, the cook, the cleaner, the bar maid, everything. I worked all the time, I worked nine shifts a week back to back and it was fine, I had loads of money 'cause I never paid my rent. I just got my wages in cash every month, I had no bank account or anything like that ... But then when I was about seven months pregnant the restaurant burnt down, fucking burnt down, I was there when it happened and I was just working up until I couldn't work and then I would go onto maternity benefits but the restaurant burnt down and they let me go.* (Jill, 28, Edinburgh)

Jill who has few employment rights demonstrates her anger, while Sharon speaks of her ability to manage possible options via her mother's employment position: 'The only reason I got that job was because my mum was an active trade unionist'. Support, in the sense of trade union protection, was often absent from their workplace settings. This formal support was often replaced through informal assistance, such as family members and friends advising of possible jobs. Here, several women spoke of being 'lucky' – which highlights their continued vulnerability and does not replicate the privilege of knowing the 'right' people. Sharon points to the 'favours' received through her mother's employment, as does Grace. However, instead of viewing this as an ability to capitalise on existing networks and

generate social capital (Putnam, 1993), I would suggest that a different analysis is required, given their entry into workplaces on a low, and still precarious, level:

> *Then my friend got me a, I was unemployed, I got sacked actually from the last job that I was working in retail and, eh, my friend said, 'Look, I can get you on this YT scheme'[7] and I was 17 at the time* (Grace, 30, Edinburgh).

Few economic benefits are gained from this form of 'networking', which also fails to impact upon or prevent the regulatory constraints and punitive measures enforced in employment centres and other benefits agencies. These processes highlight the local manifestation and negotiation of structured, political decisions, increasingly targeting so called troublesome and de-motivated youth. Instead of receiving help from the expected sources (for example, employment centres), these were negatively experienced, placing working-class people into working-class jobs, or at least trying to, as Elaine highlights:

> *I thought 'Right, I've got to go' and plus the dole were pressurising me to go and get a job at the first factory. I thought 'I'm not going to get trapped in a job at the fish factory up here'* (Elaine, 37, Highlands).

Youth Training Schemes were instigated as a way of dealing with youth unemployment, to little avail, as Michelle explains. Nonetheless, she is able to challenge the way in which she is being positioned and 'escape', like Elaine, to get out before the going gets worse:

> *I left school at 15 and I thought I would get the whole summer off and was told I would have to get a job, you have to pay your way. I was gob smacked that I had to pay my mum to live in the house. In those days it was YOP schemes, you know, Youth Opportunity Programmes and it was £16 or something ridiculous like that, it was really shit money and I had to hand over half of it to my mum. They were six month schemes and I did two then I decided I'd had enough of Fife so I just fucked off and packed a rucksack and went travelling, spent the next 20 years doing that (laughs). I guess I decided that there had to be more than this and I didn't want to work in shitty jobs for £1.19 an hour. It wasn't about the money it was about the life experiences* (Michelle, 37, Edinburgh).

Despite constraints, such as choosing between £1.19 an hour or 'fucking off', opportunities such as participation in voluntary work, were grasped. Voluntary work placements were sometimes seen to offer a chance to move away from their home area, as well as potentially providing access to future careers paths. The choices which the women made, and make, should be placed within the context of the constraints upon them, while also acknowledging their ability to negotiate often difficult circumstances caused by the structural inequalities which they are subject to as working-class lesbians. For example, there are gendered and sexualised expectations placed upon these women that are class specific, or at least operate with classed effects. Michelle's post-school transitions were regulated by 'the money' in so far as her options were driven by an economic imperative as well as economic constraint. Pam (24), Michelle (37) and Fiona (29) all got involved in voluntary work; they were motivated and did not need to undergo character reform via a 'Welfare to Work' scheme. Voluntary work was undertaken for political reasons and/or as

a way of moving out of their immediate areas and circumstances, a chance to help others and themselves at the same time. Fiona moved into an anarchist co-operative, Pam went to work at a Catholic boarding school and Michelle chose Christian youth work over joining the army, exercising a preference for saving people rather than shooting them:

> *I left home at 16. I had two ways as far as I was concerned at that point, one was to join the army and the other was to get involved in the church. I had a vague interest in the church simply 'cause there was a kinda social aspect to it, they were a bit touchy feely and that was quite nice. So it was church or army and I thought 'Mmm kill people or save people?' and I decided I really couldn't do the army thing, I liked the whole idea of mud and guns and hey! But I thought 'not convinced'. So I fucked off to do kinda Christian youth work and I never ever threw my heart and soul into it, it was a way of getting out of ... a way of getting out of Fife, a way of fucking off, getting out of that kind of life that I just felt alien to. I thought 'I don't have to stay here, I don't have to do this'. I looked around me and I saw people getting into this spiral of ..... I don't know what, and not in a judgmental way at all, really, seriously, but just like 'That's OK but I can't do that, ever!' I didn't know how else to do it, I needed a safe way of doing it, I couldn't, I'd never do it on my own* (Michelle, 37, Edinburgh).

For Michelle, voluntary work is viewed as a safe and secure option, made in recognition of limited choices – less risk than joining the army, better than staying put. While laughing and making a joke of the decision making process, Michelle is also very careful not to denigrate the decisions of others; her own movements occur in tension and conflict, rather than ease and comfort. Although Michelle speaks of voluntary work as a 'way out' she then notes the way working-class people are utilised in this service (later describing the disadvantages incurred through 'only' having (long-term) voluntary work experiences rather than formal qualifications):

> *I got involved in youth work and got put in projects that involved drug work and because I was very, you know, one of the masses, I wasn't coming from a social work 'Oh, hello!' [accent] perspective, you now, I knew it, heard it, seen it, done it. I suppose it's that thing, one of the masses so I was kinda popular* (Michelle, 37, Edinburgh).

Michelle is 'put' in projects, being typecast as 'one of them'. Being 'one of the masses' in this context involves compromise and concession, not equal give and take; working-class experience is extracted and put to use, the price to pay for 'moving on'.

In looking at the ways young lesbian, gay and bisexual people move on, Prendergast et al (2002) note that parents can provide, or deny crucial financial help in such transitions, and suggest this is particularly salient in the context of sexuality, where, given parental disapproval, support may be withheld. But this alone abstracts the different classed abilities of parents to 'pay out' in such a manner – and the different abilities of young people, across sexuality and class, to 'move on'. Some women in my sample remained at home immediately after finishing school, although this was often problematic. Many had to share space (such as bedrooms) with younger siblings and contribute to household expenses. This period was not 'time-off' and comparisons with middle-class peers were made and resentments voiced. A year out in this context is a year out of work and in the top bunk,

not the same as backpacking around Australia with a credit card and a return ticket (see Heath and Cleaver, 2003). Other women made conscious efforts to move away from home. Mavis highlights the importance of class factors in this transition: she attempts to hide her working-class self in order to generate a more positive (subjective and economic) result.[8] While trying to alter her classed embodiment, Mavis realises she is ultimately misrecognised through it (Skeggs, 1999); the signs of class showed through and could be 'detected' by those in the know, those knowing where to place her:

> *When I went to London I got a sense of relief that nobody would know that I was working-class anymore. They couldn't detect in my accent, but then what I began to understand was that middle-class people would absolutely, there was no fooling middle-class people they would know that I was working-class, no matter how politely I spoke* (Mavis, 52, Edinburgh).

Jude spoke of her desire to move away from home in terms of getting some space 'to live' as a basic need, rather than a creative or expressive desire.[9] Her choices are informed through sexuality and class, where the tensions of no/choice and moving/staying are lived out. Jude's language illustrates the imperative nature of her move: she is driven to leave:

> *I hated my secondary school so much that, em, and not just the school in terms of sexual identity but I hated that my family life, em, in terms of having no money, in terms of sharing a room with my two sisters in a tiny council flat. I hated that so much that it, it wasn't even a choice. I mean there was a choice obviously in that I could have just stayed and put up with that but the choice was made for me in a way* (Jude, 31, Yorkshire)

Here Jude connects her 'choices' directly with her sexual identity and class position, noting the differential options which individuals have access to, an intersecting factor that is often absent in the analysis of lesbian lives. Maybe being a happy lesbian is easier if you don't have to share a bedroom with a younger sister and the accusing eyes of her Barbie dolls:

> *I would maybe have been able to experience my sexual identity in terms of having a space in Glasgow, being in Glasgow, having my own space. Space wouldn't have been an issue 'cause I wouldn't have had to ..... it wouldn't have forced me to think about it, if I was middle-class. Em, I didn't want space to express my sexuality, I just wanted space to live. Em, which is something which is obviously tied in with sexuality and working-class. It's just being given the same opportunity just to live, and then from then living, whatever you want to experience. Perhaps other people, people that have their own rooms, didn't share with their brothers and sisters, people that money wasn't an issue, people that wondering where the next meal was going to come from wasn't an issue, you know* (Jude).

For Jude, the struggle isn't so much about expressing her sexuality but simply having a room, a space for possibility, be that sexual, classed or otherwise. This is a crucial departure from other studies on lesbian youth, which tend to prioritise sexuality as the most crucial issue of transition, with vulnerability and exclusion likely to arise from this alone – rather than as part of broader, interconnected locations. Broadening out the scope

of a/typical routes into lesbian adulthood, other women I interviewed moved from home into heterosexual relationships[10] and marriage, which they themselves often explained as a consequence of the expectations placed upon them, as well as their own abilities in determining the best (classed) outcome:

But when you worked in a factory and you were one of ten and you lived in the East End [of Glasgow], you knew your place, I knew my place. I knew the best I could hope for was a guy with a trade and that's what I got. I knew the best I could hope for was a job in Wilson's[11] *'cause they paid well. So I aspired and I got to that. You knew, it was all unwritten but I knew then that that was my little area and I wouldnae be allowed to step out of that, I knew that!* (Lynn, 44, Edinburgh)

Lynn 'just knew' what was expected and made her choices through a realistic awareness of this, expressing a sense that when 'what you see is what you get' there is not much point flicking through the brochure. However, the limitations involved could be devastating. Kirsty (26, Manchester) was previously involved in an abusive heterosexual relationship, feeling compelled to be there through lack of alternatives, including a lack of employment which made her financially dependent.[12] Both these women have made substantial changes in their lives, but these transitions were and are not linear and often do not have an easily achievable outcome.

Conclusion

In this article I have pointed to some of the ways that aspects of class and sexuality interconnect in the lives of working-class lesbians as they move from school and/or home settings into – or out of – the workplace. On the whole, the empirical evidence presented describes remembered accounts, some more recently remembered than others. But they were all powerfully expressed, emotional and emotive accounts, with obvious enduring outcomes. I would therefore assert the need to further investigate the connections between materiality and sexuality, established by authors such as Dunne (1997), Valentine et al (2002) and Dunne et al (2002), with specific attention to the 'difference' that class can make in economically – and emotionally – 'achieving' a 'lesbian lifestyle'. This would perhaps foreground the continued classed differences between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', while attention to the classed voices and experiences of lesbians themselves, whether current or remembered, would serve to demonstrate the importance still accorded to class and the agency, interpretations and resistances which individual actors can make as they move through social space and through the life course.

I hope this research, and indeed future research on these issues and intersections, will impact upon social policy formations. Policy makers should be aware of the aspirations and expectations held by, and withheld from, young working-class lesbians. The experience of being a 'failure' in school and beyond is a heavy emotional and economic burden, a burden that would perhaps be lessened with more adequate school provisions and resources. Class exists in the classroom and beyond and it seems that working-class youth are being significantly let down in its continued existence, while the individualisation of class processes only serve to personally position them as 'let downs'. Successful policy development

would not only address the issue of positive sex education and affirmation of varied sexual identities, as has long been on the (ongoing) agenda, but also be able to speak to all young people's post-school choices, potentials and possibilities.

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Notes

1 Due to the constraints and focus of this article I will not be discussing in-depth the definitions of class, but rather the meanings of class which interviewees themselves highlighted will be apparent throughout this article. Such meanings often encompass and point to the interaction of economic, subjective, embodied, interactive and embodied components of class.

2 I would also argue that their portrayal is perhaps overly optimistic: homelessness is seen to bring 'opportunities' to challenge assumed heterosexual identity, becoming somewhat separated from socio-economic contexts and constraints of such 'choices'.

3 I conducted four focus groups with the following pre-established groups: Young Lesbian Group (Edinburgh), Manchester Lesbian Group (Manchester), Older Lesbian Group (Glasgow) and the Rural Lesbian Group (the Highlands).

4 Although not the focus of this article, the women I interviewed experienced homelessness rather differently and considerably more negatively than Dunne, Prendergast and Telford's (2002) respondents.

5 Three women (Emma, 56, Manchester; Chris, 64, Glasgow; Fliss, 40, Highlands) who earned this amount defined themselves as middle-class and were included in my research as members of pre-existing focus groups, as it would, arguably, have been unproductive to exclude them. Three others (Jeannette, 39, Glasgow; Sharon, 47, Glasgow; Angela, 42, Glasgow) recently experienced substantial wage increases in their late thirties – late forties, having acquired degrees as mature students. Sonia (32, Yorkshire) worked as a Prison Officer; she did not like her current vocation but realised the financial benefits of it and felt unqualified for anything else.

6 Twenty women experienced unemployment immediately after school. For recent school leavers this was on-going (Kate, Lauren, Anna and Jenny). Elaine, Kirsty and Alice were unemployed on leaving school and were unemployed at the time of being interviewed although they had worked in secretarial (Elaine), shop (Kirsty) and care work (Alice) for short periods, while Diane although initially unemployed had worked as a care assistant for many years. Shona was initially unemployed after leaving school but had just found a job as a youth support worker, which she described as the most secure and highly paid work that she had ever done, as did Amy who now does secretarial/ administrative work. Having experienced long term unemployment (7 years) post-school, Jeannette currently worked as a community worker, earning a secure income (£21,000–£30,000), while Jill now worked as a project worker after 7 years of unemployment. Having completed various Youth Training Programmes (YTS), after initial unemployment, both Grace and Michelle were now employed – Grace as a trade union organiser and Michelle as a care assistant. Jo and Tracey, who were also unemployed upon leaving school now worked as a gardener for a community project (Jo) and as a carer (Tracey). Sukhjit was unemployed on leaving school and had worked in a variety of shops and offices but now attended university as a mature student. Ten women were currently employed in secretarial/ administrative or care work, although others, who gave their job titles as 'support work' may also be categorised as 'carers' although these women tended to earn slightly more (for example, Doris earned £11,000–£15,000 as a support worker while Kelly earned £16,000-£20,000). Two women (Fiona and Carol) worked as cleaners. Rita worked as a hairdresser and May did production work.

7 The Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was introduced in 1978 with the intention of giving unemployed school leavers work experience and training. This was replaced in 1983 by the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) which was in turn replaced by 'Welfare to Work' schemes introduced as part of the New Deal in 1998. These schemes highlight the 'churning' of the poor around different de-standardised forms of work. Furthermore, MacDonald and Marsh (2000) suggest that policies aimed at combating youth unemployment are attempts to transform young people themselves rather than dealing with structural inequalities.

8 Mavis left her home in Glasgow in her early twenties, having worked in Glasgow's bars, and found secretarial work in London. She returned to Scotland in her mid-30s,

relocating to Edinburgh. She has been long-term unemployed ever since due to a disability.

9 Jude left her home in Glasgow at the age of 16, heading for London with her cashed benefit money, where she found work in a restaurant. She attended university in York as a mature student in her late twenties but left in her second year and continued in her part-time restaurant work.

10 Twelve women spoke of previous heterosexual relationships and/or heterosexual marriage in the course of the interview. Many spoke of this being the expected, the only or even the best option available at the time.

11 Wilson's is a local food chain in Glasgow. Lynn had previously been married and has two children. She is now employed as a 'Social Carer' in Glasgow earning £16,000-£20,000.

12 Kirsty has been unemployed, on and off, since leaving school at eighteen. She is a single-parent with a small child to look after.

Marginal Inclusion: What is the future for the UK Youth Parliament?

Roger Green and Helen Sender

To what extent is the UKYP representative of all young people, inclusive and engaged with marginalised young people? This article examines this question and considers the role of the local authority youth service in supporting this challenge. A key issue in this discussion is the participation of young people in learning about political and democratic processes and structures, and how this might be achieved. It concludes by arguing that further research is needed into how young people are selected as Members of the Youth Parliament, the personal, educational, and career benefits to these individuals and most crucially why some young people are not involved.

Keywords: UK Youth Parliament, democratic and political processes and structures, youth service, marginalised young people, research.

This article is based on the findings of a pilot survey on youth services in London, an analysis of the recently published Office for Public Management's Review of the UK Youth Parliament (2004), and a critical review of the literature surrounding youth participation in democratic and political processes. The results from this suggest that the concept of an inclusive United Kingdom Youth Parliament may be fundamentally flawed.

The UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) is a relatively new independent charity established in 1999 with the aim of promoting the voice and concerns of young people across the UK. Funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) it argues that young people should be able to express their views and be heard on the areas of life relating to them. The UKYP's current aim is that:

> *By 2006 young people in the UK will be aware that they have their own Youth Parliament, and that providing they are aged between 11 and 18 years old (inclusive) they have the right to vote for an MYP, and the right to stand as an MYP if they so wish* (www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk).

Membership is open to young people aged between 11 and 18 from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. With over 400 elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), the UKYP purports to be representative of all young people in the UK (www.

ukyouthparliament). The parliament meets once a year for its members to discuss issues which affect young people. These 'annual sittings' are intended to produce a yearly manifesto and an agenda for action. Members also have the opportunity to belong to one of several select committees, who each have to formulate a manifesto for the UKYP on specific issues such as health, media and educational opportunities.

Taking London as an example, in 2004 there were 26 MYPs, 17 deputy MYPs and 12 observers. The main task of a MYP included meeting up with other MYPs, deputy MYPs and support workers from the London region once a month to share information on events. They also have meetings with MPs and Government ministers about young people's issues, including voting at 16, the minimum wage and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (Romain, 2004).

The UKYP is intended to have the power to influence both national and local government, and other services and agencies that work with young people. English members belong to one of nine regions, while Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own forums affiliated to the UKYP. All the members are democratically elected by young people in each region on a yearly basis, with Local Education Authorities (LEAs) representing a UKYP constituency (www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk).

It claims to have been successful in developing a national youth forum, through being representative of all young people across the UK. It cites the involvement of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) young people (20 per cent), a better gender balance than its adult House of Commons counterpart as 52 per cent of MYPs are female and that 4 per cent of their MYPs have a disability (UK Youth Parliament: Manifesto 2004). Melody Hossaini, a trustee, of the UKYP states that, 'one in six MYPs live in inner-city areas and there are MYPs who have been homeless, in care, in trouble with the law and so on' (*Young People Now*, 23.06.04:14).

The Office for Public Management Report

The recent DfES review of the UK Youth Parliament conducted by the Office for Public Management (OPM) in 2004 has been hotly debated in the columns of *Young People Now*. Arguments have gone backwards and forwards as to whether the UKYP is too white, elitist, and reserved for those young people who are heading off to university and it has been suggested that unless it was open to change then its funding should be withdrawn. It has been criticised as having an 'English agenda' by concentrating on topics and areas related to England rather than the rest of the UK and being insensitive to the political situation in Northern Ireland (*Young People Now*, 23.06.04).

This report, the first of its kind into the work of the UKYP, is worth examining in some detail in relation to UKYP's claim to be inclusive. In terms of diversity and representation, the report indicates that whilst the UKYP had achieved some success in its ethnic composition this diversity was absent in other areas, for example, the young people involved as MYPs were seen as better educated and more articulate than the majority of young people. This middle-class perception was compounded by the view held that the UKYP was always represented by white males (OPM, 2004).

The report recognises the lack of social-economic diversity amongst MYPs and that some groups of young people are excluded from the UKYP. The perception that 'the average' young person does not become a MYP is also evident. Equally the difficulty in engaging with marginalised young people, or what the review calls 'disadvantaged and vulnerable young people' (OPM, 2004:14) is acknowledged. To overcome this, the report puts forward a number of recommendations, such as, MYPs should aim to improve their skills base by receiving training in outreach approaches, for UKYP to further develop its network and partnership working and to re-examine its internal structures.

On the question of whether the UKYP provides a voice for all young people in the UK, the report highlights a significant difference between the perceptions of MYPs who felt it did, and charity and voluntary organisation stakeholders who felt this was not the case. As the report states: 'The extent to which UKYP has managed to include vulnerable young people is felt to be negligible and many stakeholders question whether the process of becoming an MYP is inclusive' (OPM, 2004:32). The criticism that the UKYP as an organisation had not made sufficient links with those charities, voluntary organisations, and others working with marginalised young people is reflected in the report which expresses concern that MYPs had: 'little contact with or understanding of the lives of excluded or marginalised young people and that, whilst they may be aware of the issues, know little of their real impact' (OPM, 2004: 38).

Another important issue raised by the report is that the young people who had been consulted, who were not MYPs, had never heard of the UKYP. This issue was recognised by MYPs and strategies to address this included targeted visits to places such as youth centres to reach audiences not currently involved with the UKYP. The Welsh Youth Forum, *Funky Dragon*, is offered as an example of an organisation that does not just work with schools to engage young people. It is seen as a youth assembly that has taken on board on a formal basis, the issue of raising organisational awareness and supporting greater diversity and inclusion. In order to widen their representative base *Funky Dragon* has worked with local youth forums and voluntary organisations. Despite this example, the problem of how to engage young people in creating a more inclusive organisation while involving and representing young people who do not traditionally use such facilities is not resolved in the OPM report.

A key question in this discussion is: to what extent young people are interested in politics and the political process, both at the general level and becoming involved as a MYP and in the UKYP? The OPM (2004) review was not primarily aimed at answering these questions, however a number of useful pointers did emerge. The review found there was support for the current structure of UKYP, in that it mirrors existing parliamentary structures and provides young people with a 'political education'. However this raises a question about the extent to which the UKYP attempts to replicate the now problematic adult political structures which resulted in high disaffection rates amongst 18 to 24-year-olds, with only 39 per cent of them voting at the 2001 general election.

Young people interviewed for the OPM (2004) report had problems with the term 'parliament' as it suggested a formal organisation, which may well be based on the young people's negative perceptions of politics generally (Henn et al, 2002, O'Toole et al, 2003).

Learning about Parliamentary democracy through becoming involved in the UKYP may not be the most appropriate option for some young people, particularly those on the 'margins'. It may be true, as suggested in the report, that the development of UKYP demonstrates that young people are interested in politics and getting involved. However, young people from the Northern Ireland Youth Forum suggest that the UK MYPs should get more involved in 'real political debates' and rather less in making careers for themselves (OPM, 2004:74). Overall the report produced a number of recommendations ranging from funding, networking and partnership, overall structure, leadership and management. Increasing the diversity of young people involved with the UKYP and those becoming MYPs was also a specific recommendation.

Youth Service Plans

The 'Transforming Youth Work' agenda (2001) required Local Authority Youth Services to each produce a Youth Service Plan. One of its aims was to meet the range of needs of young people including reaching the most excluded and marginalised.

For part of our examination into the inclusiveness of the UKYP we undertook a pilot survey of all the thirty-two London Boroughs' Youth Service Plans, with the aim of examining to what extent these plans referred to youth participation (Green and Sender, 2004). In particular we were interested in whether they included reference to local youth parliaments or equivalent forums and their commitment to the MYPs and the UKYP. Allied with this, we were concerned with the emphasis they placed on the inclusion of marginalised young people within their areas and the targeting of youth service policy and practice to get young people involved in political participation. In all, twenty boroughs out of the thirty-two responded to requests for copies of their Youth Service Plans. It should be noted however that some of the plans on which the analysis was based were only available in draft format. Whilst this survey had its limitations, for example, Youth Service Plans only provide an overview of any one local authority youth service, the findings did provide insight into youth services' commitment to engaging and involving marginalised young people in local democratic forums and the UKYP.

Our findings revealed that at the local level, support for MYPs and UKYP would seem to be patchy and in some cases largely absent. Equally the links between youth service activity and marginalised young people and how they feed in to supporting MYPs and the UKYP was noticeable by its absence. Only twelve boroughs had a MYP or were taking active steps to develop structures and processes to elect one, whilst eight Boroughs made no mention of the UKYP or having a MYP representing them. Some of these boroughs did however discuss in detail their aims to get young people within their area more democratically involved and to get their views heard.

Seventeen of the boroughs had a range of youth forums, assemblies, and councils either in place or being developed. They were often short on detail regarding the actual running and setting up of these. The majority of the Youth Service Plans did not mention that they had developed a local youth parliament, with only six making a reference to the creation of a youth parliament or a youth council structure to represent young people from the

whole borough. Four additional boroughs did refer to plans to develop structures that were along the lines of representing young people. The survey found that the majority of the Youth Service Plans were placing an emphasis on getting young people involved generally within the youth service and listening to their views and opinions. This included gaining young people's views on the services offered and what they would like to improve. For one borough, the main outcome aim of their youth forum was to try and use it as a progression route to get young people into becoming youth workers at a later stage. In none of the plans analysed was there any direct reference to the term 'politics' or 'political education'. Instead the majority of local authorities talked of their role in citizenship training, introducing young people to democratic structures and processes, and helping them to participate in various other aspects of their communities. One north London borough stated that to promote citizenship and young people's involvement in the local democratic processes was a key aim.

Many of the boroughs referred to young people's involvement within the planning and delivery of youth service provision. Whilst this whole notion of involvement and consultation would appear to be firmly embedded in youth service practice, there was generally a distinct lack of detail as to what extent young people's views were listened to and actively-taken on board. The majority of the boroughs had a clear commitment to issues of diversity and equality. This was evidenced in their stated youth work values and practice, in addition the promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion was seen as part of this work, as was targeted work with marginalised groups. A north London borough youth service, for example, viewed such work as being undertaken by the service's Youth Inclusion Programme, that worked with young people with a record of offending or school exclusion. Several boroughs saw initiatives that aimed to target the 'hard to reach', and new resources for the direct delivery of innovative youth provision in excluded communities as being the way forward. One south London borough aimed to increase the number of young people from BME groups participating in its youth service provision, while another youth service in the same locality specifically targeted Afro-Caribbean young men, refugees and asylum seekers and gay, lesbian and bisexual young people.

Only two Youth Service Plans acknowledged that the voices of young people rarely came from marginalised or excluded youth. One borough was honest in commenting that excluded young people were rarely being heard within discussions and that there exists a lack of youth forums to involve them and where their views could be heard. There was a lack of information on the extent that policies and practice were aimed at encouraging the inclusion of excluded young people, particularly in relation to becoming directly involved in local youth councils and forums that would ultimately lead to the election of a MYP and the buying into the concept of the UKYP as a whole.

How local authority youth services engage with marginalised young people appears to be problematic across all the London boroughs who responded to our survey. Equally the commitment to the UKYP and MYPs at the local level seems at best to be patchy and still developing in some boroughs, whilst others would appear not to have taken it on board at all.

The UKYP Trustees Report for 2003 included in the OPM (2004) report of the review of

UKYP confirms the main findings of this survey. It states that in 2002–2003, 114 of the 149 (77 per cent) of local authorities in England engaged with the UKYP. When this figure is rounded up with local authorities agreeing to participate the following year in 2003–2004, the figure is higher at 87 per cent . This is an impressive commitment from local authorities across England. However the Trustees' Report goes on to highlight that, 'the biggest challenge continues to be London with 51 per cent of the local authorities not participating in 2002–2003' (OPM, 2004:104).

Clearly then, getting local authorities in London to participate in the UKYP is an ongoing challenge, as is the linked issue of the involvement and representation of marginalised young people. What this pilot survey shows us is that this process has some considerable way to go, and further research is needed into the way that youth services from London in particular engage with young people from different backgrounds. This includes examining the resources that are in place and the commitment to gaining a representative range of young people from the local community to become involved in both local and national democratic processes such as the UKYP.

The pilot survey suggests that a more substantial commitment is needed from local authority youth services, in terms of policies, resources and youth work practice to support the whole UKYP and MYP enterprise at the grassroots level. A more partnership and networking building approach should be taken by the UKYP with local authorities particularly those in the London area.

Political Participation and Involving Marginalised Young People

Fundamental to this whole discussion is the process of engaging with all young people, listening to them, and finding out about their views, ideas and aspirations. This is not an easy task. Many young people are seen as politically apathetic. For example, the Adam Smith Institute in 2000 found that 'over half of the 15–24 age group say they are 'not interested in politics' (Pirie and Worcester, 2000:30). Bristow (2001) argues that for young people, the main problem is 'that they see their relationship to the world around them entirely passively. Politics – the way the world works – is something done to them by other people, over which they have no control and want no control' (Bristow, 2001).

This view regarding political apathy amongst young people has been questioned by other literature and recent research (Henn et al, 2002; Gerodimos, 2005) which highlights the involvement of young people within local politics and individual issues and tends towards supporting the view that young people are not politically apathetic. A 'Youth in Politics' report conducted by NOP (1995) found that 'individual issues tended to stir young people more, rather than getting involved in politics generally' (Bristow, 2001). Gerodimos (2005) conducted research on 487 students, into their democratic engagement. He found that young people do want to and do engage in politics, but generally in non-formal ways. From the sample, seven out of ten students rated democracy as being either totally or highly relevant to their everyday lives and as something that they felt was important to themselves

personally. However this study cannot claim to be representative of the entire youth population as it focused only upon a small student population within Bournemouth. Nevertheless, this view is supported by Henn et al (2002) who state that: 'Far from being apolitical and apathetic, young people do have an interest in political issues' (Henn et al, 2002:174). From the study they conducted they found that 50.9 per cent of the respondents spoke to their family or friends about politics, either some of the time or often, whilst 44.8 per cent of participants had at least 'some interest' in local politics and 70 per cent took some interest in national politics. One of the main views expressed in this study was that politics is not aimed at young people. They felt that they were not actively encouraged to take part or to take an interest in it. Some also felt that there was no reason to participate in politics as their views would not be listened to even if they did speak out. White et al (2000) state that if young people were given the opportunity to discuss politics in their own terms, and if politics was not seen in such a defined way then young people would be much more likely to be interested in and participate more actively in local politics.

O'Toole et al (2003) examined how young people conceive of the political, experience the political, and the actual politics of being young. They found that there were a variety of ways that young people viewed the political, for example, that most things were in some way connected to politics. Many saw politics as something that directly affected them but as a process from which they were either excluded or upon which they could not have an impact. Their study concluded that young people are not politically apathetic but are concerned with political issues that directly affect their everyday lives. Their main problem is that young people don't feel that they are being listened to by decision-makers.
How young people are engaged in the democratic political process and structures such as the UKYP, or at the local level, and on issues that really affect them especially those who are deemed marginalised or socially excluded remains at the heart of the issue. The question therefore arises about what support, structures and processes are in place to achieve the engagement of socially excluded or marginalised young people in politics, in a way that will make them want to speak out.

A number of models of participation have been developed, which might be applied to this challenge. For example, Roger Hart's (1992) 'ladder' of young people's participation classifies the different degrees of youth participation within projects and programmes, with the preferred methods of participation starting at the top, going to the least favoured at the bottom. The top rung is youth initiated projects where adults and young people share participation within the decision-making process. Hart argues that this empowers young people while allowing them to gain and learn from adult expertise and life experience. The next rung down is youth led and initiated participation, where adults only play a supportive role. The following rung is where adults initiate projects but decision-making is then shared between adults and young people. The rung below this is where young people are consulted on the projects and programmes run and designed by the adults, and they are then informed about what their input will be used for and the outcome of the decisions made. The bottom rung of 'true participation' is where the young people are assigned a specific role and they are then informed about the reasons for and the way that they are being involved. The final three rungs which are examples of not true participation are: tokenism where the young people appear to be given a voice but have little or no choice about their participation; decoration which occurs when young people are used to help the appearance

of a cause in a way that is relatively indirect; and finally manipulation, where adults use the young people to support their cause but pretend that this cause was inspired by youth. Another way forward is highlighted in Kirby and Bryson's (2002) study which involved young people aged 10 to 25 in public decision making and made recommendations of how this could be improved, particularly for marginalised young people. It included asylum seekers, lesbian and gay young people, young carers, travellers, young people with both physical and learning disabilities, and those from black and minority ethnic groups. They argue that it is important that members of these groups should be consulted as they may wish to express a distinctive point of view. The National Voice for looked-after young people (www.anationalvoice.org/) and the National Black Youth Forum (www.nbyf.org/) are both good examples of self-organised groups that aim to get young people's voices that are usually not heard, to be listened to. Hackett (2004) has commented that the decision-making process is vital to the development of confidence within young people, in particular to make decisions with and against the adults and organisations with whom they are working.

Such involvement of young people has been supported by the Carnegie Young People Initiative (2001) which aims to develop standards for the public and the voluntary sectors at national and local levels to actively involve them. One of Carnegie Initiative's key findings is that more marginalised young people need to be targeted as socially excluded groups are still the least likely to be involved in youth activities. They recommend that initiatives should be developed locally for young people so they can become involved at earlier ages in issues regarding their communities and not just in those that directly affect them. They also look into the issue of social inclusion, in terms of which young people participate in consultations. One of the main worries is that the same young people will repeatedly be involved to represent the views of young people in general. CYPI also emphasises the importance of not excluding the opinions of certain groups of young people as being 'unworthy'. These include young offenders, young people excluded from school and drug users.

Matthews and Limb (2003) argue that whilst there is a rising trend to constantly interview and gain the views of young people and children, for example, via youth councils, there are groups of young people who are generally left out of any such youth forums. These include refugees, travellers, ethnic minorities, girls, carers, disabled young people, homeless, those excluded from school and young people who do not attend youth clubs and projects. The difficulty of gaining young people's interest and support within any type of political participation cannot be forgotten. Wyness comments that 'the reality is that youngsters don't fall out of the trees wanting to join this sort of council' (Wyness, 2001: 204).

Conclusion

In 2004 it was announced that the UKYP was to receive an extra £80,000 from the DfES on top of its existing budget of £169,000, and be financially supported for another three years from 2005 (*Young People Now*, 28.07.04:13). This is despite some of the concerns expressed in the report regarding the representation of young people and local authority support. Even with this support from the DfES, the challenge for everyone working with

young people is surely how to achieve a more socially inclusive model. If the UKYP is to succeed, youth services must be encouraged and funded to actively promote the Youth Parliament concept at the grass-roots level in particular by having clear unambiguous strategies to engage marginalised young people within a broad agenda of promoting the Youth Parliament concept. How to get more marginalised groups interested within the process so they are involved, their views heard, and participate is the real challenge for UKYP and its supporters. At present, and despite research, practice models and targeting, young people, who are for example, asylum seekers, homeless, 'looked after', disabled, excluded from school and left at home, and those caught in the revolving doors of the youth justice system,remain on the margins.

Asking such young people to consider standing for election as a MYP and to become a representative or spokesperson for youth is highly problematic particularly when they are on the margins of formal school and youth structures as Combe (2002) has argued. The inclusion of marginalised young people within meaningful youth participation is viewed as being of great importance. There are many positive outcomes which they would gain from this. For example, it allows young people to be part of their community and also to develop their social life and personal skills (Roker and Eden, 2002). Unfortunately those who might gain most are unlikely to have these opportunities for participation available to them (McCreary Centre Society, 2002).

This does not mean that such an aim is unrealistic. One example that demonstrated that it is possible to include such young people, was a research project undertaken by the Centre for Community Research that involved marginalised young people and introduced them to 'adult' political structures and processes (Green, Joshi, and Wysling, 2001). By including young people from the school council, the local youth club and those young people who were outside of these settings, with support from teachers and youth workers their voices were heard in the adult forums with these young people reporting back to their peers. Whilst only a small scale, time limited project, it did demonstrate that a number of young people who were viewed as committing anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood, given the opportunity and support, jumped at the chance of being involved. The personal growth for these young people included confidence building, learning how to discuss issues rather than argue, being viewed as equals and learning about democratic process and structures. These are all areas that the UKYP aspires to achieve.

However there is a long way to go. For example, in evaluating the final version of the 'Children's and Young People's Participation Strategy' of a local authority in the south east of England, Green and Pinto (2004) found that the UKYP and their MYP and deputy were not mentioned whilst local youth forums were only briefly mentioned in relation to providing additional support. As Cohen and Emanuel (1998) argue, in order for young people from disadvantaged groups to become involved, policies and procedures need to be effectively put in place from the beginning to offer a context to allow them to do so!

This article has addressed and raised many issues of importance that relate to the UKYP that require further exploration. Ongoing research is needed into the most appropriate ways of including marginalised and socially excluded young people within the UKYP and other political youth forums. In addition research is needed into the experiences of the

young people who become MYPs and what impact this has on their personal development and future careers. The question of course still remains as to the role of the UKYP and the involvement of marginalised young people within it. This has implications in terms of the participation of young people in the national political system. The Electoral Commission has ruled out giving the vote to 16 year olds by recommending the minimum voting age remains at 18, whilst the government is committed to this change (Curtis, 2004). If the Government decides to and manages to get the voting age lowered in the future, what then becomes of the UK Youth Parliament?

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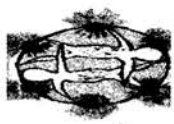

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Curriculum Debate and Detached Youth Work

Pete Harris

Recent editions of *Youth and Policy* have bristled with a lively debate regarding the relative merits of the development of a curriculum for youth work. The catalyst for this discussion appears to have been the publication of Merton and Wylie's *Towards a Contemporary Youth Work Curriculum* (2002). However, in many ways the issues raised in this debate are not fundamentally new but go to the heart and soul of the youth work profession.

Essentially, Merton and Wylie are reflecting the belief held by many that a curriculum can help communicate youth work's key messages and display some much-needed intentionality in the work. Notably they point out that 'detached work or counselling ... are not curriculum. Nor should they lead to accredited learning' (2004). However they do think youth work generally needs to be clearer about what constitutes its core goals and methods. Others in other articles (see Sue Robertson (2004) and Tony Jeffs (2004)) raised concerns that the development of a curriculum leads to product and outcome-based work and a devaluing of the youth work process. They are concerned at the over-burdening of workers (in much the same way as teachers) with session plans, targets for accredited learning and similar paper work. Planning the work, it is argued, has to incorporate the flexibility that young peoples' needs demand. It is my intention here to illustrate that nowhere is this more relevant than in the uncontrolled environment of the street.

The debate continues outside of the periodicals and academic circles and was notably present during the Federation for Detached Youth Work (FDYW) conference in Derbyshire last autumn at which Tom Wylie, among others, spoke. His argument appeared, in part at least, to be a pragmatic one – I will attempt to summarise it, I hope fairly. Youth workers, according to Wylie, need to recognise that in order to continue to receive funding, they have to be able to demonstrate they are making a contribution to the achievement of a series of social objectives laid out by their political masters through the democratic process. These objectives correspond to a degree with the alleviation of various social problems as well as general attempts to promote young peoples' development and participation in society. 'Twas always thus and always shall be.

Within The National Youth Agency's interaction with government ministers Wylie has, without doubt effectively, argued for increased funding and support for the Youth Service. Arguments that can be said to have led, in part at least, to the welcome commitments to fund the service outlined within *Transforming Youth Work* and to the greater recognition of youth work apparent within government circles. Operating in *real politic* and without the

luxury of idle posturing, Wylie also elected to take a pragmatic stance that recognises that the Treasury will not be convinced of the value of youth work without, 'clear, measurable quantifiable curriculum and outcomes.'

> *If it is to win sufficient resource from the public purse, youth work needs to articulate its purposes and methods clearly and it cannot choose the ground on which it has to do so.* (Merton and Wylie, 2004)

Practitioners (myself included) who may have reservations concerning Wylie's views on the merits of curriculum recognise that policy makers may feel more comfortable with the notion of curriculum and will perceive the field as more worthy of professional respect because of its presence. I would argue, though, that the choice to not actively champion a prescribed curriculum does not mean that we cannot clearly articulate our purposes and methods. This is both crucial and highly desirable, but may also mean that the clear articulation of our purposes may highlight a certain lack of congruence with the purpose assigned to us by those who distribute tax revenue. We have therefore, a huge job to do arguing our case for an alternative praxis not only with tax spenders but also with taxpayers and the media, as it is they who ultimately influence the direction governments feel they can take.

Interestingly for detached workers, Wylie does point out that detached work, 'is and cannot be curriculum based' (Merton and Wylie, 2004). Why then are detached workers across the country continually being expected by senior managers to monitor work on this basis through systems such as Youthbase? Or manage the assessment mechanisms inherent within the management of, for example, Neighbourhood Support Fund projects. Despite Wylie's caveats, and various attempts to adapt systems to the detached work model, Local Authorities up and down the country seem to be accepting such systems and requiring detached workers to work to them without any recognition of the contradictions inherent within curriculum and outcome based monitoring systems. In some cases detached work is being threatened or even shelved because of its apparent inability to meet the monitoring demands of curriculum based systems. Ofsted inspections continue to judge effectiveness within similar parameters.

There are matters of principle at stake here around the appropriateness, efficacy and even moral basis for a move towards a curriculum-based model. At the heart of this argument, as others have pointed out, lie fundamental questions over the role of youth workers as, amongst other things, informal educators. The profession has long resisted any attempts to move the work away from its informal base. I am sure those in favour of curriculum would argue that the development of a curriculum does not preclude an informal approach. Surely, it is argued, we can continue to work in an informal way and simply apply the 'syllabus' to what we do – and nothing is lost in the process. Indeed, many skilled practitioners are engaged in squaring the circle in this way. It may be we need to do so within the present climate of pressure for greater accountability. In this article I seek to contribute to a wider effort – that hopes to stimulate the creation of an alternative model retaining maximum accountability but without the loss of the values and methodology that brought so many of us into detached youth work.

The pedagogy of dialogue

The basic tenets of informal education have their roots in such influential thinkers as Paulo Freire, John Dewey, Kolb and some contemporaries such as Jeffs and Smith. On reading Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), for example, many could legitimately argue that such ideas have no place in youth work practice and that youth work should not be engaged in Freire's revolutionary purpose. Some may not see this Brazilian educator as relevant or practical with reference to youth work today and that perhaps his ideas are too idealistic, utopian even. This is an entirely reasonable and politically viable position, but it is not one I share. I believe, at the very least, one cannot seriously maintain having digested the work of Freire and others that the development of a curriculum model, as is currently being formulated, is consistent with those principles and methodology. I would expect to hear voices extolling the virtues of the informal, Freirian model of work in academic and practitioner circles but surely also there is some room for those who influence policy makers to at least promote moves away from these basic tenets.

Youth workers have long seen Freire, and other thinkers as central to their practice. The argument here is for an approach with young people based on notions of 'dialogue'- a concept far too often poorly understood and rarely seen in practice; education as 'problem solving' rather than 'banking'. Young people are not seen as empty jugs into which knowledge is to be poured. The teacher- learner relationship becomes genuinely mutual – reciprocal even. Authority is not abandoned but exists in real terms defined by personal experiences and characteristics rather than position or status. Those who argue that the youth work relationship necessarily involves the dictation by the adult of direction and agenda are not prepared to accept the relinquishing of that control. Fearing how this approach will be perceived by funders or those in power; or that they do not fully understand the true negotiated nature of a dialogical relationship with shared investigation at its heart. The values and knowledge of either the educator or the educatee are not abandoned but harnessed. Without clarity on this, where we often arrive is at a product and funding led (rather than process and needs led) model.

The detached work context

As detached workers this debate is particularly pertinent as the physical context of our work makes it practically impossible for our practice to be anything other than voluntary and negotiated in all its aspects. We cannot and (would not wish to) exert any more control over the street environment than we would as citizens. Initially, our contact and building of relationships remains within that street environment. This along with the business of delivering youth work without some of the physical resources available to our centre based colleagues make delivery of a structured curriculum problematic. We can adapt resources and use many youth work tools such as art, drama, stimulating discussion, questionnaires, games, etc. but essentially, as detached workers we – what is in our heads and hearts – are the resource.

We have no authority imbued in us as a result of our control over resources or any trappings of status and would not want any such status. In early stages of the work, we have no

sanction available other than the removal of contact. We often cannot know who we shall meet and under what circumstances. Groups can be transient. We operate under the gaze of the local community, open to public scrutiny and often in environments where tension is high. We are particularly susceptible to interruption by random events. The creation of closed or more structured groups for particular programmes or issue-based work is virtually impossible unless moved into some kind of building.

Such 'developmental' or project work is very much part of our process but as detached workers, initially we hope to be invited by young people into their space and then we have to negotiate acceptance into that space. The business of introducing an agenda other than the young people's, needs, therefore, careful negotiation and time to establish trust and respect. Indeed, without that trust and respect we know any messages will ultimately be ignored. Workers with one eye on an outcome or even a pre-conceived destination often neglect this crucial phase or feel the need to move too quickly through it. Management under pressure for evidence of arrival at the destination often compound the problem.

Programmes and projects conceived and delivered based on curriculum areas or single issues will not be as effective as those conceived and delivered through dialogue – which can of course, in time begin to address those very same issues. The young people in the street environment have often rejected or been excluded from the more structured environment of the school or centre. What 'reaches' the 'hard to reach' is free association in an environment of free association. They are of course not 'hard to reach' at all. Detached workers are reaching them everyday and as long as they can continue to do so free from notions of syllabus, outcome or product they will continue to significantly impact on the lives of the so called 'socially excluded'. Through moves towards curriculum based practice, detached workers are now under pressure to structure their work in a way that they know will only alienate the young people and ultimately characterise workers as yet more adults wanting to control young people. Young people on the street are particularly effective at identifying efforts to control and the relationship will be lost along with the opportunity to effect change.

As in all good youth work we plan and evaluate our work on the basis that we will respond to the needs of young people as expressed by them and then enter into true negotiation and dialogue as part of a process of personal development for both parties. As issues emerge we reflect and plan to address these issues the following night/session. This planning should be recorded and evidenced. Sufficient time needs to be allocated to this process. There is a degree of structure to our work but it lies in the manner in which we approach it rather than in its method of delivery or subject matter. The particular challenge for detached workers is that we are tasked with carrying this structure around in our heads and conveying its existence by our words and actions alone. This requires a high level of skill to see it delivered in practice. We need to be able to think creatively and spontaneously – on our feet – rather than by referral to policies, a manual or a syllabus.

Like all good youth workers we look to foster democracy and develop in young people the critical awareness that leads to full citizenship, involvement in political processes and the exercising of rights and responsibilities that come with such a role. Through this (which may involve established techniques of philosophical enquiry such as dialogue) we hope that

young people will be able to eventually challenge the status quo where it operates to deny full opportunities to members of a democratic society. We do this because we believe this is the most fruitful approach in striving to reduce the oppression that those we work with suffer; we believe this is how we can retain and nourish our own and the young people's humanity and how we can bring about change. To characterise this approach as woolly, insufficiently credible, or simply convivial conversation is to deny the value of huge swathes of philosophical enquiry – theoretical thinking that has laid the foundations for some of the most remarkable, ground breaking work with young people and communities throughout the world, and I might add, some of my own most effective and life changing practice as a detached worker for 12 years. Neither is it revolutionary posturing; indeed it could even be considered to chime with, and be the logical extension of, New Labour's language of stakeholders and opportunities for the many, not the few.

With the growth of curriculum based practice, the proliferation of programme based youth work, the encouragement of accredited learning and efforts to reintegrate young people into the world of education and work, we risk losing the defining and most valuable characteristics of our work – voluntary association, dialogue and negotiation. Moreover, in the frantic frenzy of attempting to demonstrate the value of our work, measure 'distance travelled' or quantify 'soft outcomes', to satisfy those with control of the public purse, professionals are being swamped with quantifiable monitoring processes. These are not only onerous to the point of paralysis but have the added effect of swaying practice in favour of what can be most easily demonstrated in those terms. Good planning based on evaluation and reflection should be integral to all youth work practice. However, session plans with pre-conceived learning outcomes make for easy evaluation against pre-determined objectives but poor participatory youth work and in a detached setting, as Wylie acknowledges, make no sense ideologically or practically. The fitting of emergent or unanticipated outcomes into subject areas may aid accountability but rarely adequately reflects the value of the process in the production of those outcomes. Such collusion and 'buffering' for the benefit of funders, often performed by managers confirms the apparent success of the status quo and prevent the development of necessary changes in accountability structures. Most worryingly, the delicate balance of those early contacts between adult and young person can be upset; good practice skewed and compartmentalised and the person-centred nature of our work lost.

A prescribed curriculum, however hard it tries to demarcate the qualitative will only, in the end lend validity to the pressure to present results in quantifiable formats – easily digestible nuggets for Whitehall civil servants and local councillors. Practice will suffer as workers prioritise targets such as accredited and other outcomes over process and relationships, committed workers will become de-motivated and leave, the achievement of social objectives will remain elusive and in the long term our profession could once again become the target of criticism and under resourcing.

An alternative way forward

We should not discount the value of moves towards curriculum and the reduction of so-called 'social exclusion' for some young people in certain contexts. Helping young people

achieve their goal of qualifications and entry into the world of work as part of a process of their self actualisation is of course valuable and valid, when expressed as a need by young people. To deny them such an opportunity would be absurd. But can/should we aim higher than simply reintegrating young people into the mainstream? Are we naïve to expect society to value and sustain any state funded profession that in any way challenges the status quo? How should we as workers and the organisations who represent us walk the line between the desire for proliferation of our profession and the dilution of our desire to remain radical? How can we be at one and the same time both 'in and against'? The curriculum debate involves all of these questions and it is not sufficient to simply criticise current trends without suggesting alternatives.

Our task is to convince policy makers (both those who are ideologically disposed and not) of the value base and effectiveness of a humanistic, person centred conception of young people that sees them as full beings rather than 'things' and more than passive objects responding to uncontrollable change. The recent Joseph Rowntree report into streetwork seems to confirm that to base interventions with young people on issues identified as problematic (e.g. drug use or anti social behaviour) rather than a commitment to a process of dialogue is doomed to failure.

> *...dialogue, and a willingness to begin with the issues and questions that have significance for the young person, may well be a prerequisite of success, irrespective of whether street-based interventions have a primary concern with health, community safety, youth justice or education, training or employment".* (Crimmens et al, 2004: 75).

A person centred approach, it can be argued, can lead to the alleviation of the alienation and exclusion of these young people as well as the social problems that are of such concern to wider society.

Some of these concepts are notoriously difficult for professionals to grasp let alone sceptical politicians, and the profession has been consistently poor at communicating the strength of these methods and the power of this philosophy. Practitioners need no convincing though of the efficacy of these principles. Indeed, within the detached work field we know that with the young people we are in contact with, work that does not follow these principles is not only likely to fail to achieve any recognisable social objective but also do little to alleviate the oppression they suffer. This, in turn, leads to the worsening of social problems with which youth workers are increasingly tasked with finding solutions.

Although we must always be mindful of the danger of isolating ourselves in a purist bubble and being starved of funds to the extent our principles remain inapplicable, surely there is some room for greater evocation and defence of the values of true informal education in our work. Representative national bodies face the difficult decision over the extent to which they risk alienation in the pursuit of ideals. Are more youth workers and centres, irrespective of the manner in which they operate necessarily a good thing?

There are today so many agencies and professions engaged in attempting to redirect young people or control the more undesirable aspects of their behaviour – school, social workers, probation, mentors, connexions advisors, youth offending teams, as well as youth workers on programmed initiatives designed to reduce crime, anti social behaviour, social exclusion,

etc. All of these agencies are undoubtedly doing some good and fruitful work. Individuals within these professions often struggle in difficult circumstances but succeed in reaching young people cast adrift from mainstream society and genuinely effect positive change. We should salute these colleagues who have a crucial part to play in the maintenance of social cohesion and encourage, wherever possible, work to be developed in partnership with these agencies. However if youth work, and in particular detached youth work, overly dilutes its commitment to an informal and voluntary essence, there could soon no longer be any adults placed alongside young people by the state who can genuinely be said to be engaged in relationships based on true mutuality. Relationships where young people are accepted for where they are – rather than where adults would like them to be. A utilitarian approach to the development of detached work – targeting 'hot spots' with 'rapid response' teams, the focus on work set up to address anti social behaviour or community cohesion, and the funding of work through crime reduction streams must be challenged.

That is not to say that we as adults should not consider the choices and position of young people to be detrimental to themselves and others and wish to enable positive movement. Or indeed that detached workers do not and will not continue to firmly challenge young people to address issues of 'respect' and behaviour and voice the views of the wider community and society at large. Rather that to be able to learn, move, change and develop young people need, as do all of us, to feel their reality is accepted as valid and that they retain the power to name that reality as it makes sense to them. Real development requires this acceptance before challenge can become effective and cannot be present when our eyes are focused on the destination we seek rather than seeing the world through the eyes of those we desire to help. This is a subtle but crucial philosophical distinction.

But there are hard practical issues also. I recognise that Merton and Wylie acknowledge detached work cannot be as curriculum based as other methodologies. I accept also their intentions are sincere and that it is perhaps a misrepresentation of their ideas to characterise them as 'Fordist' with a fixed body of knowledge, skills and intended outcomes. I would view this debate as in itself an entirely healthy dialogue between friends and allies. Unfortunately though, in practice, detached work on the street is increasingly being expected to deliver recorded and accredited outcomes as defined by a curriculum. Managers, many of who have little or no understanding of the nature of detached work are simply imposing identical structures of monitoring and evaluation on detached teams as on their centre based colleagues. Both fields are hampered as a result and are suffering from levels of de-motivation and staff turnover that can only lead to a poorer service to young people. Detached workers are being frustrated in their attempts to strengthen the work because the policy climate and the move away from an informal approach are suffocating best practice.

It may be considered by some to be futile or unrealistic to raise such 'voices in the wilderness'. I feel such voices can contribute to practitioners within our field and elsewhere arriving at a level of understanding and practice that a truly humanistic, informal, holistic model of youth work demands. There is no doubt that our concern to foster democracy and encourage political participation may have less political capital than the removal of problematic social issues. While young people remain immobilised politically their needs will always remain secondary to the need for the adult world to reduce any negative impact on

adult society. Surely though, we can all agree that young people represent the future society and are a product of adult intervention and indifference – they have responsibilities, but as equally valued citizens we owe it to them to raise not only their opportunities but their consciousness also. I make no apology for a lack of neutrality in this instance.

The real question therefore is should the desire to increase the capacity of the youth service profession lead us to compromise on the values we hold so dear. Youth workers are educators first and foremost and should be judged as such. No one would expect a schoolteacher to demonstrate that they had reduced crime in the local community but as we all know the impact of a positive relationship between teacher and pupil can most definitely lead to young people opting for different life paths. This positive change does not rely on, or need to be delineated in advance, or assessed and recorded against targets, for it to be real and demonstrable. It does not need, and cannot be meaningfully reflected in a curriculum or a tick in a box on a monitoring sheet.

The essential issue for us as workers therefore, is trust. Workers should request it, clearly demonstrating the rationale that lies behind the approach and be willing to be critically examined through methods that reflect the purpose and participatory values of our work – regular inspection with appropriate criteria, young people consultations, qualitative evidence, etc. Quantitative measures can be used but with care so as not to upset the delicate balance and character of negotiated relationships. Crucially, also, we need to show ourselves to be worthy of that trust and develop our profession to the extent that even our weakest links are operating at high levels of understanding and practice. Poor, unreflective, unsupported, ineffective practice is still too prevalent in places, putting managers under pressure to improve outcomes with target setting and heavy handed monitoring. We all individually have a responsibility to prove that methods that may not be immediately demonstrable can be momentous in impact in the hands of diligent, reflective practitioners. The field itself needs to produce credible alternatives to the systems currently in use. In the absence of such efforts well meaning allies such as the NYA and others will continue to have to present our profession to policy makers in terms that suit policy making processes rather than the needs of young people. In return, maybe then we can legitimately demand that our political and professional representatives do more to champion the principles we hold so dear.

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What does St. Paul have to say to youth workers?

Richard Davies

Born at around the turn of the first millennium of the Common Era (CE), Paul remains one of the most significant contributors to the Christian religious tradition. In this article I want to expand Paul's sphere of influence from a faith community to the wider domain of youth work. This is not a straight forward task, but I hope to show that Paul contributes not only answers to 'religious questions' (if there are such things), but also to what has become known as the 'human condition'. In particular his ideas raise resonances with dilemmas and debates presently 'live' in youth work in the UK. Especially I shall be interested in giving practical form to three roles: face-to-face practitioners, policy makers and academics. Given the focus of the article, I am not here trying to argue in detail; rather I am using Paul, his life and his letters, as a springboard for reviewing apparent deficits in present youth work practice.

Paul is concerned with many of the issues that face practicing youth workers: tackling oppression, challenging thoughtlessness, developing self-esteem, in doing detached work, in local community centres (and centres of community), and with supporting the development of the spirit and soul. Paul, however, does not talk in this way, he conceptualises these ideas very differently, and in a different language. He does so with two intellectual backgrounds: that of the classical period, and that of Judaism. The intellectual background of the classical period has made something of a return in recent decades: in moral and political philosophy (see MacIntyre, 1985), in relation to curriculum studies (Davies, 2003), and in relation to youth work (see Young, 1999). The intellectual background of Judaism known to Paul has been the subject of some theological controversy following Sanders (1977) (see for example, Wright, 1991, 1993, 1997; Bosch, 1991). In addition modern Jewish thought has recently been developed and extended by Sacks (for example 1996, 1997).

In this article I want to review three characteristics of Paul's approach to his task: his intellectual honesty, his practicality, and his people centred approach. Each of whichoffers an insight into Paul's person and his task. There are, however, a couple of preliminary issues that need to be addressed. In particular some methodological matters as to the acceptability of applying Paul outside of the faith community to whom his letters were addressed. Before dealing with this issue, there is a need to offer a brief pen portrait of Paul himself.

Who was/is Paul

There are two reasons to be unsure of the correct tense of the verb. Firstly, although Paul

is physically dead, dying in about 66 CE, he believed in the resurrection of the dead. Christ was the 'first fruits of those who have fallen asleep' (see Co. 15:20b), and Paul's future was not simply death but also a future resurrection. Talking of Paul as only in the past is to embrace a view of the world that is not Pauline. For Paul those who believe in Christ are both 'was' and 'is', historic figures, but also alive for eternity[1]. The second reason is a question over the 'Paul' we are talking about, the historic Paul or the Paul of literature. Even if I were tempted to use exegesis to establish the 'real' Paul, space would preclude such an approach. Here I am concerned with implications for youth work, and I am content to depend upon Paul's legacy of literature. I shall not worry about whether there are any conflicts between the 'real' historical figure of Paul and the literature that he wrote. Having said this, I shall consider a few methodological issues shortly.

Paul was born a Jew and Roman citizen in the city of Tarsus in modern day Turkey. Originally known as Saul he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee who studied in Jerusalem under the scholar Gamelial (see Acts 22:3). Little is known directly of Saul's early life and the best hypothesises are based around an understanding of the strict Pharisaic life which Saul embraced. According to Luke, Saul is seen condoning the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, (Acts 7:58) and seeking leave of the Jewish authorities to find and arrest Christians in other cities, most notably Damascus (Acts 9:2). It is on the road to Damascus that Saul has a vision of Jesus of Nazareth, a vision that convinces Saul of the truthfulness of Christianity. Although this is often referred to as the 'conversion of St. Paul', scholars have questioned the term 'conversion' often preferring the term 'call' (see Bosch, 1991:125). The disagreement centres on the level of change for Saul/Paul resulting from this vision. Given that Christianity was at this time a sect of Judaism there is no real conversion, yet Saul/Paul's views have both elements of continuity and difference.

After several days Paul emerges in Damascus doing what he was to spend the rest of his life doing 'preach[ing] in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God' (Acts 9:20). After being the subject of two attempted assassinations, Paul is sent off to Tarsus for a period of time. Although Luke does not mention Paul for several chapters, nevertheless he must have remained in touch with the apostles in Jerusalem. When Barnabas needs help in supporting the church in Antioch he turns to Paul. The bulk of the remainder of Acts (chapters 14 to 28) is then concerned with Paul's three missionary journeys, his arrest by the Romans, quasi-judicial trial, and then his journey to Rome. It is a story of prison, riots, miraculous escapes, and shipwreck, as well as informal education, healings, and preaching to assemblies and market places. It is during this period that Paul writes his 'epistles', letters mostly to churches he has founded or hopes to visit. In all seven are recognised as by Paul's hand, with another six whose authorship is either disputed or which are not Pauline.

Paul is arrested in Jerusalem on what Luke records as trumped up charges. Local Roman officials fail to sort out the problem, they simply leave him in prison. Paul 'appeals to Caesar', as is the right of a Roman citizen, and is sent to Rome. There he is allowed to live in his own house, looked after by his friends, and preach freely. Although Luke's account finished with Paul in this state it is thought that he is released, but then executed in the Christian persecutions.

Methodological matters

There are two key methodological questions that need to be addressed:

- What does Paul say?
- How ought this to apply to a non-Christian audience?

What does Paul say?

This is essentially a theological matter, and is dealt with in detail by Sanders, Wright and Bosch (ibid). I have tended to draw on these authors, though not exclusively. Given the limited space in this article and its youth work focus I shall not be attempting to offer much in terms of a theological justification. However, there are two points that ought to be made. First there is a distinction between Paul as the writer of the letters and Paul as a character in Luke's history of the apostles. The letters offer a primary source for Paul, and Luke, at best, is a secondary source. Though considered methodological 'bad form' I have drawn on both types of sources during sections of this paper. I have attempted to be diligent in identifying which source is being used. Second there is the question of the authenticity of letters ascribed to Paul. As with many writers of this period, disciples used Paul's name as an act of homage. Thus there are letters that are not authored by Paul, though they may contain elements of Paul's teaching no longer surviving in other documents. Although at the level of faith community this distinction is of limited importance, it is significant in theological debate. For ease of justification I have accepted Sanders' list of the authentic corpus (1977:413ff) that includes: Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians and Philemon. I am sympathetic to arguments that show Pauline material in Colossians, II Thessalonians and Ephesians. In this paper I have restricted myself to the authentic Pauline corpus.

Paul's contribution to a non-Christian audience

The audience for Paul's preaching was essentially non-Christian, but the letters, on which much of my argument will rest, were directed towards believers. Paul has a reputation as being a Christian writer whose works are primarily studied within the faith community. Other classical writers, such as Aristotle, do not seem to have acquired this restrictive tag, though key Aristotelian features, such as the metaphysical biology, are deeply religious and problematic. One issue is that Paul's writings are often taken as normative, rather than descriptive and illustrative of 'the human condition' and I want to briefly explore this later in the article. First I want to argue that Paul, in having an ideological commitment and a particular worldview is no different from other more modern writers.

Let us consider the work of L.S. Vygotsky. Vygotsky's writings have become widely popular and have underpinned much work on social constructivism in psychology, as well as research methodologies such as cultural-historical activity theory. Yet, one of Vygotsky's underlying aims, as Wertsch points out, was to link together the science of psychology with Marxist theory:

> *this setting provided Vygotsky and other young scholars with opportunities and challenges that remain unparalleled in the twentieth century. They were asked to reformulate entire disciplines in accordance with Marxist philosophical principles and they were asked to creates sciences that could assist in the construction of a new socialist society.* (Wertsch, 1985:1)

Now it is difficult to claim that one does not agree with any aspects of Marxism, given the variety of claims that Marxism makes, but it is clear that many reasonable people do not accept the Marxism worldview or key tenets of Marxism. Equally clearly many in the academic and practitioner communities have embraced Vygotskian frameworks for thinking about cognitive development and function.

The difference between Vygotsky and Paul seems to be that whereas disciples of Vygotsky sought to extricate key insights from this Marxist grounding, the disciples of Paul have tended to remain united to the faith community. Vygotsky's work is not normative, and it is possible, with care, to accept certain insights and reject others. The zone of proximal development (ZPD), for example, has practical importance, and needs to be held in concert with some other theoretical ideas in Vygotsky's writing. Yet it is possible to embrace the ZPD and reject other aspects of the Vygotskian framework.

Here I want to use Paul in a similar way, accepting his insights into the 'human condition', but rejecting the text as in anyway normative[2]. Further, I am not attempting to present a framework of Paul's ideological position, but interesting aspects of his writing. The methodology loosely follows the 'ladder of abstraction'. Beginning with concrete cases and context (in this case Paul's letters) one seeks to abstract out key general features, before applying these features in another context and another time. In the next section I seek to establish some key areas of concern for Paul and to excavate his perspective. Then I will seek to apply those concerns in the light of present debates. Bosch argues, rightly, that it is best to kept these two activities discrete, the second (application) following logically and temporally from the first (interpretation):

> *We have to read Paul historically – that means on his own terms (as far as it is possible) – before we attempt any 'application', rather than proof-text him to buttress an understanding to which we happen to be favourably disposed.* (Bosch, 1991: 171)

Given the subject matter absolute differentiation is not realistic. There are two reasons for this. First initial thinking about the structure of the article has been influenced by the kinds of issues that are presently around in youth work. Second I choose to explore broad characteristics of Paul's life and mission. This leads to an impossible theological task, to capture the whole of Paul's theology in a single article. So, for example, issues such as his apocalyptic views are largely omitted. This means that I have inevitably had to be selective what view of Paul to present, and the criteria for selection were the youth work issues that most immediately presented themselves.

The characteristics of the man and his mission

Given that this article is a consideration, perhaps even an advocacy, of Paul in general I have

chosen not to focus on a particular section of text, but on some general characteristics of Paul and his work. Primarily these are found in teachings that he has left for local Christian communities (*ekklesia*). I will explore three characteristics:

- His intellectual honesty
- His practicality
- His person centred approach

Although I shall deal with each individually they are of course intertwined.

His intellectual honesty

There are at least two ways in which Paul displays his intellectual honesty. First he is intellectually honest with himself and with his fellow apostles. Second he is intellectually honest in dealing with others outside the faith community. This has a number of features, but in particular: (i) Paul's concern with giving reasons for beliefs he holds; and (ii) that such beliefs ought to ground his action in the world.

From within the community of faith, Paul had from his earliest years been involved in thinking about, and applying, his Jewish faith. His Damascus Road experience involved a rethinking of key issues, and this thinking is evidenced in many arguments he presents in his letters (see for example 1 Co.8; Gal. 2:11ff). Being intellectually honest with those with whom he is working appears to be of great importance. Where appropriate, Paul conveys his argument in detail (see much of Romans). In other passages he presents some key features of an argument rather than its full form. It is critical, as Wright points out, to ask what Paul is doing in any particular passage (see Wright 1991: 8ff),

In relation to his non-believing audience Paul displays the same level of intellectual honesty. First he allows his audience to judge for themselves the veracity of his claims. He works from ideas with which they are familiar (the scriptures for Jews, other religious ideas for Gentiles). If Jesus is the messiah, as he claims, then others have the right to hear the evidence. Second this honesty, grounded in a deep concern for the truth, allows others to be informed about the faith, informed rather than persuaded by cunning arts of sophistry (see 1 Co. 2:1-5). Third on these occasions Paul debated with all who would engage. This was a public testing of evidence and argument in a way reasonably common in the major cities of his day. What is more he is committed to extended debate often over several years (see Acts 19:8-11).

There is open mindedness to Paul, openness to being challenged by others, but also a security that comes from having considered the evidence first, and its implication for his own life. His public, intellectual honesty is grounded in periods of reflective thought, and a deep commitment not simply to hold onto truth, but to pursue truth in all its complexity.

His practicality

I have been at pains not to portray Paul as simply a scholar reflecting on important issues. He is more than that, he is imbedded in practice. He is a practical worker who is in daily touch with those with whom he works. Practicality in this sense has two related aspects. First Christianity, for Paul, involves action in the world, action grounded in the nature of God and his mission in the world. Reflection is not enough; it must result in practical action. Second Paul's theology is not simply derived from a study of sacred texts, but also from a

study of the lives of both believers and non-believers.

A brief reading of Paul's letters offers support for the first claim. The evidence is two-fold. First, and most obviously, the letters are full of exhortation to practical action of one sort or another. Second Paul is responding to practical questions raised with him by local Christian communities, or from the experience of others who had visited them. The letters now give us only one side of what was, originally, a two way debate between Paul and the communities with whom he corresponded (see for example 1 Thess. 4; 1 Co. 11).

The second point is more difficult to defend. In part Paul's own experience had taught him to be careful about traditional beliefs. The vision on the Damascus Road showed that although he had been diligent in study, yet he was in error. The messiah had come and Paul had missed the clues. Study of tradition, though necessary, is not sufficient. In addition, one needs to be concerned with one's own experience and the experience of others. In his greetings to the *ekklesia* he shows a knowledge of, and concern with, their experiences of God and his mission in the world. Further, the experiences of local *ekklesia* form an integral part of many of the arguments he gives. It is difficult to make sense of 1 Co 11-14 without seeing Paul as learning from, and responding to, the practical experiences of believers.

One effect of Paul's concern with the experience of the *ekklesia*, and his advice to them is the use of language. Paul reflects on action in the common sense language of experience, and using concepts familiar to his audience. As Pring (1977) points out there is no need for a technical language and associated view of the world when we have a perfectly good common sense one. Thus the two aspects of practicality support and enable each other. The focus on experiences provides a common sense description of the world, which is refined through critical reflection, and gives rise to practical resolutions to real world problems.

His people-centred approach

It may seem fatuous to claim that Paul was people-centred, but I want to spell out this claim in relation to the alternatives. There are at least two possible alternatives to being people-centred: being God-centred and being *ekklesia*-centred.

It is clear that for Paul, God is the basis of his action in the world. As he notes:

> *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.* (2 Co. 5:20)

Paul is inspired and empowered by God, and motivated by his love for God. He is grounded in God, but his gaze is outward to people. For Paul there is no conflict between being 'God grounded' and 'people-centred', God is also people-centred, and so is God's mission. Paul can be people-centred because the one who sent him supports and enables him in this task.

What then of the claim to being *ekklesia*-centred? This I take from Bosch's account of Paul's missionary strategy (1991:129ff). It would be unfair to claim this was Bosch's position, but his thesis does, I believe, tend towards it. Bosch notes that Paul is 'metro-centric', in that although he is completing missionary journeys, nevertheless he is focused on cities. He tends to travel from city to city, and spends considerable periods of time in each (up to three years). However, Paul is not simply concerned with the city, but in establishing local *ekklesia*

in each. These local communities would not only be self-supporting in terms of finance and leadership, but also form centres for mission to the surrounding area. As Paul writes to the *ekklesia* at Thessalonica:

> *The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia.* (1 Thess. 1:8)

For Bosch the focus on city-based *ekklesia* is an efficient strategy, since:

> *these 'metropolises' are the main centres as far as communication, culture, commerce, politics and religion are concerned.* (Bosch, 1991:130)

Paul recognises his own limitations and devolves authority and practical activity to these self-supporting communities, whom he supports in prayer and through letters. In this way Paul is *ekklesia*-centred in his mission strategy. Yet to see Paul's mission as *ekklesia*-centred is to replace the *means* with the *purpose* of this strategy. The purpose is the well-being of individuals both within and outside the *ekklesia*. The strategy makes this more likely through such things as providing a local centre of mission, peer support, protection, mutual discipline, sharing of ideas, etc..

By claiming that Paul is people-centred I am claiming that whilst both the grounds of his mission and his central strategy are important, they nevertheless do not deflect Paul from his purpose. Further, Paul assesses the value of his mission in terms of people centred 'benchmarks'. He does not ask how many people turn up for a meeting, or how many new members this month (that is how the *ekklesia* is functioning), he commends them on their love of God, their display of key Christian qualities, of their concern for each other (or criticises them on the lack of these things). Paul is people-centred not in a sentimental way, but because he sees this as the critically important purpose of his activity.

From Paul to youth work?

There are, of course, many other characteristics of Paul on which I could have dwelt. However, these three do have, in varying ways, something to say to youth work practice today. Shortly, I want to consider three groups in particular: practitioners, policy makers, and academics. However, it is perhaps first worth considering the three characteristics outlined in relation to youth work in general terms.

At the heart of Paul's approach are people. He is concerned with their well-being both in terms of his message and his way of engaging with them. Similarly youth work is essentially about the well-being of others, primarily the young people with whom we work. We believe that through working alongside them we, as workers, enhance their lives in some way. We may contribute directly to their lives, for example, as role models and informal educators, or we may use our skills for the young people to educate themselves and each other. The approach we take, our strategy, will depend to a large extent on the young people, and the context in which we are working. Unless we are there to improve the well-being of young people, then we have no right to be there at all. However, it is not easy to establish what we mean by 'well-being' in any detail. For Paul this involved relationship with God, for *Transforming Youth Work* (2002) it involves being in 'good shape'. The key was, and remains, intellectual honesty. We cannot do youth work without at least some implicit

notion of human well-being, the beginning of a professional and morally upright response is to be clear about our conception. Further, we need to pursue debate about the legitimacy of our particular conception of human well-being. For Paul this intellectual honesty was directed to himself, his colleagues, and to his client group. Where though is the intellectual honesty within youth work? Journals publishing practitioner's articles offer space for some public, intellectually honesty, and the MA dissertation often provides professionally legitimate space for such intellectually honest debate. But we have to ask, how often is that space available in the daily lives of workers, and particularly part-time workers and volunteers?

There is an imperative for practitioners to be involved in such debates, it is not enough for policy makers or academics to develop detached 'intellectually honest' accounts. Paul as a practitioner immersed himself in practice, and generated practical solutions to difficulties encountered by the early church. The development of practical responses to the needs of young people requires both immersion in practice and also intellectual honesty.

As an example of present practice in relation to research, let us consider a recent review in this journal, Jeffs' (2003) review of Emler's (2002) report on 'self-esteem'. Both the review and the original report seem fine examples in their respective fields. However, I was fortunate to be present as a forum of practitioners addressed by Nick Emler when the report was published. The practitioners at my table were clear that he was not talking about 'self-esteem'. The meaning of the term was reasonably clear to them, clear enough for practical purposes. Their use of the term did not square with the use made by social psychologists. Whilst Emler himself is clear that the term is imprecise, the primary requirement for a psychologist is to define something so that it can be measured. The primary requirement for practitioners is to be able to describe practice so that one can make judgements about the best way to act. It is therefore unsurprising that there is a disagreement. Jeffs' analysis is that we need 'to reflect on our own experience and the research before acting in haste' (2003:75). Jeffs also points out that we need to 'probe common sense' and 'be mindful regarding our use of terminology' (ibid).

Should the practitioners I listened to be concerned with the term 'self-esteem' in the same way Jeffs and Emler seem to be? Well, no, the term works well for them without the precision or measurability of the term's more technical manifestations. The difficulties arise if we assume that: (a) the concept identified by the term is the same in both academic and practice discourses; and (b) that the academic meaning ought to be dominant as practitioners design their work programmes and during interaction with young people.

Neither of these seems to fit Paul's account of practicality. These practitioners are using the term 'self-esteem' in a locally clear way (that is within a particular discourse community for a particular purpose). Such a use has developed over time and results from the practitioners experience and some familiarity with the wider literature and debate.

What we ought to be seeing is an enhancement of practitioners' roles in defining terms in common professional usage, and seeing academics conform to these concepts, rather than the other way round. This requires more practitioners involved in the research process with a role both as researchers themselves and guardians of the language of professional practice.

Having stated what I see as a vision for youth work informed by these key Pauline characteristics, I want to briefly consider the implications for three roles: practitioners, policy makers and academics.

In terms of face-to-face work there is a need for increased space, time and security for critical aspects of professional working beyond face-to-face practice itself. There is a need for structured intellectual honesty, and a culture that supports workers' investigations into human well-being. There is a need for practitioners to be given the opportunity to be involved in research about their practice and about practice in general. This may be in form of local 'action research' type projects, or by working with academic institutions. At the heart of this problem is a managerial issue. Effective supervision and line management ought to be looking to use workers in these tasks, and prepare them for intellectually honest reflection and formal research in their agency. Further, we need: (i) face-to-face workers and managers to see the point of engaging in this kind of debate; (ii) a policy framework that welcomes, and in fact depends upon effective reflection and research at 'ground level' rather than at the level of quango, national management council or government; and (iii) a culture of trust to be re-established in the profession, between professionals and between professionals and funding bodies. This is not only because trust is a good and minimises transaction costs (see Fukayama, 1995), but because it offers the most effective means of responding to the well-being of particular groups of young people.

There will also be a change in the task for policy makers. The task becomes to provide a consistent and supportive environment within which professional youth workers can practically work out what that professionalism means. This will be different in different places with different groups of young people. The present bureaucratic system has two failings: first, its claim to be able to use good social science in order to initiate certain outcomes is a fiction (see MacIntyre, 1985: chapter 8); and second, it places power in the hands of those least knowledgeable about practice (policy makers). What is required is a policy framework that enables local solutions to local problems. Paul had a strategy: devolve to the lowest point, and support through letters, directions, visits, and most of all engagement in intellectually honest debate with fellow workers. Further, policy makers are called upon to develop people-centred 'benchmarks', benchmarks that record purpose rather than strategy.

Finally, there is the role of the academic, and by this I mean not only those of us employed by higher education, but the seeming myriad of consultants in the field. That is, those of us for whom practice is either a very small leisure time pursuit, or lived by proxy through our students. There are three roles that we can play. First, we have a role in more esoteric research (thinking about what Paul might have to say, etc.). Second, we have a role to support practitioners to engage in research. This may be through partnership with practitioners, consultancy on research projects, or through degree programmes. Finally, and perhaps most significantly we can use our distance from practice to think up those provocative questions that disrupt practitioners and policy makers, and stimulate some involvement in intellectually honest debate. The account of practice that I have been articulating is one that increases the freedom of practitioners in terms of policy and local management. It identifies local communities of practitioners as at the heart of good effective practice. However, this places additional moral demands on workers. Errors by

workers clearly impact directly on the lives of young people and their well-being. Workers need to be questioned and provoked into intellectual and honest debate, not for sterile pursuit of truth, but in order to justify their actions as being in the best interests of young people.

Concluding comments

In this article I have attempted to take some key characteristics of Paul's life and work and consider some broad implications for youth work. It is inevitable that some will be unhappy with the result. For some the use of a religious figure in this way will be inappropriate, surely he got it so wrong he has little to say to youth work today. Well the jury remains out on whether he got it wrong, and I have tried to show that we can use the writings of even those with whom we disagree to give an alternative perspective. Others will claim that I have played fast and loose with exegesis, but I would claim this was never the purpose of the article. Others will claim that my view of youth work is too cynical, perhaps, but it reflects the claims of others embedded in practice. Good solid intellectual honesty may have prevented Paul from some serious mistakes, not least condoning the stoning of Stephen, and from the need for his 'Damascus Road experience'. Ongoing, good solid intellectual honesty may save us from equally serious mistakes, and the need for such radical re-education.

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Notes

1 This is of necessity a 'broad brush' account'. There is insufficient time to explore all the theological details. For example, there is a question as to whether the dead are raised now, or at some future date. Much depends on your view of time itself, and God's relationship to it. In general I have limited the theological argument in several places and refer readers to Wright (1991, 1993) and Sanders (1977) for more extended argument on theological matters.

2 To be clear, I am not claiming that the text is not normative, but I am not treating the text in a normative way, which would be inappropriate for a broad audience.

Review Article

Howard Williamson
The Milltown Boys Revisited
Berg 2004
ISBN 1 85973 824 9
£16.99 (paperback)
236 pages

Jonathan Roberts

Howard Williamson has written a gem. I think it will last and shine. Here is a portrait of a cluster of men's lives for 25 years from the mid 1970s. The chapter titles are the current concerns of sociology of young people, but what stayed with me was the elegant weaving and editing of lives to bring these men alive on the page. For a culture where self reflection and long term views are not valued, Williamson has put in his skill and time to reflect and tell the unfolding truth for all of them. The intimacy of his craft reminded me of another invitation to

> *Listen. Time passes. Come closer now. Only you can hear and see behind the eyes of the sleepers, the movements and countries and mazes and colours and dismays and rainbows and tunes and wishes and flight and fall and despairs...* (Thomas 1955)

Williamson takes his inspiration from the photographer Robert Capa: 'His statement that 'if your pictures aren't good enough you're not close enough' became the dictum for ... war and adventure photographers' (Marien 2002:307). This adventure of human life is lived out with no mockery of a Llareggub landscape: these men's lives reveal what it has been like in these Isles for the last generation.

The study was based on a target group of 67 of whom Williamson contacted 30. His method of contacting people is described (pages 9-16) as part of the story telling that brings the study alive: networking, chance encounter, backed by a warmth of memory that encourages the 'Boys' to put themselves out for him. We lose the stories of the six who have died, except for a glimpse of one being kicked to death in a drunken fight, and the 30 who were not found, presumably, having gone from Milltown, and we learn nothing about their replacements.

Williamson lays out his methodology clearly and well (pages17-33) with exemplary plain comments about agreeing confidentiality, and managing issues of legality. He captures the excitement of finding out what has happened in people's lives, the pain and shock of some of the revelations on the researcher. He sets out the basic premise of the book and the research:

> *This is an unashamed empirical study, a whole hearted exercise in 'grounded theory'. The Milltown Boys should open our eyes to some of the social realities of contemporary Britain, and how individuals in particular circumstances have endeavoured to deal with them over the course of their lives.* (p. 23)

This is a great resource for helping people start to think about the way they do research.

This is a judgement that will be recognised in many neighbourhoods and frustrates the desire of many to bring an end to law breaking.

Dylan Thomas' death at 39 from 'hard drinking' (Drabble 1985:977) is the reminder when we read of the Boys health (pages 159-185) that they are not yet dead. Health strategies, healthy eating, risks from heart and lung threatening drinking and smoking seem to have passed so many by. Health professionals, particularly at neighbourhood level, will benefit from Williamson's unflinching report of levels of smoking and drinking that reminded me of surprised families and friends at the funerals of men like these. This is a worthy challenge to popular culture's idolising unhealthy life styles (like the 'junk dilemmas' of Irving Welsh (1993). I look forward to extracts from this being used in health education, and helping people plan to change their lifestyles.

The personal and the behind-the-doors views of the Boys' lives are real treasures and we are privileged to have them. I hope that this book is reprinted and survives; it will describe well to people in a hundred years time what we were like in the way households were made up, and how we found places to live. The personal successes and setbacks, the attitudes and the range of security is all here. There are people of property with comfortable lives, families planning their moves around the housing benefits, working the complex world of local authority housing: dealing with the chance of a right to buy and so on. This is a thorough, heterogeneous report on where many people are at the end of the 20th century. The acuteness of homelessness has receded to a degree but the vulnerability of the poor is only too evident.

Behind the doors we also find the relationships, children and family lives. For a sample of 30 men picked in a fairly *ad hoc* way they give us a fair range of experiences. There are some very isolated Boys, one gay, relationships that have lasted (about a third) and relationships that have replaced others every few years. Williamson records the facts and is terse in his commentary:

> *The patterns of relationship formation and the reasons for their subsequent collapse are complex... although some of the Boys worked more diligently at protecting their relationships than others.* (p.137)

The 60 children produced by these Boys are certainly of great interest to those who study young people. Williamson describes the Boys whose orientation shifts from their peer group to their children, and those who do not change, continuing in their deep attachment to their peers. He speculates about the chances and opportunities that arise from the complex combinations of factors and I liked the way he prefers the idea of orientation to that of, just, organisation. This is the sort of approach that effective Sure Start programmes and Home-School agreements are cultivating.

Williamson tried to get the Boys to reflect on their lives, 'though many were unaccustomed to either looking back or looking forward' (p. 211). There is a strong sense of fatalism, but some

> *have made more concerted efforts than others to shape the direction of their lives, The Boys may have grown up in the same area and been broadly exposed to the same influences but ... they were certainly not all the same.* (p. 234)

This is certainly the abiding impression of the book, making it worth a second read: a collection of intimate, moving life stories of such diversity that they shake easy answers. Their heterogeneity in current social setting, life careers, destinations, and attitudes allows no single answer. This data sits uneasily with the theoretical patterns and challenges us to put people's experience first and interpretation second. This is indeed Williamson's own conclusion about theory:

> *Beyond these elementary though critical observations, I cannot offer any significant advance on theoretical formulations concerning social exclusion, risk and the life course. What the study does, however, is to raise questions about the validity and persuasiveness of a range of contemporary 'established' theories within youth research and within broader social theory. Perhaps others will make use of this comprehensive empirical account to further such considerations.* (p. 239)

Perhaps this is a good point to reflect on the impact of the data. In 1978 the Boys left school with few or no qualifications. They expected unskilled jobs. In 1990s terms they are the status zero generation, or we might now label them NEEP. But look at the analysis of their life course: nine are in successful legitimate employment, owning homes, out of crime, in stable family arrangements, and paying attention to children's education. Eight have stable respectable working class lives. Seven (only) ended up in status zero careers: active criminality, family breakdown, poor health. The majority came through: this demands careful reflection.

Youth Studies watches and listens to young people to report and interpret knowledge about young people. This knowledge builds as we remove distorting perspectives and see young people's experience more clearly. Williamson has made a clearer picture possible, challenging the determinism that can distort our willingness to see the real lives of young people.

Youth work builds relationships with young people and as such is subject to their critiques. Knowing young people is made by being known by young people and the youth work researcher should expect to be changed in the relationship as Williamson has. There is not much reference to youth work in the book but the patterns of being known are like those looked at by Bob Holman in *Kids at the Door Revisited*, or studies of effective youth workers. Williamson's data suggests the value of relationships like those that youth workers seek to establish in coming to an understanding of these (often) socially excluded young men. Williamson demonstrates the great power of the relationship in working with young people (see PAULO Unit A1). We might hope that the generation of youth workers to be developed using the National Occupational Standards (PAULO 2002) will encourage greater self awareness (PAULO Unit B2) and planning for the future on the basis of their learning (PAULO Unit B4). This should be an encouragement to youth workers in their work, and in their writing up of their work.

Neighbourhood renewal practitioners would want more from this book. As it stands it could look like 30 untethered balloons of experience drifting across an estate. What wider comparative data might there be about the social trends on the estate? What has the local comprehensive done to improve standards? How has unemployment fluctuated? How do the housing statistics and health indicators compare with other places? It is really hard to

know if this data sits adjacent to world class opportunities (like some deprived areas in London), or in deep complex multiple deprivation like Liverpool or Middlesbrough. Context is important if we are going to make sense of some of these stories, and if they are to become useful for tackling 'floor targets'. As it stands the story is dominated by the Boys and the public and community bodies that have an interest in what goes on have had no chance to express their side of the story. Perhaps a second edition will give us some satisfying neighbourhood statistics over the same period?

This book is inevitably a story of Boys (and Men ducking their responsibility by still being called Boys). Women step through the doors once or twice as part of the lives but it is not always clear what it is like to be a woman in Milltown. There are extreme stories of burning his wife's things so that 'when I left there all she had left was what she had on, what she was wearing' (p. 133), and some reference to violence between men. What is the truth for these women surrounded by all these men who value how hard they are? Why do so many of the women choose not to live with these men and choose deep poverty instead (giving the men the time and money to spend at the pub)? There is a silence here that is about more than the emotional incompetence of the Boys. Perhaps a Milltown Girls book would help?

Longitudinal studies are really useful in assessing the impact of policies and themes on the lives of the people they are most meant to benefit. 2004 also saw the publication of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation study (Webster et al, 2004) that builds on two earlier studies (Johnston et al, 2000 and MacDonald and Marsh, 2001), giving access to another group of thirty young people. 'As in our earlier studies we found that the problems associated with youth transitions do not conclude at neat, age specific points...' (Webster et al 2004: 41). 'Our diagnosis of why their extended transitions into adulthood are continuing to be hindered closely implicates de-industrialisation... poor demand for labour and a paucity of realistic opportunity' (Webster et al 2004: 42). In this study there are links made with context, and a range of related research. Building relationships with the subjects as Williamson has done produces rich material, but perhaps he too needs to set it more in a community of enquiry. He asks for others to look at the material and offer interpretation and he is generous in sharing this opportunity, it seems churlish to refuse.

Like others who have reviewed this book I have found it stimulating, moving and a starting point for further thoughts. I can see this being a great opportunity for students developing their thoughts about data: it is sufficiently ordered and readable for beginners to find their way, but it does not give the answers and so leaves opportunity for interpretation with the reader. I hope that *The Milltown Boys Revisited* becomes widely read, above all because it sums up the experiences of a larger group in the 1970s-1990s than the 30 men who worked so generously with Howard Williamson.

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Reviews

Christopher Williams, Vladimir Chuprov and Julia Zubok
Youth, Risk and Russian Modernity
Ashgate 2003
ISBN 1 85521 915 8
£45.00 (hardback)
pp. 232

Howard Williamson

When we think about Russia, most of us are probably preoccupied with the millions being spent by the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich on his pet project – Chelski Football Club. Abramovich, though not mentioned by name, is one of those 'new Russians' mentioned in this book who benefited from Boris Yeltsin's mantra 'take as much freedom as you can'. The plight of most people in Russia, and particularly its young people, is light years away from such wealth and conspicuous consumption. They have been the victims of the upheavals and uncertainties throughout the 1990s, following the collapse of communism. Whichever way they have turned, risk and vulnerability stares them in the face – in ways which are difficult to contemplate from the perspectives which prevail in Western Europe, despite the apparent similarities underpinning debates about 'fractured' youth transitions and the policy challenges around employment and social inclusion.

The authors introduce this book with a thorough overview of theories of risk and the ideas of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, which have been so influential in informing contemporary social theory. They maintain, however, that the formulations of 'risk society' promulgated by these two sociological gurus have significant drawbacks. They are largely Western in scope, overgeneralised, lack differentiation about the kinds of risks to be faced by different social groups, overemphasise the state of 'post-modernity', and fail to comment on the potential differences in the nature of risk in stable and unstable societies. *Youth, Risk and Russian Modernity*, then, seeks to interrogate the impact of various forms of risk in one particular country, Russia, and on one particular social group – young people. The authors' contention is that every country 'has its own specifics which strongly influence the types of risk prevailing, the ability to adapt to risk and the types of mechanisms available for resolving risk' (p. 28). They explore these issues by reference to the wider political and historical Russian context, through comparative analysis across Europe, and by drawing substantially on their own recent empirical *Social Development of Youth* survey, published in 1997.

Though, as elsewhere, Russia may be considered a 'risk society', it faces its own distinctive challenges. On account of its particular 'historical modernisation' (post 1991), the implications of the legacy of the socialist model of public administration, what the authors call the 'post-totalitarian syndrome' (a continued passive reliance on the state), and, of course, the question of globalisation (which, in many quarters, is perceived with hostility as Americanisation). Though Russia is a rich country with vast natural resources, it has failed

to exploit this potential and opportunity in the interests of its people. Instead, it has lurched through successive economic and social crises, recurrently failed to ensure employment, wages, health and safety, and been characterised by political instability and ethnic conflict. All have given rise, in the authors' view, to a 'risk society' which is significantly different from the countries of Western Europe.

It is within such a context that young people have had to make their transitions to adulthood, to find a 'niche' or 'pathway', to 'navigate' a route or establish a 'trajectory' – drawing from the metaphors of transition first promoted by Karen Evans and Andy Furlong. For many young people in Russia, given their impoverished circumstances, this has been well nigh impossible. Their transitions have been riddled with uncertainty and marginality, the possibility of secure 'integration' has all but collapsed (because of the volatile, unregulated labour market), and the further consequence has been 'deformed and lost' identities. Russian youth suffer from anomie and alienation. They may have similar aspirations to their Western European counterparts, and face similar problems (education, jobs, housing) but the policy response has been virtually non-existent, despite a Presidential decree in 1994 which theoretically guaranteed young people 'the legal, economic and organisational conditions enabling young personal development and the right to create youth organisations, movements and initiatives' (p. 111). The reality, in contrast, is that around 30% of those aged 16-30 live below the poverty line, and it should not be surprising that they experience a sense of hopelessness and lack of control over their lives, producing a 'live for today' mentality.

Young people in Russia are at odds with their wider society on account of bearing a disproportionate burden of emergent social inequalities (their treatment in the labour market is nothing less than appalling), through no longer 'connecting' with the traditional forces of socialisation (notably family and education), and as a result of retreating into a variety of sub-cultural styles and practices. But however they may have sought to deal with 'risk' (and a typology of different risks is advanced), the probability is that this will produce yet further risk to be addressed and (somehow) 'managed'. Indeed, in seeking pathways to integration, a significant proportion of young people lean (albeit often reluctantly) towards 'delinquent innovations' within the criminal infrastructure which now permeates all echelons of Russian society. The younger generation in Russia, it is argued, has found itself at the crossroads 'between a discredited past, an unacceptable present and an uncertain future' (p. 124).

Young people everywhere face new challenges in the context of the 'risk society'. There are gains to be had, as well as losses to be borne. In Russia, however, the challenges are dramatically greater and the losses dramatically outweigh the gains – certainly collectively for young people in general, and usually individually as well. Drawing on their empirical work, the authors explore – against international comparisons – five 'risk trends' in the life situation of young people. They unravel bleak socio-demographic aspects of Russian life, and poor prospects in the labour market: indeed, 'although only 1.1% of young respondents in the West would consider working in the "black economy", 24.6 percent of their Russian counterparts... do not exclude such a possibility, no matter what the consequences are' (p.143). Opportunities for 'self-realisation' are heavily proscribed, with available work rarely corresponding to educational achievement, and there is a profound

distrust of politics. Such disenchantment extends to the inability of young people to secure any moral foothold or social reference points in the turbulence of Russian society, and the crisis of youth identities is only assuaged by reference to a mythology of the stability and calm of the Soviet past.

Youth, Risk and Russian Modernity is, without doubt, a depressing but rewarding read, for it can be perused at a number of levels. It speaks to social theory through its penetrating analysis of 'risk society'. More generally, it provides a valuable 'social history' of the past decade of Russia's development. More pertinently, for readers of this journal, it considers the social condition of young people whose aspirations and needs are qualitatively little different from young people elsewhere (though, quantitatively, of quite a different magnitude), but for whom any infrastructure of state support is virtually non-existent. As the authors note, the socio-economic plight of young people in Russia 'stems from the social and youth policy of the Russian state which is based on a desire to keep a firm distance from the social problems of youth' (p.148). As a result, the risks young people have to face are magnified, social protection is minimal, and their alienation and exclusion should therefore come as no surprise.

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Sarah Banks
Ethics, Accountability and the Social Professions
Palgrave Macmillan 2004
ISBN 0-333-75166-3
Price £16.99
PP 221

Steve Harrison

In recent years Banks has emerged as the authoritative figure concerning professional ethics in the fields of practice covering youth and community work and allied occupations. *Ethics, Accountability and the Social Professions* is the latest of a number of books by the author concentrating on the subject of professional ethics. This venture is more akin to *Ethics and Values in Social Work* where Banks is the sole author, than *Ethical Issues in Youth Work* an edited collection of essays. However, it will appeal to both audiences and beyond.

The book is essentially concerned with developments in the so called 'social professions' and the ethical implications for practice. The backdrop is one of increased managerialism and bureaucratic control contributing to what Banks refers to as the 'new accountability' in the areas where the 'social professions' operate. This study draws upon historical, sociological and philosophical frameworks for analysing the above developments. Therefore it effectively maps some major issues facing the so called professions, professionals and the field of work in general. I have to admit I was somewhat overwhelmed by the number of different forms of ethical bases identified in the work, and from the view of somebody looking for the voice of moral authority, I felt like a 'kid in a candy store' wondering which I might choose today.

This is rightly a book that will inspire more questions than provide answers. However, the range of theoretical frameworks Banks draws upon is impressive and potentially act as a route into the works of major thinkers in the field of ethical enquiry. Background knowledge of the theorists drawn upon is not essential to understanding the book but would be useful for a deeper reading of the arguments presented. Each chapter adopts a clear focus in an attempt to unravel a complex and often daunting area of study for anyone approaching it for the first time. It is in this systematic and clear approach that the book demonstrates its major strength. If the target audience is, as I would guess, undergraduate students on professional training programmes with a professional studies element and post-graduate students focussing in on particular aspects of professional development in their particular field; then it hits the spot.

The major areas of analysis contained within the book include an exploration of professional ethics as an area for study and analysis of the social professions from a historical developmental approach, a three part philosophical analysis moving toward practical application and the perspectives of practitioners. Using clear language and taking time to unpack concepts and terminology Banks has produced a text which should be recommended reading on any professional studies programme.

Another refreshing aspect of this book is the fact it has been clearly rooted in the experiences of practitioners in the field. Banks has engaged in research that gives the study a contemporary relevance and therefore an additional voice of authority. I did have some difficulties with the book however; the central categorisation of the 'social professions' and associated assumptions about client groups probably being the most significant. Whilst I note the author's recognition that the term 'has no more internal logic than other groupings' it does suggest commonality where commonality may not exist. One of the problems that has faced youth and community workers (to take one example) over the years has been their ability to; crystallise a coherent professional identity, establish their professional authority, and secure a degree of professional autonomy. This has led to some commentators referring to such occupational groups as 'semi-professions'. Now it could be said that the same is true of social workers (another occupational grouping included under the title 'the social professions') and to some degree this is true when dealing with these as very general themes.

However, the experiences of youth and community workers have largely not been shared. Social work has taken on an increasingly legal/quasi legal dimension imposed upon it which has led toward a greater emphasis on the technical expertise and specialisation which has to a great extent secured the position of social work within an often hostile social and political environment. Youth and community workers more often than not finding themselves operating largely outside of such a significant statutory mandate, have sought to carve a specialist role for themselves in the spheres of education and social work (in the broadest sense of the term). Furthermore there are arguably significant differences within the UK context particularly with the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that have lead to policy initiatives with a significantly differing ethos and emphasis to those applying to England in particular.

To borrow from Wittgenstein (who's duck rabbit makes an illuminating appearance) there

is a 'family resemblance' between the occupational areas labelled as 'social professions'. However, the resemblance is born out of a historical thread that connects them but does not constitute a shared experience particularly in the past thirty years. Therefore despite the authors appeals to treat the term lightly the inherent connection between social work and youth and community work is highly problematic (even when limited to the context of the UK in general).

A further slight irritation is the mild romanticism that appears toward the end of a book that has in the main achieved a reasonably balanced and critical approach. This I believe may have been encouraged by the historical/developmental approach adopted in the early stages of the book. The author's final comments conjuring up the notions of 'the value base' 'firm foundation' and 'solid traditions' suggest remnants of a possibly better day that may not have existed beyond an aspiration that was held and not fully realised.

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The Countryside Agency and Save the Children
Children and Domestic Violence in Rural Areas: A child-focussed assessment of a service problem
Save the Children, 2003
ISBN 1 84187 079X
£7.50

Janet Watson

I was delighted to see this publication having had a specialist interest in rural issues, being a former Chair of Nottinghamshire Interagency Domestic Violence Forum and a current Trustee, who over 15 years, has been attempting to raise public awareness on domestic violence issues and the effects on young people. The Countryside Agency is to be commended for commissioning Save the Children to undertake in 2002 this small scale, exploratory project that is the first of its kind.

It explores the nature and extent of domestic violence, support provision for children and young people living in rural areas in England, identifies examples of good practice, highlights implementation for policy, practice and improvements in the provision of domestic violence services. Up to now, there has been virtually no investigation into the issues of rurality and young people which could inform the work of the growing number of Interagency Domestic Violence Fora or Women's Refuges, struggling to improve services: the focus has very much been on the norms for urban areas. Also the direct experiences of children and young people have been largely overlooked or recounted from an adult perspective.

The methodology of the assessment is heavily centred on eliciting the views of children and young people. This in itself proved challenging as there is a culture of silence surrounding

domestic violence and a preference in small rural communities for problems to become invisible. Many young people, especially those at the extreme cases of domestic violence living in refuges, were highly vulnerable and reluctant to tell to anyone about their individual experiences and needs. The researchers noted the optimism and courage with which most children or young people coped with their situation, how highly sensitive to the needs and vulnerability of their mother or siblings they were and how they assumed a supportive and very practical domestic role.

The assessment is divided into sections relating to access and awareness of services, friends, leisure and social networks, refuge provision, housing, educational provision for children who experience domestic violence, health and welfare, 'moving on', outreach services and provision for specific issues facing teenage boys. The appendices include useful contact addresses and references that are likely to afford valuable reading for practitioners.

The Report lists implications for policies and some good practice ideas, which basically are the same as for urban areas but adapted for use in a rural context. It suggests more innovative and proactive methods to reach young people, e.g. capitalising on the growing possession of mobile phones and using telephone helplines that give the privacy and anonymity that young people prefer.

The role of school nurses, health visitors and midwives is even more significant as they are in a unique position to detect and support those who are experiencing domestic violence and are regarded with trust by their patients and clients. However, like teachers, their effectiveness may be constrained by lack of awareness or training about the specifics of domestic violence or ineffective communication procedures with other agencies.

Housing is identified as a crucial issue since according to government figures, 16 per cent of all homeless households in 2000/01 lost their homes as a consequence of domestic violence. In rural areas there is a shortage of social housing, temporary accommodation and access to support services. But moving into towns and away from existing support structures can also be traumatic for young people, especially their insertion into a new school.

The research confirmed previous findings that refuges provide an essential service for both women and children escaping domestic violence. A Women's Aid Census on 8 Feb 2000 indicated that 2,045 women and 2,745 children were living in refuge accommodation on that particular day (42 per cent of the children were under the age of 5 years). However more temporary emergency accommodation and refuge provision is needed in rural areas despite the drawbacks of less anonymity and safety. Ironically, many of the existing refuges with their precarious cashflows caused by lack of statutory funding, are unable to meet the staffing ratios and space requirements of the National Standards. Consequently there is a risk that many of the children's services will have to be closed down, which would be detrimental to the lives of both children and mothers.

Life in refuges is difficult for older young people but especially for teenage boys who are rarely admitted over the age of 16. Many are reliant on the goodwill of friends and relatives, end up in a flat on their own with limited contact with their mother and siblings, remain in the family home or face the prospect of homelessness. Refuge and health workers

commented on the need for housing prioritisation, anger management sessions and more male youth and refuge workers to work with teenage boys.

The implications of domestic violence for those with animals or pets to care for is one of the most striking aspects of the research. Very little attention has been given to the effects of having to leave behind much loved pets, especially when there is fear and a likelihood that the perpetrator will neglect or even abuse the pet. For farming families, there is an even greater problem where they are responsible for animal care and livelihoods depend on it.

Overall the assessment provides very useful information, in a very readable format, on domestic violence issues relating to children and young people as seen by them and the special problems for services presented by rural areas. It should be of interest to teachers, health workers, youth workers, the Connexions Service, social services, police, voluntary organisations, and organisations and services involved in domestic violence.

However, the recommendations for policy change and practice echo the general format of so many we have been accustomed to see over the years, relating to a range of service provision. These include the need for longer term funding for developing support services; encouragement of more joint service provision and shared facilities; better use of existing premises; more collaboration and links between services including protocols for sharing information; specific awareness training for services to detect and address cases of domestic violence; and prioritisation of needs, more innovative ways of reaching young people.

What seems to be needed is less exhortation and more action on all these fronts!

Janet Watson has been involved in youth, play and community work for 30 years.

Rachel Brett and Irma Specht
Young Soldiers: Why they Choose to Fight
Lynne Reinner Publishers
ISBN 1 58826 261 8
£12.95 (pbk)
pp 191

James Whitehead

Although it is impossible to give exact figures it is estimated that 10 per cent of all current combatants in the world are children. Such use of children is not a new phenomenon, but the 20th century has seen a steady increase in their participation driven by three major factors. First, technological developments have made small arms lighter and easier to use by children under 10 years of age. Second, proliferation has made them cheap, an AK 47 can be bought for as little as $10 in some conflict ridden areas.

Third, the more protracted a conflict the more likely children are to be 'recruited' to alleviate the shortage of adult manpower. These bald facts, however, tell us nothing of why some children become armed combatants and others do not. This fascinating, if rather disturbing book, seeks to deepen our understanding of this issue, in the hope of informing the development of more effective demobilisation and re-integration programmes. The focus is upon adolescents who describe themselves as 'volunteers'. An earlier study in Central Africa found two-thirds of child soldiers describing themselves as such and the authors attempt to define what is meant by 'voluntary' in both practical and legal terms. If volunteering means an element of choice then it is sadly lacking for many of these young people.

The authors note that the sample size for the research was small: 46 boys and only 7 girls were interviewed, the findings should therefore be treated with caution. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to canvass opinion from a wide geographical range including conflict zones in Latin America, Western and Central Africa, Central and Southern Asia and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland). Two British junior soldiers were interviewed, which provides a useful, if limited, comparison with the motivations of children in 'peacetime', and research from an earlier project, with a similar methodology, carried out by one of the authors, was incorporated into a chapter comparing the motivations of boys and girls.

Using material from the interviews (extracts from these are interspersed throughout the narrative) the authors develop an analytical framework. This divides the motivations for volunteering into three levels: environmental, the general setting or context; the specific situation of individuals which made them vulnerable to this environment; and ultimately the moment of decision, the event that triggered their 'joining up'. At each level the authors identify contributory factors. For instance, at the environmental level they consider the existence of war itself (defined as armed conflict or militarised violence), poverty, education and employment, family and friends, politics and ideology, the specific influence of adolescence and finally culture and tradition. Three things become clear. First, that these 'macrosocial' factors are repeated throughout all three levels, but operate at increasing levels of intensity as you move from the general to the specific. Second, while many of the motivations are similar for children and adults there are certain 'child-specific' elements, such as family abuse and educational opportunities. Third, the decision to 'join up' results from a confluence of events and circumstances, which are cumulative and interrelated. Like much of the social sciences it is more Chaos Theory than straightforward Newtonian cause and effect.

Having provided this framework the authors identify what they believe to be the three main factors driving adolescents to volunteer: war, family, and education and employment. They argue that other factors, while often important, are products of these three and come into play only when a 'vulnerability' is already present. It is interesting that poverty, often identified as the most common feature of child soldiers, and frequently identified as 'the cause of child soldiering', falls into this latter category. Without wishing to state the obvious, the authors believe the existence of War to be the most significant factor, both as a cause in itself, creating an environment where violence is commonplace, but also as the source of other factors: increasing poverty, exacerbating social tensions, closing schools and rupturing families. Furthermore it provides an opportunity for young people to escape their circumstances. In other words war has a 'multiplier effect'.

The family, despite being recognised as a major factor in the development of young people in 'normal environments', has received little attention in regard to the motivation of child soldiers. On the one hand the family may encourage enlistment, because other family members are involved or out of ideological conviction. On the other hand children may have no choice, as the senior surviving family member being forced to join up in order to provide for what remains of their family. Alternatively they may join to escape an abusive or exploitative family environment. Among the sample this was the most significant factor for girls.

The third crucial element is education and employment i.e. the means of economic livelihood. As the authors observe:

> *The young person who is in an educational setting and making satisfactory progress, with the prospect of being able to make a living afterwards, or who has already left school and is economically self-sufficient, will require strong incentives to leave to join the armed forces or an armed group.*

That said, the school or teachers can be a direct factor in motivating young people to join an armed struggle, for example the minority of *madrassahs* (private Islamic schools) in Pakistan, which encourage pupils to join armed struggles in defence of Islam.

Given this range of factors and motivators it should come as no surprise that dealing with the issues of child soldiering is inextricably linked with wider efforts to promote development and resolve conflicts. The central issue, relating to child soldiers, is identifying those elements that lead them to 'volunteer', a 'choice', which for many, is simply one of survival. This book goes a long way in helping us to understand that.

James Whitehead is a serving British Army officer in the Educational and Training Services Branch.

B. Fawcett, B. Featherzstone and J. Goddard
Contemporary Child Care Policy and Practice
Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
ISBN 0-333-97379-8
£16.99 (pbk)
pp 188

David Barrett

What an agreeable read – although I suspect the authors would like a more discerning start to the review than that. The book sets out with a very ambitious agenda that it struggles to cover in its 165 pages of text. The authors, within their own commentary, outline some of the significant policy initiatives between 1998 and 2003 relating to children. Additionally, in view of the different policy fields discussed, the age range is extensive, from pre-birth up to 21 years.

Although the book sets out to explore particular policy areas in some depth and to consider the practice implications (see Chapters 2 and 3 – Thinking About Children Today and Family Policy) they further consider important theoretical developments. For example Chapter 3 provides an overview of family policy as contested by Conservatives and New Labour with particular emphasis upon the New Labour approach to targeted initiatives and a change from protecting people from the market to placing them within it.

The following group of chapters (4-9) moves the reader through a series of specific policy arenas. They are designed to outline recent developments and attempt to convey how these can be understood including the implications for child welfare practices. Chapter 4 – Child Abuse and Child Welfare – examines the influence of the Children Act, 1989, and the subsequent legislation such as the Protection of Children Act 1999. The authors note that although the Labour government has been largely content with the 1989 Act it has also refocused in terms of policy priorities. For example, they argue that the present government now prioritises tackling poverty and criminality as forms of abuse above those actions/ inactions by adults and parents.

'Looked after children' are the subject of Chapter 5. The 1997-2001 Labour administration made a number of significant changes that made this group of children highly visible. The authors argue that the government was responding to evidence of failure at several levels in policy and practice. Those had implications for failing to protect these children from further abuse and in such areas as education performance. The two key initiatives Quality Protects and Children Leaving Care Act 2000 are placed centrally by the authors to this discussion.

Chapter 6 Youth Justices considers youth justice policy – it was politically centre stage in the late 1990s. The authors consider the main ingredients of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, including its politically loaded language such as Anti-social Behaviour Orders and curfews. Later they (along with many others) struggle with the government's performance evidence in this area of social policy and note 'It is possible that Labour's approach, imaginative as it is in some ways, will eventually undermine its early achievements by over-use of a puniive strategy that stores up long-term re-offending' (p. 113).

Disabled Children and Young People (Chapter 7), Children, Young People and Mental Health (Chapter 8) and Children as Carers (Chapter 9) are all welcome innovations. Each of these three areas are all too rarely given their own space, analysis and comment so this is a strong positive for the book and these chapters will be particularly welcomed by students. Equally positively the book is written in clear language, is well laid out and gives some good critical analysis. I found the discussion sections at the end of some chapters particularly useful. The reference section is excellent, comprising 16 pages, and there is a good index too.

For me some key features were absent, this is probably more to do with editorial decisions than omission. For example the book did appear a little short and thus a chapter on physical health or more on the EU context of child protection in an increasingly transient Europe may have been helpful. The landmark Stephen Lawrence case, could have received a higher profile and the potential implications of the long awaited Sexual Offences Review could also have received attention too.

The book, however, remains well researched containing effective analysis which will be required reading for a number of trainee professionals. The material has the potential to be expanded to a full 'Reader' style publication. I encourage the authors to follow that suggestion if they have not already started to rise to such a heady challenge.

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Ellie Lee, Steve Clements, Roger Ingham and Nicole Stone
A Matter of Choice? Explaining national variation in teenage abortion and motherhood
Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004
ISBN 1 85935 181 6
£14.95 (pbk)
pp 68

Elizabeth Burtney and Mary Duffy (eds)
Young People and Sexual Health: individual, social and policy contexts
Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
ISBN 0 333 99357 8
£17.99 (pbk)
pp 256

Margaret Melrose

These are both timely publications having arrived on my desk for review in a week in which the press was reporting an alarming rise in the rate of sexually transmitted infections amongst the young and the government issued new guidelines to GPs in relation to teenage abortion. Both make an important contribution to furthering our understanding of young people's sexual health and sexual behaviour. *A Matter of Choice* is based on a national study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and seeks to explain 'national variation in teenage abortion and motherhood' for young women aged 17 and younger. It combines statistical analysis with qualitative data gathered through interviews with young women, community elders and a survey of GPs. In it we learn of a correlation between deprivation and early motherhood. In affluent areas, teenage motherhood is less common than in more deprived areas and abortion rates amongst teenagers tend to be higher amongst young people living in affluent areas. The authors' evidence suggests that the decision to terminate a pregnancy or not is influenced by 'socio-economic circumstances, family and community views and availability of services' (p.48). Generally, it seems that young women's decisions about whether to terminate or continue with a pregnancy are made after the young woman discovers she is pregnant but before she has seen a health professional.

The text also informs us that there are disparities in terms of access to abortion services in different parts of the country and that available services vary in quality. The authors recommend that abortion be de-stigmatised and suggest that this might be achieved through discussion in school-based sex relationship education. The authors also recommend

provision of better access to family planning and sexual health services, better access to abortion through existing GP services. They also suggest that there should be availability of both NHS and independent sector provision. The work finds that abortion services need to improve on a range of issues but especially in relation to 'second trimester procedures' and in terms of 'sympathetic and caring treatment at consultation and procedure' which takes into account the needs of young women undergoing abortion.

Young People and Sexual Health has a broadly comparative focus on young people and sexual health from a variety of perspectives. The 'core' of the book is 'an examination of the various layers of the influence on the sexual lives of young people' (p. xvi). The book is structured into four parts. The first section explores sexuality and sexual health in context and the chapters here discuss the broader factors shaping young people's sexuality and sexual behaviour. The protracted nature of adolescence is addressed and within this context it is suggested that 'risk taking is often associated with autonomy' and that sexual activity is used as a means to find answers 'to problems about identity' (p.12). We are reminded that young people themselves do not see sexual activity as problematic and that health promotion material that ignores this fact is likely to be unhelpful.

The second section explores international and UK policy contexts with chapters examining policy developments in the UK, sexual health policies and trends in Europe as well as a comparison of trends in Australia, New Zealand and USA. The chapter on Europe compares trends in the Netherlands and Finland where both countries offer similar success stories in terms of sexual health promotion amongst young people. The comparison of trends in Australia, New Zealand and USA suggests that a more liberal climate appears to offer the greatest protection to young people.

Part three of the text considers groups who may require additional support, such as young people who are looked after, young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual, young people from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities and young people with learning disabilities. This section acknowledges inequalities in sexual health outcomes that are related to socio-economic position, ethnicity, age, sexuality and other factors such as being looked after. We are informed that young people who are looked after are more likely than their peers to experience early pregnancy and Corlyon's chapter suggests that Local Authorities might address this issue by providing greater consistency of carers and by paying greater attention to the emotional needs of these young people. She also suggests that if these young people were provided with more information about relationships, contraception and pregnancy this might reduce the risk of unintended conceptions amongst this group.

The chapter on lesbian, gay and bisexual young people suggests that homophobia and heterosexism make such young people reluctant to seek help and/or that services provided do not cater appropriately for the needs of these groups. The chapter on young people from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities advocates sensitivity to the needs of these young people while a chapter on boys considers the social context in which they learn to be men and the implications this has for sexual health promotion and their sexual health.

The final section of the book addresses the issue of how young people learn about sexuality and considers the influence of the media, parents, schools and peers. The discussion

suggests that young people receive a number of mixed messages resulting in confusion about sexuality and appropriate sexual behaviour. Both these texts make an important contribution to this very topical field of debate and practice. Unfortunately, the pages at the beginning of *Young People and Sexual Health* began to fall out before I reached the end of the text!

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Mae Shaw
Community Work: Policy, politics and practice
Working Papers in Social Sciences and Policy, The University of Hull, 2004
ISBN 1 903704 17 0
£7 (plus £1 p and p), £4 (plus £1 p and p) to community groups and students.
pp 50

John Holmes

This A4 booklet draws on the admirable work being undertaken at the University of Edinburgh's Community Education Department around the concept of community and community work. It contains four chapters

1. The theoretical problem of 'community'
2. Community and community work: historical antecedents
3. Community work and state: an ambivalent relationship
4. Community work today: the politics of practice

Plus a conclusion and an interesting appendix in which five respondents 'who have been at the cutting edge of community work since the 1960s' (Gary Craig, Marjorie Mayo, Chris Miller, Keith Popple, Marilyn Taylor) give answers to 5 key questions about the relationship between community work policy, politics and practice. These five, as well as Mae Shaw, are all university academics and this is reflected in the content of this working paper.

The paper's main strength lies in its informed updating of the long established debate about the contradictions faced by community workers who have to deal with top down policy from the state (which is also often the source of their funding) whilst also acting in the interests of the communities in which they work. The main theme is that despite a government climate that supports community work in a variety of forms, the role of the community worker remains a difficult one in terms of 'creating, sustaining or, where necessary, defending the creative "spaces" in which people can assert, celebrate or contest their "place"' (p.36).

The contested nature of community work is rooted in the diverse and often contradictory theoretical meanings given to 'community'. Shaw traces the roots of the word community from its fourteenth century origins in the English language through to the opposing positions of the individualist liberal and communitarian traditions. The view of community as value and as an ideal opens up the potential for feminist and other critiques of the

limited nature of community as well as that communities have boundaries that exclude some whilst giving a sense of belonging to others. The historical origins of community work, in a critique of charity, is analysed clearly through both the settlements and colonial community development. These are primarily seen as 'benevolent paternalism' and contrasted with 'bottom up' autonomous collective action. The uneasy relationship with community work is analysed as the State increases its involvement with welfare, through to the radical critique with the CDPs in the late 1960s that community development was expected to regulate and manage the poor rather than challenge poverty and inequality. Shaw argues that with the shift to 'marketisation, managerialism, and governance', characteristic of both the New Right and New Labour community development has come to have a more central role. The traditional resistance of community work to being an agency of the State can now be co-opted as a role model of the new consumer culture in the public as well as private sectors. Community work principles such as empowerment, self help, participation and partnership come to be used as key components of attacking a 'dependency culture' seen to be created by an overly dominant state. However if this occurs to simply reinforce the legitimacy of a state that accepts continuing power, economic and social inequalities, then the democratic principles of community work have been lost.

The fourth chapter relies heavily on theoretical perspectives. Shaw argues that instrumental rationality can be linked with seemingly objective professional approaches but this 'proscribes intellectual engagement with social purpose'. There is clearly a danger that community workers will be incorporated into the new broader state enterprise and that they will become operatives or technicians unable to see the wider political purpose. This is strongly reinforced, as Gary Craig points out, by government funding which results in 'an employment base that is fragmented, short-term and insecure'. What is insufficiently recognised by Shaw is the extent to which community work is often its own worst enemy. She does recognise that the old mantra of 'a good community worker should be working themselves out of a job' is an untenably neutral position that only sees power in terms of passing on their knowledge and skills. This is, in my view, part of a wider problem of resisting professional status as inappropriate to this area of work that has done as much to weaken community work as any state machinations to incorporate and emasculate. Professional status does not have to be separate from political organising and if training inspires and politicises full-time workers they should take a lead in promoting the work. This does not necessarily mean that this separates them from the local volunteers and part-timers.

My concern with this working paper is that it does not deal with the practice responses to the important tensions and contradictions it identifies in community work. Policy is defined at the grand thematic level rather than looking at how the specific policies of neighbourhood renewal are working at the local level. Whilst it is valuable to hear from the leading academics it would have been equally valuable to hear from practitioners in how they were dealing with the contradictions identified. There does appear to be a gulf between the highly erudite and valuable theoretical debate represented by this working paper and the functional skills analysis some community workers embrace in the name of anti-professionalisation. Unless this divide can be bridged it would appear that community work will continue to weaken itself at just the time it needs collective unity.

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R. Burnett and C. Appleton
Joined-up Youth Justice: Tackling youth crime in partnership
Russell House Publishing, 2004
ISBN: 1-903855-32-2

Jonathan Roberts

This book presents some of the first research conducted in England and Wales into the efficacy of partnership working combined with a review of Youth Offending Team (YOT) systems, current legislation, ranges of disposals and Youth Justice Board (YJB) performance measures. Its main strength lies in the clear explanations of the rationale behind the introduction of YOT's and the range of interventions and specialist roles undertaken by this multi-agency service, which would be of great benefit to practitioners new to the YOT or working in partner organisations. Chapter 2 offers a concise summary of the key legislative developments relating to state intercession with children and young people who offend, since the turn of the twentieth century. It offers a basic insight into New Labour policy with an appraisal of the white paper *No More Excuses* and the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act amongst the legislation laid out for consideration.

Findings from qualitative research conducted in the Oxfordshire YOT with partners, managers and practitioners are detailed in Chapter 3. It emphasises the requirement of setting up a framework, building relationships with relevant partners and establishing strong clear leadership. A clear message from the interviews is the importance of identification, acknowledgement and planning around shared and competing agendas, with joint understanding of the need to set boundaries and accountability – crucial in the successful development of the partnership in its embryonic form.

Chapter 4 enters the domain of practice within the YOT environment with key evidence of the tension between welfare versus prevention in the area of youth justice. The rapid pace of change engendered by YJB initiatives has, this chapter demonstrates, created structural difficulties and practitioner resistance. Thought is given to the generic nature of core YOT work – assessments, court duty, pre-sentence reports – and the difficulty in releasing staff to develop specialist work given the pressure to manage work at a removed level with cohorts of young offenders. In this area practitioner comments are consistent with my own experiences of interacting with colleagues whilst working as a member of a YOT.

Chapters 5 and 6 cover the staple work of the YOT and give the reader a succinct, if limited, overview of pre-court and post-court interventions and the range of preventative work with young people perceived to be at risk. It gives a précis of the orders available to the court and an interesting insight into the views of magistrates; those interviewed believed they did not have enough discretion in sentencing. There is no doubt the time from arrest to sentence has been cut dramatically, but while this is welcomed by most, it puts pressure on the YOT to process cases quickly.

Chapter 7 offers an evaluation of the range of programmes and interventions available to practitioners in Oxfordshire covering the key risk factors associated with offending behaviour. Many of the learning points offer salutary advice for those setting-up such programmes. The benefits of ring fencing places for YOT young people in projects accepting

multi-agency referrals, generic work that potentially deskills specialist workers and tangible outcomes that transfer from strategic to operational implementation – these are only some of the issues outlined that support the development of more effective practice. Whilst many of the programmes and interventions have their roots in earlier work carried out before the implementation of the YOT, some thought had been given to producing 'state of the art' projects with a view to meeting young people's identified needs. However, many practitioners currently working in YOTs will identify with the use of projects to manage the sheer number of young people on orders and the uncertain boundaries. As a consequence, new gaps in provision have emerged, where thresholds for access to services are contested amongst YOT practitioners and partner agencies.

Chapter 8 explores the thorny issue of custodial sentencing for young offenders and examines the Detention and Training Order (DTO), the latest attempt to reduce the use of custody. As the YOT is mainly responsible for implementing the second part of the two-stage order, the Oxfordshire YOT sensibly seconded staff to the local YOT but this may not be a viable option elsewhere due to resource issues. This 'detached' team helped fuse delivery although it was admitted that the DTO in its current form is very labour-intensive and stretches resources. The Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme (ISSP) is assessed and, although the primary function was not to reduce the use of custody, it appears to have been used not only for the persistent young offenders, it was aimed at, but as an alternative to the DTO for less serious offenders as it avoids custody.

An attempt to gauge achievements by measuring outcomes and examining the effectiveness of implementation is made in Chapter 9. Measuring outcomes in this area is notoriously difficult and to the non-specialist, probably the only acceptable measure is a reconviction study, which in this case indicates a sizeable and encouraging reduction in reconviction of some 16 per cent. As the authors clearly state, a reconviction study does not uncover the rate of re-offending, which is probably much higher and could be affected by a range of variables. Some practitioners still believe that the system is punitive as it detects crime and punishes the individual and is not as 'cutting-edge' as it first appears. Mediation, for example, is an innovative approach but used too infrequently and is not always effective, as only careful management will produce a good outcome for both offenders and victims. Restorative justice and reparation is seen as 'encouraging' and would seem to encapsulate the YJB ethos. It is believed that more time is needed to reinforce parental responsibility and an inordinate amount of time is spent dealing with 'social work' issues rather than implementing youth justice interventions. Government targets are seen as unhelpful and largely unattainable.

Chapter 10 is an ambitious attempt to create a 'model' for others to follow. It is ambitious because the research covers only a single YOT and problems can vary regionally despite a national strategy being established. However, it is not to be discounted and in keeping with the rest of the book, should provide a good, sensible framework for new managers and practitioners that can be adapted to local needs. It is simply written, with 'learning points' giving good guidance as to how to develop and maintain a multi-agency partnership.

Overall, this book gives a plethora of factual information, almost all of which is very useful. It espouses cautious enthusiasm regarding New Labour's approach to youth justice, despite

many conceptual and theoretical concerns. However, this book is very much about practice, it explores many issues that are fundamental to the working of YOTs. It gives sound, practical advice as to how to develop the relatively-new but effective multi-agency approach to youth justice, the very cornerstone of New Labour's 'joined-up' approach to service delivery.

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Neil Thompson
Group Care With Children and Young People
Russell House Publishing, 2004
ISBN 1 903855 41 1
£14.95
pp 112

Heather Smith

Thompson acknowledges that group care with children and young people is a difficult and demanding job and, rather refreshingly, that he doesn't have all the answers. He sets out that the premise of his book is to provide 'a significant proportion of the basic knowledge you need to do your job effectively' (p. xii). He explains that he will closely integrate theory and practice and suggests that within our own development as practitioners we should pay attention to Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

A significant amount of attention within the first chapter is paid to the history of group care identifying key figures such as Thomas Coram and Dr Barnado. Thompson explores how Barnado's philosophy of hope went against much of the dominant thinking within society at that time. Instead of seeing children as 'lost causes' he looked at the idea that it was their upbringing that influenced their behaviour and personality rather than fixed characteristics, and that with the right influences and environment each child could become a respected member of the community. This is a philosophy that has 'underpinned residential child care practice for over 130 years' (p. 2). Thompson also goes on to explore the development of the welfare state and current frameworks such as the Children and Care Standards Acts alongside the value bases from which we work. This exploration is useful as it sets the context for further discussion throughout the book.

Throughout, key issues from working within group care are picked up, for example care planning. Thompson acknowledges that for a child or young person to have a successful experience of group care, care plans are essential, with emphasis on the need for partnership between all the agencies and importantly the child or young person involved. With so many different professionals often being involved, without carefully considered planning the child or young person could be let down and find his or herself lost in the system. Assessment approaches such as the Aldgate ecological approach of the interaction between humans and their environment are explored, alongside different care planning

processes and frameworks. All of this is useful, because as a practitioner it raises awareness of ways of working within the assessment and care planning systems.

One of the more complex subjects Thompson discusses is that of abuse. The chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the issues involved. He usefully breaks down the categories of abuse highlighting the less publicised ones of institutional and social abuse. It serves to raise awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse as well as vulnerability factors that may lead to abuse taking place. His writing is not about causing panic amongst practitioners but advocating that we should try to find the middle ground between being oversensitive and not sensitive enough. He also acknowledges that disclosure of abuse will cause our own feelings around the subject to surface and that it is necessary for us to deal with them in a safe way that will not affect the work being done with the child or young person. What is key within the way Thompson explores this issue is that he encourages a balanced approach and working closely with professionally trained and experienced practitioners.

Thompson also explores more specialised areas within group care such as working with children with disabilities and those with challenging behaviour. He offers practical ways of working as well as theoretical notions within each subject. Time management and coping skills that we employ as practitioners are the focus towards the end of the book. A strength of the book is that Thompson pays attention to how we as practitioners work within a difficult area and look after ourselves alongside the difficulties and issues that the children and young people may be facing.

The text is a complimentary mixture of theory and practice. Throughout Thompson uses exercises in the form of questions to encourage the reader to reflect on what they have learnt, how this fits in with their practice and how they may develop. He explores theory in sufficient depth allowing readers to understand the basic concept, but he also attaches to each chapter a 'further reading' list, which gives scope for the readers to research ideas and areas they are interested in. Thompson finishes each chapter with a conclusion, which allows the reader to draw their thoughts to a natural ending before moving onto the next chapter; it also allows for quick reference when re-reading the material.

In general his style is very accessible and this makes the book available to practitioners with a variety of experience, knowledge and practice settings. I have worked in a residential group care setting and have seen many examples of good and bad practice, and although what Thompson is offering is not new material it is material that essentially re-visits the basics of good practice. This gives an opportunity for experienced practitioners to re-focus and for new practitioners to begin defining their style of practice.

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Joel Spring
Educating the Consumer-Citizen: A History of the Marriage of Schools, Advertising, and Media
Lawrence Erlebaum Associates
ISBN 0-8058-4273-X
£13.40 (pbk)
pp. 254

Mike Males

Admirably, New School University media scholar Joel Spring avoids the rhetorical excesses of standard American commentary on advertising effects on youth. Unlike Johns Hopkins University's Mark Crispin Miller, Spring does not argue that ads provoke teen drug abuse, suicide, and mayhem. Nor is he breathlessly puritanical, like the Media Education Foundation's Jean Kilbourne, who paints images of Madison Avenue-seduced children defying parents' healthy values, indulging skyrocketing drunkenness, promiscuity, and self-destruction, and forfeiting their youthful 'passion and idealism' to corporate wiles.

The uncomfortable reality American media critics fail to confront is that advertising seeks to influence youths to act like their parents, not defy them. American adults spend some 5 trillion $US per year on consumer items, yet it is the $150 billion teenagers spend annually (and most of that on family, not personal, purchases) that spawns perpetual panic. From conservative moral huckster William Bennett to leftist corporate critic Ralph Nader, virtuists' obsession with corporate advertising's seduction of the innocent crowds out far more pressing childhood dangers, such as poverty, violent and chaotic homes, crumbling schools, and fiscal abandonment of the younger generation by a wealthy, ageing America that seems to resent not having even more money to spend on itself.

Spring's historical analysis calmly charts America's 'consumer culture' ideology that generates 'consumer citizens' who accept 'any political situation so long as there is an abundance of consumer goods'. Driving consumer culture's advertising barrage was William Graham Sumner's doctrine that 'the irrational desires of hunger, vanity, fear, and sexuality determined human action'. Rather than dispensing factual product information, marketers sell by hyping and exploiting consumers' personal dissatisfactions as reflected in stylishness or perceived deficiencies thereof.

Beyond profit motive, 'consumerism was able to absorb social justice issues and turn them into marketing opportunities', from the promotion of convenience foods and appliances to free the housewife from housebound drudgery to patriotic images of 'greater freedom through consumption' suggesting new manly and womanly roles. Even the civil rights movement's economic goals 'were primarily to gain full participation of all groups in consumer culture', materialistic aspirations supported by sellers to enlarge markets and propel the American economy to global superiority.

If consumer ideology has infiltrated every human aspiration, it must greatly affect youth. Spring traces the alliance of educators, marketers, and mass media (the latter two embodied in *Seventeen* magazine, founded in 1943) to create a distinct teenage consumerism

founded in products tailored to adolescent rituals: dating, proms, the emerging 'youth culture' generated by high schools. Was, then, the 'national teenage culture' that erupted from the 1950s on 'a result of advertising?' Yes, Spring concludes: 'Teenage identity centers on brand names and icons' in an 'unabashed consumerism that unifies youth' around the world. 'Children' are 'seduced' and 'lured' into commodified lifestyles by marketing schemes, including sex education, *Sesame Street*, school-based advertising, theme parks, branded social programs, and icon-packed entertainment.

Spring documents efforts by Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Taco Bell, Eli Lilly, Pizza Hut, Colonel Sanders, and other firms to sponsor school programmes and educational materials, noting that marketers strive to 'implant brand names in children to establish adult preferences'. This is another common, curiously unexamined statement. If adults are still buying at age 50 the same brands they initiated at 15, does this mean teenagers make spectacularly good consumer choices? Or is there something drastically wrong with the adult brain's ability to update its product needs?

Are teens the manipulated, or manipulees? In his detailed history of consumerism, it is curious that Spring omits such a crucial figure as Eugene Gilbert, the teenage father of teen marketing. In 1944, by age 18, Gilbert had hatched every important feature of modern marketing to youths. Teens, he said, would respond to retailers who supplied what they wanted; the best way to find out what teens wanted was to have their peers ask them; prominent youths could be recruited to model and popularise products. Commissioned by corporate clients, Gilbert's 5,000 teenage pollsters conducted surveys and focus groups in the 1950s that advised marketers and Gilbert's weekly column, 'What Young People Are Thinking', syndicated in 300 newspapers. Gilbert's techniques survive intact in today's youth-marketing strategies, as documented in Alyssa Quart's *Branded* (2003).

Gilbert and marketers viewed teens very differently than the helpless corporate stooges lamented by Spring, Quart, Nader, Kilbourne, Miller, and other anti-corporate savers of the charge-card children. Gilbert and his public relations disciples reaped bundles by enshrining teens as willing manipulators of willing producers. Far from dictating fashion to kids, marketers spend millions spying on savvy youths, querying potential trendsetters, and nervously floating, withdrawing, and modifying products to suit ever shifting youthful tastes. Today's teens 'may force marketers to toss their old tricks', *Business Week* (15 February 1999) snivels: '...Marketers who don't bother to learn the interests and obsessions of Gen Y are apt to run up against a brick wall of distrust and cynicism ... Companies hoping to win their hearts and wallets will have to learn to think like they do'.

Spring's intriguing history of consumer culture is oddly truncated. It retreats into anecdotal clichés and ends abruptly just when analysis of the emergence of today's more sophisticated young consumers, evolving teen resistance to advertising, and increasingly fragmented youth markets that defy any notion of a 'global teen culture' would have yielded powerful insights. While adult culture critics naturally are horrified at the invasion of product promotions into every cranny of American life and presume mass marketing must exert vast seductive power over youngsters, modern youth who grew up amidst the advertising hullabaloo appear to be adapting to it without instigating civilization's demise.

American grownups, eager to panic over every condition of their teenagers except those representing genuine menaces, will not find in Spring's big-picture history the kind of satisfying alarmism culture critics typically deliver. If only Spring had analyzed consumer culture's present as he did its history – admittedly, a tall order – *Educating the Consumer Citizen* might have prepared us for the next generation's Eugene Gilbert.

Reference

Quart, A. (2003) *Branded*, New York: Perseus Books.

Mike Males, Sociology Department University of California, Santa Cruz.

Jean Carabine (ed)
Sexualities: Personal Lives and Social Policy
Open University Press, 2004
ISBN: 1861345186
176 pages

Yvette Taylor

This edited collection provides a thorough exploration of sexuality and social policy. It convincingly demonstrates, through a range of historical and contemporary examples, the many ways in which 'private' lives are never just that but are instead subject to and constituted by a range of often competing, contested and contradictory discourses: discourses which have meanings and consequences for individual and personal lives. A positive feature of this text is the ability of the contributors to illustrate, using the work of Foucault, the effects of the discursive on sexual lives, from what is seen to constitute proper sex, to who is eligible for citizenship rights via its constructed, yet imperfect and never easily achieved, practice. All authors succeed in combining and making apparent the material and institutional components of discourses – and indeed the material elements and effects of social policy discourses as they are implemented and contested. The authors assert the inevitable interaction between social policy and personal lives, combining a concern with the functioning of social policy at the governmental level, with the meanings such procedures have for those who variously occupy the sexual categories created, affirmed and denied.

In many ways the theoretical ground covered in *Sexualities: Personal Lives and Social Policy* represents familiar arguments, nonetheless the collection contains many views worthy of asserting again, especially when vividly demonstrated with fresh empirical evidence. It is also important to do so, when, as the authors suggest, there is an evident marginalisation of sexuality within the academic discipline of social policy and when the practice of social policy simultaneously makes explicit and yet hides its own sexual agenda; the regulation of private and public spaces. I feel this text is therefore invaluable to both teachers and students alike, across the disciplines of sociology and social policy, as it highlights contested and perhaps unfamiliar terms, such as heteronormativity discourse, 'logic of practice', self-surveillance, in

bold and offers clear definitions and examples. Each chapter succeeds in vividly demonstrating its respective focus and all offer a range of statistics and illustrations, present in official governmental and activist documentation which seek to establish, problematise, contest and re-define sexuality. The book is enjoyable to read, broken up as it is with apt illustration and concrete examples. After every theoretical concept has been introduced the reader is invited to undertake a small activity, enabling critical reflection on topics introduced. I certainly deployed some of these very strategies and examples when teaching sociology seminars on sexuality and expect that it could be widely used in a similar fashion, especially given its extensive list of further resources and reading materials. In order to demonstrate its broad applicability I will outline the main structure of *Sexualities*, before concentrating on two chapters, the first on young people and sexuality and the second on the regulation of disabled bodies, the inclusion of which I found to be particularly insightful and refreshing.

The first chapter by Carabine introduces the significance of sexuality to our personal lives and to how social policy is constituted, analysed and practiced through heteronormative processes. She contests the idea of an essential fixed sexuality and instead demonstrates the inevitably socially constructed and mutually constitutive nature of sexuality and social policy. In Chapter 2 Sexuality, Parenthood and Population: Explaining Fertility Decline in Britain from the 1860s to 1920 by Megan Doolittle, the reader is able to benefit from the variation made apparent in historical approaches, as notions of sexuality, parenthood, the personal and indeed social policy vary throughout time. As this chapter makes clear these vary in their applicability across gender, class and location. It would, perhaps, have been useful to extend this class analysis into the chapters dealing with more contemporary concerns as I did feel this, at times, had been relegated to the 'past'. Nonetheless, there are inevitable omissions in such edited collections and I think in this case, the authors more than meet their objectives and do include material which is often excluded.

Rachel Thomson, in Chapter 3 Sexuality and Young People: Policies, Practices and Identities situates young people within wider discussions of sexuality and social change. Examining changing ideas of child abuse, the problematisation and regulation of teenage sexuality and conflicts around sex education, made apparent in the debates around the repeal of Section 28. Images from the US national campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy are given as examples of approaches which connect teenage pregnancy with social exclusion – teenage bodies written over with the words 'useless', 'dirty', 'nobody'. Thomson suggests that while previous debate in the UK centred around the boundaries of authority between the state, professionals and the family, now new terms dominate the agenda captured in the concept of 'social exclusion', which brings with it governmental effectiveness targets.

In Chapter 4 Silencing Sexuality: The Regulation of the Disabled Body, Margrit Shildrick extends the field of sexuality and disability, challenging unquestioned attitudes and uncovering material processes and policies that organise all our lives, whether we are 'able bodied' or 'disabled', bringing in the physicality of the body into social policy analysis. She charts the movement from the traditional medical model of disability to the social model of disability, confronting the simple split between 'us' and 'them' and the widespread use of the reductive term 'the disabled'. As well as charting how social policy currently does effect the lives of people with disabilities, including access to education and employment, she also indicates potentially emerging social policy issues, apparent in the example of facilitated sex.

The book ends with a return to the central themes, highlighting the many ways that social policy restricts and regulates sexual lives, as well as providing opportunities to contest and transform them both. From beginning to end, I found this book engaging and informative, with much to offer both new and more experienced readers and I would thoroughly recommend it.

Yvette Taylor, University of Sunderland.

David Crimmens, Fiona Factor, Tony Jeffs, John Pitts, Carole Pugh, Jean Spence and Penelope Turner

Reaching socially excluded young people: A national study of street-based youth work

Joseph Rowntree Trust and The National Youth Agency, 2004
ISBN 0 861553101
£15.99
pp 88

Bren Cook

It is rare for a book, especially an exposition of nationwide research into a relatively narrowly defined aspect of a small profession, to accurately describe a *zeitgeist* like this one does. *Reaching Socially Excluded Young People* is an ambitious piece of research that covers England and Wales. The research team of Crimmens, Factor, Jeffs, Pitts, Pugh, Spence and Turner invited over 1500 projects to take part. They got a final response of 564 projects, which at a little under 45%, is not a bad return. Like *Pop Idol* the detailed volunteers were whittled down to a sample of 30 projects. Definitely unlike the 'talent show' this endeavor has been fruitful and the result is this highly descriptive report rooted in reality as seen from a practitioner's eye view.

The book is a slim volume in an A4 format that is divided into two main sections. The first of these comprises chapters 1,2,3 and 4 and takes the reader through the detail of the study and describes the context of street based youth work. Each chapter is headed by a short case study, everyone of which is fascinating and illustrative. This first 'half' of the study details the national picture, what street based work is about, its aims and methodology, the organisational and funding context. It describes the young people that street based work reaches and what some of their issues are. There is a very useful run through the history of detached and outreach work that takes in the recent policy cascade from the present government. The text is usefully punctuated by pie-charts and other graphs that clearly represent some of the relevant data from the study. There is a particularly interesting sub-section looking at the management of street based work that succinctly lays out the logistical difficulties behind the current management and resourcing climate.

The issues arising from the study form the second section of the book and the work of unpacking the study continues. Chapter 5 discusses the re-configured field of street based youth work. We are taken into the universal versus targeted debate as well as a very helpful peek at the emancipatory versus correctional continuum. If this isn't a relevant area to

explore for the whole of youth work I don't know what is.

The following three chapters look at sustaining, accountability, monitoring, evaluating the work plus exploring the issues around training for the workers.

The study ends with conclusions and implications for policy and practice. These are grouped into the following areas:

- The geographical distribution of provision;
- The funding lottery;
- Staffing street-based youth work;
- The limits of prescription;
- Monitoring, evaluation and inspection;
- Education employment and training- working with Connexions;
- On and off the streets;
- The duration of intervention with high need/risk young people.

It is in the conclusion that I found a phrase which describes a dynamic the government would do well to heed as it drafts the Green Paper *The Integrated Youth Offer*, when the writers state:

> *It is ironic that the commendable efforts of policy makers to channel unparalleled resources towards work with socially excluded young people are sometimes subverted by the very mechanisms put in place to achieve this objective. It is not that street-based youth work wishes to be unaccountable, but the current modes of accountability are sometimes stifling the only service 'delivering the goods' in this notoriously difficult area of social intervention.*

Apart from being a very good piece of research this study succinctly explains how it actually is in the field of contemporary youth work. It manages to capture the state we are in and the cul de sacs we have gone down in the pursuit of funding. Instead of real sustained budgets this study illustrates how the use of recycled money doled out by string pulling bureaucrats has undermined the services. How have we got in this state?

I'm not too convinced about the language of the 'socially excluded'. I would argue that the young people that are 'hard to reach' are institutionally excluded and have a thriving society of their own. May be it's the burgeoning 'youth in crisis' industry that needs some attention and how young people can become partners not customers or clients in increasingly alienating institutions. Saying all that however, this study shows up that very industry for what it is turning into. I hope the folk putting together the Green Paper make the effort to read this book as it clearly raises profound questions and would place in front of them an astounding fact that the research unearthed. Research that shows that despite the short-termism, the pathologising and stigmatising agendas, the staffing meltdown, intra-sectoral competition, lack of training, etc. a relationship of unconditional positive regard between an adult human and a young human is a fruitful one for us all.

Bren Cook, is the Acting District Team Manager for Lanacashire Youth and Community Service in Preston.*

D. Crimmens and P. West (eds)
Having Their Say Young People and Participation: European experiences
Russell House Publishing, 2004
ISBN 1-898924-78-3
£10 (pbk)
pp150

Sue Robertson

This book looks at youth participation from the perspective of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The contributors examine how different European countries have attempted to fulfill their obligations under it, focusing on the development of state policies for children's participation. There are articles on Germany, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and Slovenia. However, although West briefly discusses European work on promoting children's rights (p.9) it is not made clear why these particular countries were selected, or indeed why there are notable absences – France and Spain for example. Also the terms children and 'young people' are used interchangeably by different contributors and it is not clear how the authors are defining these terms. While brief references are made to young people's involvement in the political scene that is not adult led, such as the demonstrations in the UK against the Iraq war, this book concentrates on formal structures set up by adults, providing a useful source book. *Having Their Say* sets out to provide snapshots of work in progress on participation and does so in an interesting and informative way.

In his opening chapter West acknowledges that the concept of participation is contentious, as are definitions of childhood and whether children are seen as 'social agents'. He describes how Hart's 'Ladder of Participation' based on work by Arnstein, while being an attempt to classify participation, has been used as a model of practice with the idea of moving through stages and getting to the top. That Arnstein's and Hart's ladders have been influential in the field can be seen by the references to it in several chapters therefore a diagram of it would have been a useful inclusion. West talks about the fundamental questions that need to be asked of any participation project – who is involved; why should they be involved; what sort of decisions can they make; where and when do meetings take place; and what vehicle or arena is used. He suggests that different projects will have different ideas on the purpose of participation – to shift the realm of power or to enable young people to be happy with their lot. As participation is connected with power it must also be connected with politics and, in two chapters Crimmens looks at how the government has promoted youth participation in England and within the Connexions Service. Crimmens suggests that participation processes are at the beginning stage and therefore remain essentially fragile, developing participation is a learning process for adults as well as young people. While Crimmens finds a commitment to participation he feels questions remain about whether young people's views are actually influencing the content and structures of the Connexions strategy. In her chapter on developing a National Childrens Strategy in Ireland Hayes demonstrates the limits of government initiatives for really obtaining 'the voice of the child'. Adult management of the process, particularly time constraints, limited the ability of young people to participate, but she feels that their views did inform the Strategy, which includes a commitment to give children a voice in policy and practice that affects them directly. In

Italy the advent of the Convention on the Rights of the Child led to the enactment of a law, Turco's Law, (Mori Chap. 9) which set up the National Children's and Adolescents fund, to implement action promoting 'the rights, quality of life, development , self-fulfilment and socialisation of children and young people' (p.101). However, Mori considers the law's definition of children's participation to be ambiguous.

Issues about who gets involved in participating are explored by Swinderek (Chap. 8). He considers a 'remarkable infrastructure of politics for children' (p. 85) has developed in Germany with representatives at local, municipal and national level, part of a national commitment to democracy generally. Also the Child and Youth Services Act of 1991 states that ' children are to participate – in all decisions of the public youth service that concern them'. Swinderek feels this is still a policy for children rather than one designed by them and the youth parliaments are perhaps a training ground for 'future parliamentarians and politically correct citizens' (p. 96). This issue is important in the context of the UK youth parliament which was criticised in June by the DfES which felt the parliament was failing to represent all young people; its members were perceived as 'largely middle class and well educated' (*Young People Now* 16/6/04). How to get over this problem is explored by West who discusses training for participation which he considers is relevant if the aim of participation is to 'bring children within existing hegemonic structures'. But not if it is to 'include a range of different perspectives and opinions, and a greater distribution of decision making' (p.17). Another arena where the participation of young people is often advocated is that of research and this is discussed in the context of the Netherlands by Hazekamp (Chap.10). He discusses the work of the Alexander Foundation, established to 'empower young people as an active partner in youth research' (p.113).

I found this a useful book, bringing together ideas of how to make the participation agenda work. However, I felt that the book's strength, of having different examples of work from different countries, was also a weakness as dispersed ideas made comparisons difficult. For example I was interested by the chapter about youth work in Wales by Bert Jones, (Chapter 7), but there was no point of comparison between his chapter and those from other countries which did not look at informal education at all. In the chapter on Scotland Furnivall, Hosie and Lindsay look at the rights of children in care, again an aspect not covered by other authors. Similarly I was interested to read that in Norway ' the first efforts to encourage and enable children to become active partners in the decision making process were channelled through the schools' (Begg, p.126), with a statutory duty to elect pupils councils who make decisions with real consequences for the school. The chapter on Slovenia by Dekleva and Zorga also shows how schools are the foundation for their youth parliament. It would be useful to compare their experiences with that of other countries. More importantly there was no real attempt to critique the whole issue of youth participation. Why participation has become so important for governments deserves a closer look. In the UK we are being asked to get young people involved in youth parliaments and in many different forms of consultation, but in other arenas their choices are being circumscribed by legislation; stopping them gathering together for example.

Sue Robertson, University College Chichester.

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Reaching socially excluded young people

A national study of street-based youth work

David Crimmens, Fiona Factor, Tony Jeffs, John Pitts, Carole Pugh, Jean Spence and Penelope Turner

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